Curriculum Day
May 2014

LEARNING ABOUT LEARNING-
THE KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM
Learning Goal

- To increase understanding of proposed revisions to the Kindergarten program document and to assessment, evaluation and reporting practices in Kindergarten.

Reminder about the Learning goal.
We want to get to the point where we cannot see where our planning ends and our assessment begins.
Process of creating the draft FDELK document

Consultation processes around AER in K with respect to GS
During the first years of life, a human baby's brain changes at an amazing rate. We now know that this is not just as a result of genetic make up but is heavily influenced by our earliest experiences with people and our surroundings.

For many children these experiences happen in some kind of child care and/or child and family programs. These programs play a vital role in supporting children’s health and well-being, their development, and their early learning.

Fortunately for us, Ontario is emerging as a leader in the delivery of early years programs and services:
- province-wide introduction of FDK
- Efforts to modernize child care
- Creation of Best Start Child and Family Centres

All are leading to better outcomes for children and seamless experiences for families.
It is our job at the Ministry to build coherence. Since 2003 Ontario has taken great effort to create a comprehensive and coherent early years system. While it is important in our work around Kindergarten to have an understanding of what is happening before the children come to us, and after they leave us, our focus today is largely going to be on the Kindergarten piece.

Since 2003 Ontario has taken great effort to create a comprehensive early years system. In 2009, Dr. Charles Pascal provided recommendations that have helped to move us towards a more integrated and seamless early years system, beginning with the introduction of full-day kindergarten for 4 and 5 year olds.

While that was happening a new governance structure was created under the Ministry of Education, to build better connections and improve coordination between early learning programs. The Ontario Early Learning Policy Framework supports our vision for the early years and is aligned with the philosophy and intent of the K program.

When it is released, this framework will build on the OEYPF and provide
a professional learning resource to support pedagogy and program development in early years programs.

While the first three documents are helping to build a strong foundation from birth to the Kindergarten years, K-2 Connections was created to continue the work of Kindergarten and Early Primary Collaborative Inquiry teams established in Ontario in order to investigate early primary pedagogy. It is designed for teachers, ECE’s, administrators and support staff in Kindergarten and Grade 1, 2 and 3 classrooms who want to further explore learning and teaching in the early years.

Throughout all of our work, we are trying to build a similar shared language so that whomever is reading the documents will see how each fits with and complements the others.
Curriculum and Assessment Policy Branch, Early Learning Division, and the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat, as well as our colleagues in early learning whose focus is on the child care and child and family programs – are all are part of the collaborative team in this EL work.

All of us enter into our work with a common image of the children with whom we are working. And as the arrow indicates, we believe that this image is one that should be and could be held beyond the early years.

The pedagogical approaches and practices that work for young children are ones that can be seen to be good for all learners from the youngest babies to us as adult learners. Through the work of the Early Primary Collaborative Inquiry, we have seen thinking and learning about these approaches and practices being adopted into grades 1 to 3.

When released (How Does Learning Happen) will introduce four foundations for learning in the early years. These foundations integrate the 6 guiding principles of ELECT (Early Learning for Every Child Today). Goals for the children and expectations of Early Years programs will be based on these foundations, and will help early years educators ensure...
the best experiences and outcomes for children and families.

Given the complex learning of which children are capable, jurisdictions all over the world are creating early learning programs that transcend traditional subject disciplines. Emphasis can then be placed on the thinking of the child in relation to the whole curriculum, and the thinking of the child that may appear unrelated to the curriculum goals driving instruction (adapted from Brenda Fyfe 2009) (i.e., if we only consider the curriculum goals we may miss some of the knowledge and understanding that the children already have – do we see them as capable, competent, etc.). When programs are organized with a focus on broad, cross-curricular conceptual understandings, and behaviours that encompass cognitive (e.g., innovating, communicating, critical and creative thinking, problem solving), and social and emotional learning (e.g., self-regulation, personal and social well-being), educator teams can provide learning opportunities that encourage children to think and act in robust and flexible ways thus allowing them to maximise their potential and to develop a strong foundation for future success in learning.
Overview of Proposed Changes to The Kindergarten Program (Revised) 2014

- Reorganization of the front matter
- Four-frame structure for expectations

- Note change of title for the document.

- Changes are proposed changes and have not yet been approved – so no guarantees that things will look the same when the document is released

- Front matter: Reorganize the front matter of the document to contextualize the supports for educators. This reorganization will provide educators with ready access to the research base which supports the program direction and vision of Kindergarten in Ontario. The front matter will also describe Ontario’s image of the child as learner in the 21st century and an image of the 21st century educator. It is proposed that the three main chapters of the front matter will be: Building Coherence Building Program Building Partnerships

The framework of the “Bs” is familiar to educators and administrators through training and capacity-building sessions. This framework is also being used by Early Learning Division and Boards are using the framework as a tool in their BIPSAs and IPSAs.

To further support coherence, icons have been used to show connections between and across sections in the document, as well as to videos and other relevant Ministry of Education resources and links related to Kindergarten and early primary.

- Four frame structure These frames will support integration and connection across all areas of learning and reflect how learning happens. It is proposed that the following overarching connectors for the six areas of learning would be: Belonging and Contributing, Self-Regulation and Well-Being, Literacy and Mathematics Behaviours,
Problem Solving and Innovating. In addition, expectations will be unpacked by adding conceptual understandings for all Overall Expectations.
Overview of Proposed Changes to The Kindergarten Program (Revised) 2014

- Other changes that help educators to see the document as a professional learning tool:
  - Embedding of external and classroom research
  - Clarifying misconceptions
  - Strengthening understanding

- providing educators with ready access to the research base which supports the program direction they are being asked to take in implementing the vision of Kindergarten in Ontario
- clarifying misconceptions around play-based learning, learning through inquiry, inquiry, and being in an inquiry stance, reinforcing and enhancing the critical role of self-regulation in early learning
- Connections to other Ministry initiatives such as School Effectiveness Framework, student well being and mental health
- strengthening understanding of the impact of the learning environment on learning, by clarifying understanding of the learning environment as the “third teacher” and embedding reflective questions about the learning environment in all relevant sections of the document; strengthening understanding of pedagogical documentation and its connection to assessment for, of and as learning
Overview of Proposed Changes to
*The Kindergarten Program (Revised) 2014*

- Other changes that make the document user-friendly for multiple audiences:
  - Text features
  - Design of the document
  - Interconnections

- revising and enhancing text features (e.g., addition of charts, graphics, photos; use more bulleted and/or coloured text, colour-boxed features, titles, etc.)
- being specific about how the document is designed
- show interconnections in the learning expectations
Timing is everything. And right now everything seems to have come together like a perfect storm.

- We have evidence in the science that has informed us what we know and believe - child are more competent and capable than we ever imagined

- While we were developing this new image of the child we were also re-imaging ourselves, seeing ourselves as a group of thinking professionals who are constantly rethinking our existing practices and beliefs

- This has created a need to rethink our existing pd structures

- Humans don’t learn in boxes or compartments, but we adapt to doing so

- Because of the conversations we have had collectively about learning beyond the boundaries of subject disciplines, what has been in our mind is now on the pages of our proposed Kindergarten document

- We are moving towards an increasingly integrated system; a system that is developing a coherence in the language we use to talk about the environment, about inquiry, about assessment

- In the proposed revised Kindergarten program document, the overall expectations are organized under these four broad, cross-curricular frames. They provide the foundation for play-based inquiry learning in Kindergarten classrooms, so that space is given to the children’s robust thinking in relation to and beyond the learning expectations.

- It is human nature to say “why belonging and not...?”; why those pairs and not these?” - we are trying these out to think about the OEs
The overall expectations are grouped within frames as one way of thinking about their relationship to each other as well as to that particular frame. The conceptual understandings further illustrate what learning might look and sound like.

OEs in any frame are inter-related and related to the frame (e.g., B and C); some appear in all 4 frames

Examples in SEs relate to the frame (e.g., B and C)

The frames are not intended to limit connections to any one particular frame, rather they are a way to see learning as more integrated. In addition some of the overall expectations are integrated across more than one frame. Organizing the overall expectations in this integrated way reflects learning as it naturally occurs within inquiry and play both from the perspective of the educator and the child.
Belonging and Contributing

- a child’s sense of connectedness to others
- the experience of being valued
- the ability to form relationships with others and make contributions as part of a group, community and the natural world
- the capability to think about complex relationships, community and global issues
- the ability to communicate and represent thinking, both verbally and non-verbally, about their own contributions to the world as well as the contributions of others

This frame reflects big idea: I as a human have connectivity to all the systems in my world. Young children are highly capable of thinking about global issues so this frame pushes the thinking beyond just the social skills of sharing - to “I can contribute to a group without saying anything”.

The expectations that are grouped in this frame also describe how the child is developing as a citizen through a sense of personal connectedness to various communities. They support feelings of belonging among FNMI children and their families, children with special education needs, etc.
This frame looks at how the child is developing his/her physical and emotional self in relation to others, and the ability to adapt to the circumstances.

Connections here to the mental health strategy
The expectations that are grouped in this frame also describe how the child is developing as a citizen through character traits, values and habits of mind.
This frame begins to explore questions like: “how do I begin to understand this child when the languages we speak are different, when he chooses not to be communicative?” - non-verbal as a legitimate form of communicating

Not asking can the child follow directions but rather can the child sustain an interaction and the eg may be about his/her ability to follow directions

The expectations that are grouped in this frame also describe how the child is developing as a citizen through learning about multiple perspectives and critical thinking.
Problem Solving and Innovating

- encouraging children to explore the world through their natural curiosity
- engaging their bodies, minds, and senses through stimulating them to ask questions, test theories, solve problems, engage in creative thinking, and make meaning of the world around them
- capitalizing on children’s openness to think in new and imaginative ways and represent thinking in relationships with others, with materials, and the environment
- transcending traditional problem-solving, which is often attached to mathematics, and repositioning problem-solving as a way of socially constructing knowledge regardless of the context of the problem

We have chosen not to limit problem solving just to mathematics but to think of it in a much broader way.

Make the most of children’s openness to think outside the box as they hone the skills and habits of innovative thinkers.

The expectations that are grouped in this frame also describe how the child is developing as a citizen through learning how to problem-solve collaboratively and represent thinking in new and multiple forms.
The following two slides address the AE&R connections between the 4 frames and communication of learning in Kindergarten.

1. Assessment is planned concurrently with instruction and an integral part of learning in Kindergarten – alignment with the four frames

2. …the view of the young child who is competent, capable of complex thinking, curious, rich in potential and active in the assessment process. (p. 7 adapted from Ontario Early Years Policy Framework)

When we see children as asset-based, we look at their strengths, their growth and their next steps in learning. We do not grade them, rank them or put their learning on a scale.

3. Children enter Kindergarten at different stages of development and with diverse backgrounds and experiences, and they will also leave Kindergarten demonstrating variations in growth and learning in relation to the expectations. (Taken from p. 29 in the draft document)

When writing anecdotal comments, educators should focus on what children have learned, describe significant strengths, recognize their growth and identify possible next steps for improvement.

4. The role of the parent: Assessment is the process of gathering and interpreting information, by the educator, the child, and the parent, that accurately reflects the child’s demonstration of learning of the knowledge
and skills in *The Kindergarten Program (revised 2014).*

**PROGRAM:** “Parents should be invited to observe their child in the classroom setting and to discuss their observations with the team. Also, since families are acquainted with their child’s knowledge and skills in the home setting, the team should invite families to share their observations of their child throughout the school year.”

5. **Pedagogical Documentation:** Educators begin to elicit information about student learning by collecting evidence of children’s learning primarily through observation and conversations with the child while they are engaged in learning contexts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Are We Learning About Learning?</th>
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<tr>
<td>How do we know learning is happening?</td>
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<td>How are we co-constructing and negotiating learning?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How are we documenting evidence of learning?</td>
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<td>How do we communicate learning?</td>
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These questions will frame the work in this module and begin to help participants see the connections between the use of pedagogical documentation for assessment for, of and as learning as well as communicating learning.

Goal: come to a common understanding of the role of pedagogical documentation in the context of assessment for/as and of learning with the *Kindergarten Program revised 2014* and communicating learning with parents.
Carlina Rinaldi: “We believe that assessment is also an integral part of the learning and teaching process.”

We are working on alignment of assessment with instruction, specifically assessment for/ as and of learning and the alignment with the Kindergarten Program revised 2014 and the role of pedagogical documentation. What we observe and document is what we assess and communicate to parents.
Reflections on Learning About Learning

“Intentionally Interrupt” the conception of leadership as “lead knower” rather than “lead learner.” The historic conception makes those in leadership positions reluctant to model what “not knowing” looks like and the result is a lost opportunity to give others – by example – permission to not know (adapted from Katz, 2010 p.1)

What are you learning about learning as described in the proposed program document?

As a faculty member, how will you continue to support the transformational learning in Kindergarten and beyond?

Small group discussion
Time for Reflection

Take time to be in the:

- role of the learner
- role of the leader

This slide will introduce the time educators to:

- Be in the role of learners as they read and discuss the materials and ideas that have been introduced during this module.
- Be in the role of leaders as they discuss their initial thoughts about how they will begin to move this learning forward in their faculties/schools/subject associations, in K as well as into the primary grades.
Rethinking Misconceptions

“We can’t do play-based inquiry learning in grades 1 and 2 because we have specific content to cover.”

Think about:
• the overall expectations related to processes and dispositions
• three categories of the achievement chart focus on Communication, Understanding and Application
• only one category of the achievement chart focuses on Knowledge

The following 5 slides will begin to address some of the prevalent misconceptions that relate to inquiry learning and the use of pedagogical documentation in K-2.
Safety is always a top priority when making decisions about the intentional placement of materials in a K classroom. But when we see children as capable and competent, we include safety in our discussion with them about their inquiries. This is allowing children to engage with active materials and have experiences that we previously wouldn’t have thought they could handle.

Children are Competent and Capable: Rethinking Learning Environments
When we see children as capable and competent we look differently at their work and what it tells us about what they already know and can do, and what they are learning. The learning environment allows for learning to be revealed in multiple ways and we as educators need to see beyond, for example, just the math that is revealed in the blocks.
Children decide where thing need to go: 29 children in a very small room - they wanted a bigger table for writing - chairs on one side, stand up space on another
Children are Competent and Capable: Rethinking Learning Environments
Rethinking the learning environment is happening beyond Kindergarten. Educators in grades 1 and 2 are looking at how they can make the transition to Grade 1 smoother and easier for children. A learning environment that reflects an inquiry stance is one way of achieving this.
The outcome of being a thinking professional
Rethinking Misconceptions

“Pedagogical Documentation is different than other evidence that we would include as “assessment” evidence.”

This is a misconception heard from educators (VS a “quote”)

Educators begin to elicit information about student learning by collecting evidence of children’s learning primarily through observation and conversations with the child while they are engaged in learning contexts.
Documenting the evidence of learning through observation and conversations is the most important aspect of assessment in Kindergarten and is an integral part of all other assessment approaches. When educators review and reflect on the documentation with children, both educators and children have opportunities to name and co-construct the learning.

As the documentation builds over time and educators and children reflect on it daily, children begin to internalize and apply the learning to other contexts. Educator teams analyze documentation to determine the growth of the child’s learning in relation to the knowledge and skills in The Kindergarten Program (revised 2014).
Visible Learning: surfaces and documents children’s thinking, working theories, and ideas that pique their interest

Reciprocal dialogue: creates opportunity for clarification, checking understandings, misunderstandings, connections to prior knowledge

Reflection: requires considerable analysis of what the documentation reveals; inspires further inquiry

Documenting and analyzing learning is complex

Technology is a tool that helps us to make learning visible, capture “the moment” for further reciprocal dialogue and reflection.
“The time adults spend observing and documenting, and then interpreting and reinterpreting documentation will make our time with children all the more meaningful and responsive. In addition, teachers learned the value of interpreting and reinterpreting documentation with children. As Carlina explains, this is done “in order to develop with the children, theories that give meaning to events and objects in their world” (Rinaldi, 2001).
Evidence of student achievement for evaluation is collected over time from three different sources – observations, conversations, and products. Using multiple sources of evidence increases the reliability and validity of the evaluation of student learning. (Growing Success p. 39)

**validity.** The degree to which an assessment or evaluation actually measures what it claims to measure and the extent to which inferences, conclusions, and decisions made on the basis of the results are appropriate and meaningful.

**reliability.** The degree to which an assessment or evaluation is consistent and stable in measuring what it is intended to measure. An assessment or evaluation is considered reliable when the same results occur regardless of when or where the assessment or evaluation occurs or who does the scoring.
Assessment for the purpose of improving the child’s learning is seen as both “assessment for learning” and “assessment as learning”.

As part of assessment for learning educators observe, document and engage in pedagogical documentation with children. By revisiting pedagogical documentation with children educators provide children with descriptive feedback and support for learning.

Educators engage in assessment as learning by helping children develop their capacity to be confident, autonomous learners who set individual goals, monitor their own learning, determine next steps, and reflect on their thinking and learning.

Communication about the child’s learning should be ongoing and should include a variety of formal and informal means, ranging from formal written reports to informal notes, conversations, and discussions with parents. (includes blogs, apps and other electronic ways of sharing information with parents. These decisions are locally driven by the classroom, the school, and or the board) Communication the learning throughout the two years of the Kindergarten program must always indicate the child’s growth and learning in relation to the learning expectations in The Kindergarten Program (revised 2014).

Evaluation or assessment of learning involves the judging and interpreting of evidence of learning to determine the child’s growth and
learning in relation to the overall expectations.
Learning About Learning

How/why are we documenting evidence of learning, studying, co-constructing and communicating learning?

How is your thinking evolving?

As a faculty member, how will you continue to support about learning?
A journey of moving from …… To……

Often the words “evaluation” and “judgment” were considered “bad” words for Kindergarten children – how we shift that mindset?

What is the emotional shift? What is the thinking behind the shift? What is the impact on learning with the shift? (rethink, remove)
Move from participation to engagement which leads to better learning

We want to move people above Either/or thinking.

Descriptive feedback
Protocol

…..slowing down and documenting what we see and hear without judgement

Reminder to document only what you see and hear – not to jump to judgment
Show the video clip of the FN child
Share with elbow partner or do a whole group debrief.
Observing Learning and Pedagogical Documentation

Rinaldi (2001) describes pedagogical documentation somewhat paradoxically as “visible listening” – using notes, slides, videos and so on to reconstruct children’s learning paths and processes.
About the Resource

This resource has been created to continue the work of Full-Day Kindergarten and Early Primary Collaborative Inquiry teams established in Ontario in order to investigate early primary pedagogy. It is designed for teachers, ECE’s, administrators and support staff in Kindergarten and Grade 1, 2 and 3 classrooms who want to further explore learning and teaching in the early years.

http://kto2connections.wordpress.com/
Using Pedagogical Documentation to Deepen Understanding of Children’s Thinking

Early primary educators in Ontario are looking at learning differently as they engage in research about children’s learning. Through the use of a process called “pedagogical documentation,” they are uncovering how children think and learn and are adapting their practice accordingly. Through listening to children and observing them, and collecting “artifacts” of their learning, they are developing deeper understanding of what learning is, how it develops and how to support it. In putting learning at the centre, pedagogical documentation enables educators to develop authentic relationships with children and their families.

In this module, we invite you to explore the use of pedagogical documentation to deepen understanding of student learning and to support it in the classroom. We offer six provocations, each designed to provoke discussion and provide an opportunity for collaboration and reflection. The provocations pages are anchored in guiding questions accompanied by research quotes, reflections from educators in the field and videos of early primary educators and young children.

- Deepening learning about documentation
- Reflections on educators as teacher-researchers ...
- More about putting learning at the centre ...

Click on any question to begin ...
Resources to Support Student Learning

Think, Feel, Act: Lessons from research about young children

The Ontario Early Years Policy Framework describes how the experiences children have in the early years can have an extraordinary and long-lasting impact on children’s learning, development, health and well-being. Central to this is a view of children as competent, capable of complex thinking, curious and rich in potential. To support educators working in early years settings in their continuous professional learning, the Ministry worked with leading experts in the early childhood field to develop the following thought-provoking resources.

To view the entire collection of research briefs, please go to: Think, Feel, Act: Lessons from Research About Young Children (PDF, 3.33 MB)

http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/research.html
Resources to Support Student Learning

Pedagogical Documentation
Leading Learning in the Early Years and Beyond
Across Literacy, educators are exploring documentation as a way to learn more about how students think and learn. In school teams, learning communities, and ministry programs, such as the Whole Child Whole Teacher (WCHT) the Collaborative Inquiry for Literacy Mathematics (CILM) and the Early Years Collaboration Inquiry (EYCI), they are experimenting with innovative ways to observe student learning. Study

What are We Learning About Learning?

“What is clear is that education – deeper, broader and more universal – has a significant part to play in enabling humanity to succeed in the next half century. We need to ensure that students everywhere leave school ready to continue to learn and adapt, ready to take responsibility for their own future learning and careers, ready to innovate with and for others .... We need perhaps the first truly global generation; a generation of individuals rooted in their own cultures but open to the world and confident of their ability to shape it.”