



# **Outcomes and Actions**

2021 and Beyond

# Edmonton Council for Early Learning and Care: Outcomes and Actions 2021 and Beyond

## **A. Outcome: Edmonton has a system of effective planning and management for early learning that conforms to the vision, mission, and principles of the Council and that is supported by sufficient mechanisms, structures, and resources**

1. Short-term actions (2021-2022)
  - a. Describe what a childcare system would look like that meets the needs of vulnerable populations.
  - b. Articulate how a system of early learning and care could operate, as compared to the current state, with proper planning, management, and financing.
  - c. Articulate and promote options, to institutional partners and others, for building a system of early learning and care.
2. Long-term actions (2023-2025)
  - a. Work with institutional and community partners to design, create, and implement a joint entity with the authority to plan and implement strategies for developing a system of early learning and care.
  - b. Help communities and early learning and care programs develop the partnerships they need to be successful.
  - c. Develop standards for quality and affordability that can be adopted and promoted by institutional partners.

## **B. Outcome: The information needed to plan and manage a system is readily available and used on a regular basis to monitor and evaluate early learning and care in Edmonton. Targeted research is conducted as needed to address issues that arise in designing, implementing, and sustaining an effective system of early learning and care.**

1. Short-term actions (2021-2022)
  - a. Identify, acquire, and analyze existing sources of relevant data to understand needs and guide planning.
  - b. Identify and connect with potential research partners for the purpose of collaborating in monitoring, evaluation, and research.
  - c. Conduct a survey of Edmonton parents who have young children to assess needs, barriers, and knowledge about early learning and care, including parents' understanding of factors that contribute to high-quality care.
  - d. Study and document lessons from the experience of Early Learning and Child (ELCC) Centre programs in Edmonton (2017-2021) to gain insights about designing a system of early learning and care.
  - e. Explore the possibility of conducting a formal analysis of affordability in Edmonton.
  - f. Conduct research on the following topics
    - the experiences of Indigenous and newcomer families with early learning and care and problems in accessing culturally safe and sensitive care;

- the essential dispositions and competencies early child care educators must possess to work with Indigenous and newcomer children and their families; and
- what Indigenous and newcomer families seek in high-quality early learning and care.

2. Long-term actions (2023-2025)

- Continue to conduct original research, including research using existing sources of relevant data.
- Conduct research on high-priority emergent issues as they are identified, including studies of specific populations that may otherwise be overlooked.
- Establish a regular schedule for conducting research on the needs of parents, programs, and early childhood educators in Edmonton.
- Conduct longitudinal analyses to monitor changes and identify trends.
- Present findings to and explore implications with institutional partners and relevant community organizations on a regular basis.
- Evaluate and, where appropriate, optimize continuing research practices.
- Establish an annual meeting for local researchers, policy makers, practitioners, and other interested parties.
- Establish a “community of practice” for people interested in research, evaluation, and monitoring in the area of early learning and care.

**C. Outcome: Council engages regularly with governments at all levels to promote and advance high-quality, affordable, accessible, and inclusive early learning and care that meets the needs of vulnerable children and their families.**

1. Short-term actions (2021-2022)

- Assess the policies, regulations, and practices in effect at Edmonton Public Schools, Edmonton Catholic Schools, the City of Edmonton, and the provincial government.
- Make recommendations to EndPovertyEdmonton and City Council about addressing the needs of low-income families.
- Make recommendations to Edmonton Public Schools, Edmonton Catholic Schools, the City of Edmonton, and the provincial government for changes to policies, regulations, and practices.
- Work with the municipal government, local school boards, and the provincial government so that these institutional partners have coordinated policies, regulations, and practices that jointly support high-quality, affordable, and inclusive early learning and care.
- Provide information about early learning and care to candidates in city and school board elections.
- Contribute to discussions at the federal level about a national system of early learning and care.

2. Long-term actions (2023-2025)

- a. Identify and respond to opportunities to promote high-quality, affordable early learning and care involving school boards, governments, and relevant organizations and agencies.
- b. Continue to monitor and evaluate policies, regulations, and practices in governments and school boards, and make recommendations as necessary.

**D. Outcome: Early learning and care in Edmonton is fully welcoming to and supportive of the range and diversity of young children and their families.**

1. Short-term actions (2021-2022)

- a. Design and implement a communication plan, focused on problems and solutions identified in the research described in above (B.1.f.) that is targeted to postsecondary educators, pre-service and in-service early childhood educators, institutional and community partners, and parents.
- b. Review and synthesize research on best practices related to early learning and care for children living in poverty and children with disabilities.
- c. Work with EndPovertyEdmonton and other organizations to promote early learning and care in conjunction with initiatives to build strong communities, such as projects connected to EndPovertyEdmonton’s “game changers” (for example, eliminating racism and increasing the availability of affordable housing).

2. Long-term actions (2023-2025)

- a. Identify practices to ensure that Indigenous and newcomer families play a key role in the creation of recommendations about culturally relevant early learning and care.
- b. Work with service providers, institutional partners, Indigenous families, and newcomer families to develop guidelines, based on the research described above, to help early learning and care facilities
  - become welcoming to and supportive of Indigenous and newcomer families, and
  - follow best practices related to early learning and care for children living in poverty and children with disabilities.
- c. Work with service providers and institutional partners to
  - ensure that these guidelines are widely disseminated and implemented in early learning and care settings and
  - help early learning and care programs develop the capacity needed to support children and families with distinctive needs related to ethnicity, poverty, and disabilities.
- d. Work with institutional partners and postsecondary programs to develop standards, based on the research and guidelines described above, that guide decisions for educating and hiring early childhood educators in Edmonton.

**E. Outcome: The need for a system of early learning and care is well understood and broadly supported by Edmontonians, and Council is a widely recognized and credible source of information about early learning and care in Edmonton.**

1. Short-term actions (2021-2022)
  - a. Continue to develop the Council website to help inform partners and the public of the Council's work.
  - b. Prepare and disseminate documents to help selected audiences understand critical issues, such as
    - the need for a high-quality and affordable system of early learning and care, especially for vulnerable children and their families;
    - the need for planning and management at a systemic level;
    - the importance of high-quality early learning and care, including the need for qualified, competent, and well compensated early childhood educators; and
    - other issues as required.
  - c. Establish partnerships for sharing information about early learning and care.
  - d. Develop and implement communications plans for informing selected audiences, such as
    - parents, caregivers, and families of younger children,
    - early childhood educators and child care program operators,
    - decision- and policy-makers in governments and school districts,
    - targeted organizations or agencies with interests in early learning and care,
    - businesses and business organizations, and
    - to the general public.
  - e. Explore optimal means of disseminating research findings and exploring implications with institutional partners and relevant community organizations.
  
2. Long-term action (2023-2025)
  - a. Establish financial sustainability for the Council to continue its work.
  - b. Establish shared responsibility among governments and community partners for promoting and supporting a system of early learning and care in Edmonton.