

# INVESTING IN QUALITY PETERBOROUGH

## Report on Year Six

Prepared by: Katherine Orgill, RECE and  
Susan Scoffin, RECE

Investing In Quality   
Early Learning and Child Care Peterborough



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>PAGE</b>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR YEAR 6 REPORT .....	3
INTRODUCTION .....	4
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: CHAMPION PROFESSIONAL LEARNING THAT INFLUENCES PRACTICE .....	4
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: ENHANCE LEARNING THROUGH MENTORSHIP.....	8
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: MEANINGFUL MEASUREMENT FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT .....	9
PEER DIALOGUE DAYS .....	9
RAISING THE BAR SUBMISSION .....	11
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: ORGANIZATIONAL ALIGNMENT TO SUPPORT TRANSFORMATION .....	15
APPENDICES .....	18

## Executive Summary for Year 6 Report

This document reports on the progress made with the four strategic priorities outlined in the 2015 operational review and identifies possible direction for the future.

The first priority speaks to championing professional learning that influences practice. In 2015 there was good evidence to show that the professional learning offered in the community is being accessed. In keeping with best practice three learning opportunities were offered using a Communities of Practice (CoP) model. A range of opportunities will continue to be offered from the annual conference to opportunities for self- directed learning.

In 2015 a new model of mentorship to address strategic priority number two was developed. Beginning in 2016, and building on the third party visits conducted through RTB, each program will receive at least one mentor visit and a related report.

Strategic priority number three speaks to the measurement of quality. Raising the Bar remains the community's quality assurance tool with the goal for all programs to reach and maintain the gold level. For programs at the gold level, 2015 marked the first of 2 years with a reduction in submission requirements and Peer Dialogue replacing the traditional peer review. The reflections on professional learning submitted by educators were impressive and peer dialogue days were embraced as an opportunity to discuss successes and challenges as we move forward.

The fourth priority was the focus of the IIQ committee to ensure organizational alignment to support transformation.

## Introduction

This report describes the progress made with the strategic priorities identified in the operational plan (2015) that set the stage for the Investing in Quality, Peterborough (IIQ) Committee's future and its role in advancing quality in the City and County of Peterborough. The four priorities identified are:

- 1) Champion professional learning that influences practice
- 2) Enhance learning through mentorship
- 3) Meaningful measurement for quality improvement
- 4) Organizational alignment to support transformation

In the process of implementation, the roles of IIQ staff were examined and work plans were developed that align with the operational plan. The Professional Learning Co-ordinator has taken the lead role on the professional learning priority and the Quality Initiatives Co-coordinator, the lead role for the quality initiative priority. Staff will co-lead the strategy for mentorship which is described in more detail further in this report.

Information and data used in this report has been gathered from a number of sources, including Raising the Bar (RTB) submissions, peer dialogue days, professional learning opportunities and site visits. Quotes from participants have been included, with their permission.

### Strategic Priority 1: Champion professional learning that influences practice

Recognizing that there are a variety of needs and interests for professional learning in our community, a range of events for supervisors and program staff were offered in 2014-15. These events covered professional responsibilities, administration, child development and behaviour, programming for children and opportunities for dietary staff. There was a fall Saturday event along with networks, bringing in outside presenters, supporting other agencies' workshops, internal workshops and the annual spring conference. There was a particular focus on HDLH.

#### Learning through Relationships

The timing of the strategic plan was well-aligned with developments at the provincial level. The introduction of 'How Does Learning Happen?' and 'Think, Feel, Act' both built on feedback from the early learning community in Ontario and gave a strong focus for much of the work of IIQ staff in the past year. In the fall of 2014 IIQ hosted an evening with Ministry of Education Early Years (MEEd) staff called 'Learning through Relationships'. Maria Saunders and Ana Maria Prokopich introduced key ideas from the pedagogy and time was spent in discussion at the tables. Comments included:

*"I'm excited about diving into the Questions for Reflection." (workshop participant)*

*"I'm excited about my staff seeing themselves as capable and competent." (workshop participant)*

#### Carol Anne Wien: Pedagogical Documentation

For the second year, on a Saturday in the fall, IIQ hosted a professional learning opportunity with a speaker from outside our community. This year Dr. Carol Anne Wien, a leader in early learning, and contributor to the Ministry of Education documents of 'Think, Feel, Act' and 'HDLH' was invited to speak

about pedagogical documentation. Recognizing the central role that documentation plays in early learning, the day was devoted to clarifying the difference between documenting and pedagogical documentation. The latter is described as, among other things, "a way to make children's learning and understanding of the world around them visible to the children themselves". This was the first time that a communities-of-practice approach was used at an IIQ event. This approach included assigned seating and table facilitators. Almost one third of the participants spoke positively about this round table format. One quarter of the people commented about really enjoying learning of the difference between these 2 types of documenting.

*"The reminder that everyone is at their own place (and) to accept others as 'beginners'."*  
(workshop participant)

*"I was challenged by the opinions of other educators. Some I learned from, some I flat out disagreed with, but it is useful to find out what other people think."* (workshop participant)



*Dr. Carol Ann Wien in discussion with participants*

### **Communities of Practice**

One way to support professional learning that influences practice is by offering Communities of Practice (COP). These are being adopted in many sectors and are defined as groups "formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavor." (Wenger-Trayner). Embraced by the College of ECE, they are recognized as offering the possibility of deeper discussion and learning for participants by supporting reflective practice and allowing participants to engage in more in-depth study. They typically involve a group "of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly" (Wenger-Trayner). Those presenting are not the holders of the knowledge but rather create the structure that involves moving between individual, small group and whole group activities. Assigned seating and facilitated discussions encourage multiple perspectives to be shared at each table.

Based on the positive feedback about this COP and IIQ's operational plan, this model was used in two other workshops presented by IIQ. One was a three part series based on *How Does Learning Happen?* (HDLH?). In order to make the most of this new approach, participants were asked for input at all 3 sessions. The feedback strongly indicated that people enjoyed the balance between discussions at their

tables and the information from the presenters. Participating in the same group each session allowed time to build relationships, nurture a place of trust and hear a wider range of perspectives. Stories and experiences shared at each session provided evidence that connections were being made between the content and educators' ongoing practice. Several people were uncertain about the seating arrangement at the first session. However, by the third and final session many commented on the benefit of these mixed groups, such as hearing different perspectives and meeting others.

- *"The sessions were thoughtful and meaningful. [They] made us feel valued as learners." (workshop participant)*
- *"...the variety of activities, group work was a great chance to meet new people and connect with over these few meetings ..." (workshop participant)*

*"Understanding Materials as Invitations to Learning"* was the third COP. In visiting several programs afterwards, there was concrete evidence of educators who had taken ideas from the sessions and introduced them into their rooms.

- *"It has been nice to think outside of my 'regular' box. This experience has made me see this. Sometimes we get stuck in our everyday routine. Spicing things up differently or examining things differently puts a whole new light on it." (workshop participant)*
- *"As a centre, we have begun to change our language on the programming sheets to include 'invitations to play' and thinking/reflections on how we present activities/materials to children in a meaningful way." (workshop participant)*

#### **Early Learning and Child Care Conference 2015**

The fourth annual ELCC spring conference brought in Karyn Callaghan as the keynote speaker. As one of the contributors of HDLH, this provided a direct link to bring visibility to the pedagogy in our community. In her workshop she spoke about challenging 'myths of practice', which describe practices we may follow out of habit without knowing why. This term has continued to be used in the community as we promote reflective practice at all levels.

The annual conference draws participation from our community and beyond, allows for an interchange of ideas and practices in the workshops. Rather than having a specific focus, the conference aspires to offer a range of topics to appeal to a wide audience. The intent is also to have a mix of local and outside presenters.

- *'She challenged me to think about how to apply my beliefs to my daily practice.'* (workshop participant)
- *'Very insightful, wonderful speaker with great presence, made me reflect on the way I document and use documentation.'* (workshop participant)



*Karyn Callaghan presenting at the Early Learning and Care conference*

### **Networks**

There is a history in our community of offering networking groups for various sections of our community. There have been some changes since the start in 2008. However, currently there are 3 networks for program staff (School Age, Dietary staff and Early Learning Infants/ Toddlers/Preschool). These groups tend to meet between 3 and 5 times over the year on site at the IIQ office or at different program locations.

The Supervisor Network was re-instated in the winter of 2014 at the request of some individuals. This group seems to be particularly appreciated by supervisors from smaller or single programs as it offers a chance to share experiences and questions with others in similar positions. As the network became more established, 2 of the initial organizers were approached about and agreed to take on the role of group facilitators.

### **Community Presentations**

This year saw a number of opportunities from community partners who support the early learning and child care sector. These included Five Counties Children's Centre, and Kinark Child and Family Services. To offer support to local educators in preparing for the expectation of Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) the College of ECE made 2 presentations on the topic and IIQ hosted an evening on developing professional portfolios which will be a requirement of the CPL. As in the past, computer training on Excel was offered through and funded by the City of Peterborough.

### **Other**

We recognize the importance of offering a variety of opportunities for the community. We have also continued to promote independent learning following the model set out by the College of ECE. The IIQ website has a list of articles along with a guided reflection form has been used by members of the community and allows for flexibility in place and time for individuals.

Activity	Number	Hours offered	Attendance	Total Hours of participation
Events	21	87	584	2387

- 1) Pedagogical Documentation (IIQ / Dr. C.A. Wien)
- 2) Learning Through Relationships (IIQ / MEdu)
- 3) COP: How Does Learning Happen? (IIQ)
- 4) COP: Understanding Materials as Invitations to Learning (IIQ)
- 5) Early Learning and Child Care Conference (IIQ)
- 6) Cooks' Conference (IIQ / PCCHU)
- 7) DECA (IIQ)
- 8) ECERS-R (IIQ)
- 9) Get Out and Play (Kinark)
- 10) Sensory Processing (Five Counties CC)
- 11) Baby Doll Circle (Kinark)
- 12) College of ECE (Supervisors / Educators) (IIQ / CECE)
- 13) Excel (1 and 2) (City of Peterborough)
- 14) Reaching In Reaching Out (PFRC)
- 15) Centre Tour

### ***Moving forward***

- **IIQ staff will survey the local Early Learning and Care community around professional learning needs.**

## **Strategic Priority 2: Enhance Learning through Mentorship**

### **Progress to date: mentor visits**

Based on evidence and feedback around the effectiveness of third party visits in influencing practice, each program will be visited at least once annually by an IIQ staff. Mentor visits will provide an opportunity for IIQ staff to see firsthand the successes and challenges faced by individual programs, to work with the program supervisor offering resources and support, and assist in the development of action plans as programs move forward.

To address this goal programs were divided between the two IIQ staff and careful consideration was given to staff workload, size of program, type of program, location, and staff history with the program.

From September through December IIQ staff met with each of their respective programs. These meetings provided an opportunity for IIQ staff to explain the changes to the RTB submission and the purpose of mentor visits.

IIQ staff meet on a regular basis to share information and discuss the visits. Particular attention is given to examples of best practice, evidence of shifts in practice, and issues that might be addressed by professional learning opportunities and resources.

### **Develop and sustain a network of mentors across the community.**

IIQ staff have continued to support and nurture the leadership potential in the local sector. An example of this is the supervisor network which is now co-chaired by two local child care supervisors with resource support from IIQ.



The opportunity to take on the role of facilitator for some professional learning events has contributed to developing leadership skills in our community. There have also been articles included in the recent newsletters from local educators sharing their perspectives about events or experiences.

***Moving forward:***

- **IIQ staff continue to evaluate the tools used in mentor visits.**

**Strategic Priority 3: Meaningful measurement for quality improvement**

*Background:* The IIQ committee agreed that RTB should remain a baseline for the community with the expectation that all programs would reach and maintain the Gold level of the RTB.

For programs who have reached the Gold level, the standards of RTB were reviewed and a new process was developed to be used for the next two years.

The seventeen standards were classified in the following way:

- **Duplication** referred to standards involving information that was already being submitted to other stakeholders.
- **Static** referred to standards that, while fundamental to quality, do not change greatly from year to year and will not be required to be included in the annual RTB submission.
- **Dynamic** referred to Standards which report on practices involving daily processes and relationships which have a significant impact on quality.

The outcome of the review of the standards resulted in the development of a new process. Agencies participating in the RTB initiative would submit reporting on the following Standards:

Standard 3 or Standard 4 (these would remain on a 2 year cycle)	Parent/Guardian Survey <u>or</u> Staff Work Environment Survey
Standard 5	Environmental Assessments
Standard 16	Professional Development and Staff Qualifications
Standard 17	Professional Involvement

An electronically fillable submission template was developed and forwarded to programs who could submit their profile electronically, in paper format, or a combination of both.

**Planning Peer Dialogue days to take place of traditional peer review**

Invitees included all local early learning and care agencies and other community partners (the ECE program at Fleming College, the Health Unit, Five Counties Children’s Centre and Kinark Child and Family Services).

Two identical Peer Dialogue days were set up with an expectation for all RTB programs to participate. Depending on the size of the program, one or two people would attend, on the same or separate days. The representatives would be the program supervisor, the assistant, or an individual playing a lead role in the RTB initiative.

Questions for six topics were developed (see Appendix A) which reflected the standards in Raising the Bar and the vision of the Ministry of Education. Only the topics were sent to participants prior to the Peer Dialogue days.

Members of the IIQ committee acted as facilitators and participants were assigned to table groupings to ensure diversity. Time was allotted for each topic, staff listened in on discussions to gather information and participants completed anonymous reflections on the day.

### **Participation**

44 participants attended over the two days. All RTB programs were represented.

Due to more supervisors present on one of the days there were differences in the discussions. IIQ staff and facilitators met during lunch and at the end of each day to debrief and share information.

### **Impressions: Facilitators and IIQ staff**

It was noted that there were frequent references to HDLH? Many stories were shared illustrating the four foundations in daily interactions with children and families.

The questions provoked rich discussion around such things as:

- engaging and gathering perspectives from families, children and educators
- mentoring and supporting staff
- policies and procedures.

### **Feedback from participants**

There were positive outcomes of having community partners present for both participants from programs and community partners.

- *“It was nice to have people from other areas of the community (i.e. Health Unit) to get a different perspective and to know that they are also here to support us and early learning.” (Participant comment)*
- *“This has given me great deal of insight into all the things programs are dealing with on a daily basis...I had no idea!” (Michelle Erridge, Kinark Child and Family Services)*



*Sharing perspectives at Peer Dialogue day*

### **Feedback from participant reflections**

In the written reflections (see Appendix B) participants mentioned such things as:

- The diversity within the sector
- The commitment to quality
- The opportunity
- The many ideas they had gained to take back to their programs

*“Although we have a diversity of perspectives and experiences our goal in the end is the same...quality care of children and learning.” (Participant comment)*

### **Raising the Bar submission**

The submissions were reviewed by IIQ staff and details are provided in the following section.

#### **Standard 3: Family survey**

14 programs completed a family survey in 2014-15. A total of 985 surveys were sent to families with an average return rate of 42%.

Programs reported on the feedback they had received from families and described the action plans developed. The most commonly referred to items from families were:

- improving communication.
- providing more information to families about the growth and development of their child/ren
- more options to pay fees

#### **Standard 4: Staff environmental survey**

9 reported conducting a staff environmental survey. A total of 843 surveys were sent out with a return rate of 44%. This number included surveys sent to large multi-site agencies operating programs outside of our community.

The action plans developed from the results from the survey included:

- developing ways to support staff with professional learning goals,
- visiting other programs to gain ideas and perspectives,
- improving staff meetings,
- encouraging visits to IIQ resource library and
- developing check lists for use in programs.

#### **Standard 5: Environmental assessment**

The RTB submissions for this standard provided evidence that programs are continuing to engage in reflective practice, thinking about their environments and practice and seeking perspectives from a number of sources including third party visits by IIQ staff.

*“Thank you very much, the third party process has been a wonderful experience and I am very grateful for all you have provided us with to move forward with our program and to continue to develop.” (From an email from a program supervisor).*



*Observing children’s play during a mentorship visit*

Programs reported on the environmental assessment tools they used which included ITERS, ECERS, SACERS, DECA, and Play to Learn while one agency was considering the development of their own reflective assessment tool. One program provided the following example of how using a checklist had provoked educators to make changes in the environment. “Staff felt this added a new perspective...showed how adding a simple change such as adding materials or removing excess materials could make a big difference to children’s experiences. Also ECERs provided insight into volume, necessary and unnecessary dialogue and increasing meaningful interactions between children and educators.”

Others referred to using more loose parts in programs and wanting to include more about the cultures of families in other programs. The new annual mentor visits will provide opportunities for IIQ staff to support programs with the goals described in their action plans.

***Standards 16: Professional Development and Staff Qualifications***

***Standard 17: Professional Involvement***

Professional learning hours submitted

	Number of educators	Total # PD hours	Average # of hours per educator
Total PL hours	176 (203)	4014.25 (5421)	22 (26.70)
Non-platinum Hours	95	989.5	10.4
Platinum hours	81 (114)	3024.75 (4499)	37.34 (39.5)

The above table summarizes the professional learning hours submitted. The total number of educators who submitted hours was down a little from last year, 176 from 203 the previous year and the number of educators who qualified for platinum recognition (20 or more hours or 6 or more events) was lower also: 81 compared to 114. The total number of professional learning hours reported was down from last year as well as the average professional learning hours reported in each category. However, as in previous years it is clear that those who qualified for platinum recognition engage in a great deal of professional learning, on average over 3 times that of those who did not qualify for platinum recognition. It is this disposition towards lifelong learning that should be developed and nurtured.

We know that professional learning is most truly effective when it translates into action and positive outcomes for children and families.

This is the second year that educators have been asked to reflect on two professional learning opportunities. For the most part the reflections included in submissions provided more detail and insight than last year. Perhaps this is evidence that educators have become more familiar and comfortable with writing reflections. This practice has been supported and encouraged at all IIQ delivered or supported professional learning opportunities. Further, some may have felt more at ease with sharing their experiences knowing that this year the reflections were only read by Investing in Quality staff and not peer reviewers. It is encouraging that many educators are truly engaged with the professional learning they are taking.

The 330 responses indicated that educators are engaged in a wide variety of professional learning opportunities ranging from self-directed reading to international study tours. For reporting purposes the reflections were read and organized into clusters of similar responses. Clusters that contained more than five similar responses were seen as significant and are included below. The number of responses received can be found in brackets.

#### **Professional engagement with Ministry resources HDLH?**

Forty one reflections directly referenced Ministry of Education, Early Years resources such as *How Does Learning Happen?* (40) *Think, Feel, Act*, (2). The reflections demonstrated that educators had engaged in a range of professional learning around these documents, which included independent reading of documents and resources, discussions at staff meetings, workshops offered by IIQ and attending regional opportunities offered by the Ministry, including one offered for First Nations leaders.

Many of the reflections spoke to how studying these documents had influenced their practice with positive outcomes for children and families.

*"[The workshop] Gave me more ideas on how to give the children a more permanent spot in our mobile room, more pictures, stories, bins with names, changing our routine to have the children be engaged in activities longer while socially growing relationships." (Jenna, Strath Mclean Child Care)*

#### **Growing reflective practice and transferring learning to practice**

Seventy nine reflections could be described as self-reflective in nature and articulated the transfer of learning to practice. Aspects of practice most commonly referred to were:

- supporting children to take risks especially in outdoor play (13)
- observation (11)
- documentation (11).

*"This workshop has forced me to think about each action I take and each word I say to the children. It has taught me to think about everything from their perspective in order to understand the influence it will have." (Kylie Graves, Nursery Two)*

*"I have seen a change in the way I construct and reflect on the children's learning in my documentation. I am meaningful in my language and the way I offer interpretations of what is revealed about the children's learning that invites other perspectives." (Jessica Steele Pearson on HDLH? Workshop)*

### **Opportunities for learning through sharing perspectives**

A number of reflections (7) spoke to the importance of opportunities to share perspectives and learn from others. The IIQ initiative enables and fosters this in a number of ways from network meetings to supporting organized centre tours.

*“I have learned that some of the greatest learning experiences are found right outside. The centres I toured were very nature based, bringing logs, leaves, pinecones etc. inside. I used pinecones as a tool for painting. Bringing nature inside. Then we ended up using nature for experiences for an entire week.”*  
(Sarah Globe, Trent Child Care)

*“Recently, when we had guests from Tokyo, Japan, I put out a large variety of loose parts. You could not tell that there was a language barrier, everyone including our guests were playing together, laughing and having fun.”* (Janet Howe, Nursery Two).

*“These meetings provide me with information/knowledge around the community child care needs. Keeps me current with my expectations and gives me a chance to network with our other community supervisors.”* (Cheryl Schweer, Peterborough YMCA)

### **Sharing learning**

The following shows how educators shared their learning others:

- verbally (67)
- staff meetings (24)
- hand outs, either posted or shared by email (12)
- documentation (6)

*“I did a documentation of the toddlers dancing and laughing. I posted the documentation in the centre, allowing parents and colleagues to see what I had learned.”* ( Sarah Globe, Trent Child Care)

### **Growing leaders**

6 people reflected on their experiences in presenting to others.

*“Sharing my musical learning at the ELCC with our community has been an extremely exciting opportunity for me. I always chose to be engaged in profession. There is always something to learn.”*  
(Tara Cahorn, Trent Child Care)

One educator mentioned they had become a board member of another agency to gain and share perspectives. Two supervisors have come forward to lead the supervisors’ network meetings as mentioned earlier in the report.

### **Early learning recognition and appreciation evening.**

On November 18 2015, approximately 170 educators and community partners gathered to celebrate the important work carried out in the early learning and care sector, as well as recognize participation in the RTB initiative, and professional learning. Participants were moved as Mary Taylor and her young granddaughter, Kenni Dee sang and drummed two traditional songs. Michael Vanderherberg, described experiences from the perspective of a parent and shared his history and involvement with supporting refugees coming to Canada. Speaking of the Syrian refugees he challenged the audience to become involved and to expect to see these new Canadians in local early learning and care programs. “You may think this does not affect you, but they will be in your programs.”

***Moving forward: Peer dialogue days***

**IIQ staff will**

- **make every attempt to encourage a balanced representation of supervisors and direct contact staff at both days.**
- **encourage supervisors to share as much information as possible about Peer Dialogue days and RTB with the staff who will be attending.**

***Moving forward: Raising the Bar submission***

**IIQ staff will**

- **support participants in preparing submissions that provide evidence of best practice**
- **continue to support a wide range of professional learning opportunities**
- **continue to model and support reflective practice and dispositions of lifelong learning**
- **support educators to describe best professional practice, make their learning visible to others, and describe how learning transfers to practice.**



**Strategic Priority 4: Organizational alignment to support transformation**

The IIQ Committee will align its role and structure to implement and deliver upon its strategic priorities, furthering its vision and mission for quality in early learning and child care in the community.

1. Establish an annual planning cycle and a measurement framework to facilitate monitoring and reporting of progress against strategic priorities.

*A planning cycle has been established and implemented and will be updated annually. Work on monitoring and reporting progress is supported through the annual report.*

2. Support IIQ staff with the expertise and resources required to help shift the organization's emphasis to professional learning, mentorship and the development of professional learning communities.

*The staff have reviewed their roles and have placed emphasis on mentorship with joint responsibility for professional learning and mentoring. Staff performance review process is in progress.*

3. Develop effective communication mechanisms to inform all stakeholders in our community about the work of the IIQ Committee, its role in advancing quality, and its progress.

*The Chair reports on a regular basis to the Supervisors' Network on the work of the Committee. Staff continue to report at Supervisors' Network on IIQ activities.*

4. Revisit and revise as necessary, the policies, procedures, systems and structures to support the effective operation of the IIQ Committee in the achievement of its strategic priorities. Reconsider existing mission and vision statements.

*An orientation manual including the terms of reference was developed and reviewed by all members of the committee. This information was also posted on the IIQ website.*



## References

Wenger, E. & Wenger-Traynor, B. (2105) Communities of practice: a brief introduction. (retrieved April 25 2016) <http://wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice/>

## Appendices

### Appendix A

Table #	Topic	RTB Standards
1	Administration and Leadership	Standard 1 Regulatory Standards Standard 6 Action Plan Standard 7 Governance Standard 8 Policies and Procedures Standard 9 Job Descriptions
2	Health, safety and well-being	Standard 2 Health and Safety Monitoring Standard 6 Action Plan Standard 10 Supporting Healthy Child Development
3	Gathering perspectives	Standard 3 Parent and Guardian Survey Standard 4 Staff Work Environment Survey Standard 6 Action Plan Standard 11 Parent and Family Engagement Standard 12 Parent/Guardian Handbook Standard 15 Community Partnerships
4	Quality Learning Environments	Standard 5 Environmental Assessment Standard 6 Action Plan Standard 10 Supporting Healthy Child Development
5	Growing leaders	Standard 6 Action Plan Standard 13 Supervision and Mentoring Standard 14 Staff Meetings and team Meetings Standard 16 Professional Development and Qualifications Standard 17 Professional Involvement
6	Next steps...	Continuing to move forward with the Investing in Quality Initiative

## Questions

**Table 1: Administration and Leadership**

1. Consider your program – its philosophy, mission, policies, and daily practices. How do the program’s values reflect and affect your relationship with each child? With each family? With each educator?
2. How do you ensure that the voices of everyone are present in the decisions you make? Is everyone’s voice valued?
3. What values are visible to those who visit your program?
4. As a leader what are you most proud of with your journey with HDLH?
5. If you make one change today to strengthen relationships in your program, what will it be? If you were to make another change tomorrow, what would it be?

**Table 2: Health and Safety well being**

1. What trends have you noticed through workplace health and safety monitoring? Have these trends led to any change or modification to practices?
2. The AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act) introduced regulations to be observed in organizations and workplaces. Briefly share a change you’ve made or work that is underway to respond to AODA.
3. How can the environment be arranged to encourage children to engage in activities that involve an element of manageable risk so children are building risk competence?
4. What improvements have you made to ensure that the type of meals/snacks and the eating environment reflect the goals for children?
5. How does the flow of the day (e.g., daily schedule, routines, transitions) allow children to make choices (e.g., to engage in in-depth exploration over several days; to relax and do nothing; to reflect on their experiences)? What environmental factors may be causing stress for children?
6. If you make one change today to support the health, safety and well- being of the children in your program what will it be? If you were to make another change tomorrow, what would it be?

**Table 3: Gathering perspectives**

1. What have you found to be effective in terms of gathering perspective and feedback from families and staff?
2. How has the information gathered influenced your daily practice?
3. What questions do you ask that seem to generate the most valuable information for you?
4. How have you connected with community partners to better support the mental health and well-being of families and children?
5. How do staff share perspectives? Have recent changes influenced how you hold staff meetings? If so how?
6. If you make one change today in how you gather perspectives in your program what will it be? If you were to make another change tomorrow, what would it be?

**Table 4 Quality Learning Environments**

1. If we see all children as curious, competent, and capable of complex thinking, how is this belief visible in the environment designed?
2. How are the voices of the children, families and educators visible in the environment?
3. How does HDLH? Influence your learning environments? Share how your environments provide a sense of belonging, well-being and support expression and engagement.
4. What strategies for observing children at play have been most successful? And how do these observations influence the design of the learning environment?
5. If you make one change today to the learning environment what would it be? If you were to make another change tomorrow, what would it be?

**Table 5 Growing Leaders**

1. The main role of a leader is to grow others. Describe some successes you have seen in building on the strengths of others.
2. What professional learning opportunities have been the most influential to practice and how do you know?
3. Think about the mentors in your life. What characteristics do they have that you have taken up in your role as a mentor?

4. Collaboration and networking are essential elements of growing teams. What does this look like in your program?
5. How do you see professional development in the daily life of the program?
6. If you make one change today to grow leaders what will it be? If you were to make another change tomorrow, what would it be?

**Table 6: Continuing to move forward...next steps with the Investing in Quality Initiative**

1. What should we keep?
2. What should we add?
3. What should we leave behind?
4. What are the priorities?

## Appendix B

### Responses from participants Peer Dialogue Days 1 and 2

**Question 1: Today was about gathering and sharing perspectives around supporting and growing quality in early learning and care in our community. Describe something you learned today about our community.**

- Almost half (16/41) of the responses mentioned the discussions had helped them to realize that there is great diversity in programs and fundamental similarities around challenges and aspirations.  
*“Although we have a diversity of perspectives and experiences our goal in the end is the same...quality care of children and learning.” Participant comment*
- The second most common response concerned opportunities for networking and supporting each other and learning about the community and what is going on in other programs

**Question 2: Describe something you would like to take back to your program to implement or consider?**

The responses for question two were a little more varied, but centred around ideas and strategies to take back to their programs. These included ways to support children’s independence and ways to gain perspectives from families.

**Question 3: Describe something about the peer dialogue process that worked well for you?**

The three most common responses were:

- the opportunity to gain different perspectives (17/41)
- sharing ideas (9/41)
- the open style discussion (8/41)

**Question 4: Was anything about the process that was challenging for you?**

Very few participants identified challenges; however, 3 mentioned not having enough time for deep discussions.

In addition to expressing gratitude for this opportunity (29/30), the following was mentioned:

- Networking (9)
- Gaining new ideas (7)

*“I really like the flow of the day. I appreciated the breaks, snacks and the conversations around the table.” Participant response, Day Two*