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INUIT TAPIIRIT KANATAMI

# UNDERSTANDING THE TRAINING NEEDS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS ACROSS **INUIT NUNANGAT**





*Hugging the world, Rayelle Allen*

**UNDERSTANDING THE  
TRAINING NEEDS OF EARLY  
CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS  
ACROSS INUIT NUNANGAT**



Anaana, Aleqalu, Igimaq Williamson Bathory

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*Igloo, Stars and Sun, Tyler Enuiki Dagg*

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This includes the regional representatives responsible for childcare from the following organizations:

- The Nunatsiavut Government, Newfoundland and Labrador
- The Kativik Regional Government (KRG), Nunavik, Quebec
- Kakivak Association, Nunavut
- Kivalliq Partners in Development, Nunavut
- Kitikmeot Inuit Association, Nunavut
- Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, Northwest Territories
- Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada

## ACRONYMS AND TERMINOLOGY

### AHS

Aboriginal Head Start is an early childhood development (ECD) program funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada (for Inuit communities). AHS programs seek to support the early development and school readiness of First Nations, Inuit and Métis children.<sup>1</sup>

### ECD AND ECE

The terms early childhood development (ECD), and early childhood education (ECE) will be used throughout this report to describe initiatives that seek to foster the wellbeing, growth and education of young children aged 0-5. It is useful to specify that while the term 'ECE' refers to early learning and care programs, 'ECD' is concerned with the overall development of young children more broadly. The term 'Inuit Early Childhood Education' (IECE) is used to describe culturally and linguistically appropriate early learning programs and services designed for and with Inuit children and families.

### ECE (EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION) LEVEL 1

Usually 1 year certificate program on early childhood development from a recognized post-secondary institution.

### ECE (EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION) LEVEL 2

A 2 year diploma program on early childhood development from a recognized post-secondary institution or a one year program taken upon completion of the ECE Level 1.

### IECDWG

Inuit Early Childhood Development Working Group. Made up of representatives from the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, Nunavut (Qikiqtaaluk, Kivalliq, Kitikmeot), Nunavik and Nunatsiavut, and Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada. It was created in 2001 to provide a forum for Inuit to discuss Inuit early childhood development resources, priorities, policies, issues and concerns.

### INUIT NUNANGAT

Term used to describe the collective Inuit homeland in Canada encompassing the land, water and ice of the four Inuit land claim regions (Inuvialuit Settlement Region, Nunavut, Nunavik and Nunatsiavut).

### ITK

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami is the national Inuit organization in Canada, representing four Inuit regions – Nunatsiavut (Labrador), Nunavik (northern Quebec), Nunavut, and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region in the Northwest Territories. It is responsible for promoting Inuit interests and challenges on a wide variety of environmental, health, social, cultural and political issues.

## INTRODUCTION

The work of the Inuit Early Childhood Development Working Group (IECDWG) is informed by a vision of healthy, happy and safe Inuit children and families across Inuit Nunangat.<sup>2</sup> Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), in collaboration with the IECDWG, believes that accessible, culturally and linguistically based early childhood education is vital to making this vision a reality.

This document summarizes information on training gaps in the field of early childhood education in Inuit Nunangat. It was developed to inform future investments in early childhood education, as well as policy and program development in the field. While this project did not undertake a rigorous research process, nor an exhaustive literature review, Inuit regional partners were engaged at every stage. The resulting document gives a voice to representatives working on the ground with child care centres. This document:

- Highlights key messages delivered in past reports regarding the role of educator training in the provision of culturally and linguistically-driven IECE;
- Revisits the Inuit Early Childhood Development (ECD) Strategy and the National Strategy on Inuit Education as they relate to issues of certification, training and professional development in Inuit Early Childhood Education (IECE);
- Summarizes information and feedback from regional child care coordinators on issues related to certification and ongoing professional development for Educators with a particular focus on existing training gaps and current needs;
- Formulates region-specific recommendations for future policy considerations; and
- Proposes general recommendations for future national policy considerations across Inuit Nunangat.





*The Biggest Rainbow in the World, Tyler Enuiki Dagg*

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

ITK has been involved in Inuit early childhood development (ECD) initiatives for over a decade. A national Inuit-specific conversation on ECD began in 2001 and it was at this time that the Inuit Early Childhood Development Working Group (IECDWG) was formed, for whom ITK acts as secretariat. Since then, working group members have continued to come together to discuss their vision and strategy for Inuit ECD.<sup>3</sup> The strong desire for trained educators and leaders across Inuit Nunangat in the field of early childhood education has been highlighted in meetings, reports and vision statements since the dialogue on Inuit ECD began.

In November 2010, members reviewed the Inuit Early Childhood Development Strategy. After a lengthy discussion, consensus emerged about the need to better understand training and standard certification needs of Early Childhood Educators across Inuit Nunangat. The IECDWG developed a plan to gather information on these topics, which included a review of relevant national Inuit-specific strategies and reports and a questionnaire that was completed by the six regional representatives who are responsible for child care. This report summarizes the information that was gathered and presents common training needs that can be advocated for at the community, regional and national level.

# REVIEW OF RELEVANT STRATEGIES AND REPORTS ON TRAINING

## 1. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TRAINING: REVISITING PAST REPORTS

Since 2001, educator training has been identified as a priority. The desire for more diverse, ongoing, and accessible ECE training has been voiced consistently by Inuit. Some of the key messages put forward in previous reports and meetings on this topic are summarized below:

1) The *Inuit Early Learning and Child Care Discussion Paper*, written in 2005, noted that the availability and affordability of licensed childcare in Inuit communities depends on capital investment into IECE, including the allocation of sufficient funds for educator training and capacity building. This paper states, “Ongoing training is needed to ensure that all staff are trained now and in the future. Funding is needed to support the on-going provision of training. There are few opportunities for the ECE’s to take part in ongoing professional development and the IECDWG would like to have coordinated opportunities for this to occur”.<sup>4</sup>

2) The *Nutaquvut Sivuniksavut – National Inuit Early Childhood Education Gathering* held in 2010 brought together over 100 early childhood educators working in Inuit childcare centers who identified key messages, two of which were:

- Comprehensive investments in buildings, people and resources culminating in equal access to ECD programs for all Inuit children and families in the north and in urban areas are needed now;
- Inuit educators deserve pay and qualification parity with teachers.<sup>5</sup>

3) The *Inuit Children with Special Needs: Perspectives of Early Childhood Educators* report drafted in 2011 analyzed gaps in serving children with special needs. Respondents identified training as one of the three main themes requiring further consideration.<sup>6</sup>

4) Professional recognition and remuneration of early childhood educators at the same rate as teachers, as well as the move to integrate early learning programs into education systems, were identified as prominent international trends in the field of ECE in the 2007 report *Inuit Early Childhood Education and Care: Present Successes, Promising Directions*.<sup>7</sup> Training and paying early childhood educators appropriately for their important work supports their ability to successfully involve parents, create curriculum, practices and educational resources “grounded in Inuit knowledge, world views and ways”<sup>8</sup> and become advocates for their profession.

## 2. THE INUIT EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND ECE TRAINING

The Inuit Early Childhood Development Strategy (IECDS) was developed by the IECDWG in 2004, and was updated in 2011. The ultimate goal of the IECDS is to achieve healthy, happy and safe Inuit children and families.<sup>9</sup> Specific goals and objectives that support the realization of this vision are outlined in the Strategy. The third goal reads, “To obtain financial, technical, professional support for training, as well as regional and community capacity building”.<sup>10</sup> Supporting objectives identified for this goal are as follows:

- To advocate for Inuit-specific ECE certification through a coordinated approach to training curriculum based on common linguistic and cultural understandings, resources, salary and professional development;
- To develop a retention plan for Inuit ECD staff;
- To obtain support for training so that it will be provided at the community level (i.e. funding and a dedicated position that supports staff);
- To hold an annual training workshop for Inuit ECD workers.<sup>11</sup>

Early childhood education, like other services and programs offered throughout Inuit Nunangat, is subject to the territorial and provincial jurisdictional arrangements of each region. Issues related to ECE training such as certification standards, the cost and accessibility of training, funding support for ECE students, salary scales, and the availability of ongoing professional development are unique to each region.

### 3. THE NATIONAL STRATEGY ON INUIT EDUCATION AND ECE TRAINING

The National Committee on Inuit Education (NCIE) developed a National Strategy on Inuit Education in 2011. Through their examination of the main themes set out in the Inuit Education Accord, the NCIE proposed 10 core investments to improve outcomes in Inuit Education. One of the investments recommended pertains specifically to early childhood education, and describes the relationship between early childhood education and successful educational outcomes later in life. The National Strategy on Inuit Education states, “Access to quality, culturally relevant early childhood education sets the standard for better education outcomes by creating expectations of success for children and for those parents who are being introduced to the education system for the first time”.<sup>12</sup> The Strategy calls for the establishment of an initiative on early childhood education that will, among other things, ensure appropriate training and wages for early childhood development professionals across Inuit Nunangat. The provisions articulated in relation to training and professional development are as follows:

- Identify training and professional development requirements for bilingual early childhood education workers;
- Recommend actions required to remunerate qualified bilingual early childhood workers as professional educators;
- Bring early childhood educators together regularly for professional development exercises to explore best practices; and
- Renew the goals of the First Nations Inuit Child Care Program introduced in 1995.<sup>13</sup>

### PROJECT METHODOLOGY

The IECDWG identified the need for more information regarding the training and professional development needs of early childhood educators across Inuit Nunangat in 2010. The first step in the development of this project entailed discussion and planning around what information is most important and determining desired outcomes. A consultant was hired to review historical documents pertaining to Inuit early childhood educator training, including discussion papers previously drafted by ITK and Pauktuutit. A list of the publications reviewed was compiled in bibliographic format and is currently available from ITK.

Based on a review of existing documentation, a questionnaire was designed and sent to the six regional representatives responsible for childcare by ITK. The questionnaire, composed of 17 questions, covered three broad areas: certification, professional development, and regulation and law. (A sample questionnaire is attached as appendix A.) In April and May 2013, brief follow up interviews were conducted with the regional coordinators to gather additional information and confirm key messages. They received opportunity to review the information gathered and offer input into the final written report.



*Anaana sinittoq, Igimaq Williamson Bathory*

## LIMITATIONS

The goal of this project was to gain an improved understanding of the training needs of Inuit early childhood educators. A rigorous methodological research approach was not implemented nor was an exhaustive, comprehensive literature review on early childhood educator training conducted. The approach used to gather information was determined by the IECDWG in light of time constraints, the availability of funding, and the desired outcomes of the project.

As a result, there are limitations including a lack of information from educators and/or trainers in the field of early childhood development, and federal/provincial/territorial partners. Information gathered from regional representatives was also varied. For example, due to the understandably limited corporate history of recently hired staff in the Kivalliq region of Nunavut, certain sections of this document may not present a detailed picture of the current early childhood education training needs.

## FINDINGS: REGIONAL INFORMATION ON ECE TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The tables in this section summarize the information submitted by the Inuit regional representatives through the questionnaire and follow up phone interviews. Content from existing documents was also included when available.

**TABLE 1: PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL ECE CERTIFICATION STANDARDS**

REGION	RESPONSIBLE FOR REGULATION OF IECEC	REGULATIONS REGARDING CERTIFICATION OF IECEC STAFF IN LICENSED CENTERS
Nunatsiavut	Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (GNL)	100% of ECEs working in licensed centers require certification
Nunavik	Kativik Regional Government (KRG)	2/3 of ECEs p/center require certification
Kitikmeot	Government of Nunavut (GN)	No mandated ratio at this time
Qikiqtaaluk	Government of Nunavut (GN)	No mandated ratio at this time
Kivalliq	Government of Nunavut (GN)	No mandated ratio at this time
Inuvialuit	Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT)	No mandated ratio at this time



**TABLE 2:**  
**LICENSED CHILDCARE SPACES AND SALARY SCALE**  
**OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS (ECES) BY REGION**

REGION	LICENSED CENTERS	LICENSED SPACES (INC. AHS)	HOURLY SALARY SCALE FOR ECES
Nunatsiavut	4*	65*	ECE level 1: \$16.45 - \$20.56 ECE level 2: \$18.47 - \$23.09
Nunavik	14 centers (16 facilities)	815	Without AEC: \$21.48 - \$32.23 With AEC: \$24.33 - \$32.23
Kitikmeot	4	150	\$15.00 - 19.00
Qikiqtaaluk	37	609	\$13.00 - \$36.00 (from cook to center Director)
Kivalliq	***	***	\$11.00 - 22.00**
Inuvialuit	5	110 (76 full time and 34 part time)	Full time staff: \$16.00 - 25.00 Casual staff: \$15.00

All information that is not starred comes from completed questionnaires and follow-up interviews.

\* By January 2014, there will be 5 licensed childcare centers and 78 licensed spaces in Nunatsiavut.

\*\* From Inuit Early Childhood Education and Care: Present Successes, Promising Directions (2007, p. 25)  
based on Inuit Early Learning and Child Care Discussion Paper (2005, p. 31).

\*\*\* Information unavailable for Kivalliq

**TABLE 3:  
NUMBER OF EDUCATORS AND CERTIFICATION  
INFORMATION BY REGION**

REGION	ECES WORKING IN THE REGION'S CHILDCARE CENTERS	ECES WITH 1 YEAR TRAINING
Nunatsiavut	16	ECE 1: 7 ECE 2: 1, Entry level pre-school orientation: 10
Nunavik	160	95
Kitikmeot	25-30	10-15
Qikiqtaaluk	30*	27*
Kivalliq	41 full time 4-5 part time	**
Inuvialuit	23 full time	5: (4 with ECE certificates, and 1 with an education degree)

All information that is not starred comes from completed questionnaires and follow-up interviews.

\* From Inuit Early Childhood Education and Care: Present Successes, Promising Directions (2007, p. 25)  
based on Inuit Early Learning and Child Care Discussion Paper (2005, p. 31).

\*\* Information unavailable for Kivalliq.



**TABLE 4:**  
**ACCESS TO CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING BY REGION**

REGION	ACCESSIBILITY OF TRAINING	DISTANCE ACCESS	COST	WHO FUNDS EDUCATION?
Nunatsiavut	College of the North Atlantic (CNA)	Yes – through CNA	ECE level 2: \$4000 -\$5000	Students can apply to the Post Secondary Student Support Program
Nunavik	Training delivered in communities as needed	No	\$500,000 p/ community	Kativik Regional Government
Kitikmeot	Training accessed on site at Nunavut Arctic College (NAC) Last community based training was 10 years ago.	No	\$300,000 -400,000 p/ community	Not presently funded
Qikiqtaaluk	Delivered in communities as needed by Nunavut Arctic College (NAC)	No	1 year: \$107,250	Kakivak Association
Kivalliq	Nunavut Arctic College (NAC)	*	*	*
Inuvialuit	Aurora / Yukon College	Yes – via tele-conference through Aurora	13 courses @ \$245 p/course + cost of books	Inuvialuit Regional Corporation funds training for full time staff

\* Information unavailable for Kivalliq.

**TABLE 5:  
AVAILABILITY OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT BY REGION**

REGION	ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PD) AVAILABLE	ONGOING PD RE: SPECIAL NEEDS AVAILABLE?	WHO OFFERS PD IN THE REGION?	MORE SUPPORT NEEDED FOR PD?
Nunatsiavut	Yes	On request - particularly Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder	Nunatsiavut Gov't Dept of Health and Social Development and other sources	Yes
Nunavik	Yes	No	KRG	Yes: money & resources
Kitikmeot	No	No	Last offered by Kitikmeot Economic Development Corp (2007)	Yes: more opportunities for PD needed
Qikiqtaaluk	No - sporadic	No	Last offered by NU Dept. of Ed. (2008)	Yes: funding & coordination
Kivalliq	*	*	*	*
Inuvialuit	No	No	Formerly GNWT Dept. of Education, Culture & Employment	Yes: consistent funding needed and an occupational standards course

\* Information unavailable on this topic for Kivalliq.

# DISCUSSION AND REGIONAL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

IN THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS, INFORMATION GATHERED FROM QUESTIONNAIRES AND CONVERSATIONS WITH REGIONAL CHILDCARE COORDINATORS IS DISCUSSED.

## NUNATSIAVUT

In Nunatsiavut, 100% of early childhood educators working full time in licensed centers need to be certified with at least ECE level 1. Lead center staff must also have ECE level 2. Casual staff do not need ECE level 1, but need to have completed a preschool orientation course (PSOC) with the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Newfoundland Labrador (AECENL).

In Nunatsiavut, 30 hours of professional development (PD) are required for every three years of certification. The Nunatsiavut Government's regional childcare coordinator emphasizes that PD is extremely important, as it allows educators to acquire new knowledge, network together, and share resources. PD serves to boost educator morale and keeps them informed of the most recent information in the field. Employees from the Department of Health and Social Development (DHSD) check in with center staff about their level of training and PD needs. Workshops are either offered in centers, or educators travel to Happy Valley-Goose Bay and partner with non-Aboriginal daycares to access specific training programs.

Efforts to support educators in this regard fits within the mandate of Nunatsiavut Government's "Torngasok" division which prioritizes language retention and articulates a strategic plan to make Inuttitut a working language in Nunatsiavut. As the exploration of training and PD needs advance, consultation with childcare workers will strengthen the future growth of ECE educators in the region.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY CONSIDERATIONS IN NUNATSIAVUT:

- 1) Inuit based training programs for early childhood educators;
- 2) Support for early childhood educators in the region to learn and work in Inuttitut;
- 3) A module based ECE certification program available in the region.

## NUNAVIK

In Nunavik, Early Childhood Education (ECE) licensing, regulation and funding responsibilities are centralized within the Kativik Regional Government (KRG). KRG has a 23-year funding agreement with the province of Quebec, the only province in Canada to subsidize a universal childcare program. Hourly rates for ECEs at both ends of the pay scale in Nunavik are the highest in Inuit Nunangat. Additionally, ECE training programs are available as needed at the community level. Early childhood centers submit official requests for training to the KRG, who subcontract to Cégep Saint-Félicien for delivery. Training programs consist of 18 modules based around specific competencies, and are offered to educators on the job. The curriculum was designed specifically for Nunavik educators, and is delivered in English with Inuktitut translation. A one and a half year training program usually takes three years to complete on the job, with approximately ten educators graduating each year.

More substantial and stable investment in ECE in Nunavik has facilitated professional recognition and higher pay for early childhood educators. This funding model has also allowed for the development and implementation of collaborative projects and trainings.

The management advisor for childcare services with the KRG emphasized that there is a need for increased funding for professional development, particularly in the area of knowledge exchange. Face-to-face networking is extremely effective in Nunavik, and three-day on site visits were suggested. The need for a set of training standards accepted across provincial and territorial jurisdictions, that would make it easier for educators to have their diplomas recognized and work outside the region in which they were certified, was also emphasized. This type of system would need to take the specificities and needs of each region into account.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY CONSIDERATIONS IN NUNAVIK

- 1) Increased funding for ongoing professional development;
- 2) Resources dedicated to increase knowledge exchange across regions.

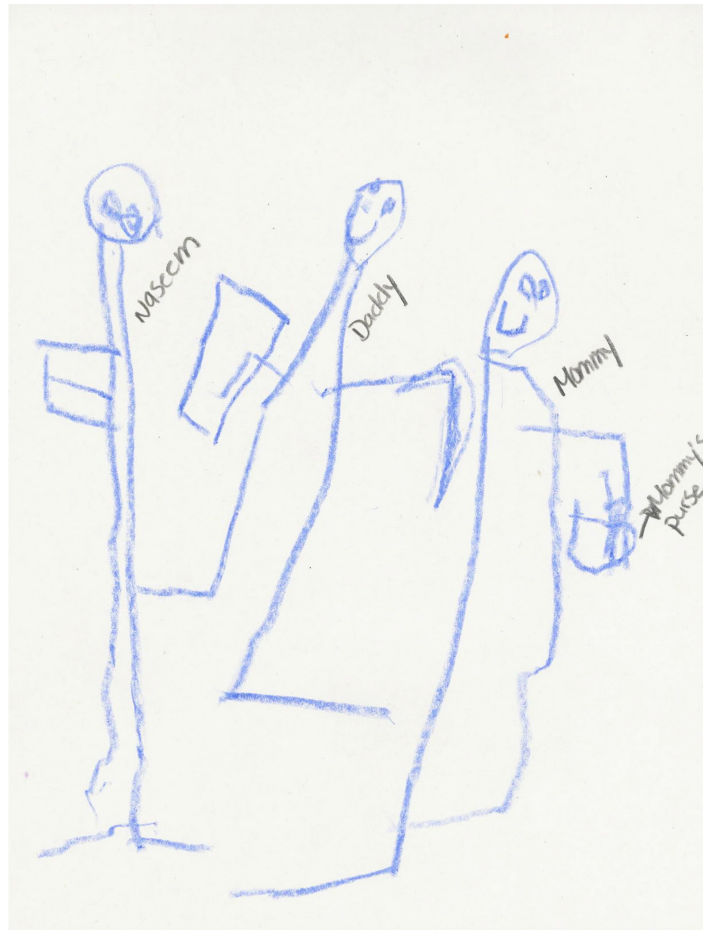
## KITIKMEOT, NU

Community-based training and distance education options are not currently available in the Kitikmeot. Educators who want to access training have to travel to the Nunatta campus of Nunavut Arctic College in Iqaluit. There is a pronounced need for community-based training programs in the region, as well as the delivery of distance education. There is also a need for increased funding for professional development. The regional childcare coordinator suggests that educators in each community be supported to develop individual work plans and identify learning goals for themselves at the beginning of every year. This would be a good way of finding out what type of training educators need or would like to see offered. Possible topics for expanded PD could include: different approaches to teaching activities, new techniques for supporting school readiness, and one-on-one instruction for different age groups.

In addition to increased funding for training and professional development, there is a desire for more knowledge sharing across the three regions of Nunavut. The Nunavut Childcare Association used to arrange regular phone meetings between the three regions; however the Association is no longer active. Nunavut is a massive territory, and although each region has different needs and priorities, sharing resources, knowledge and information on a regular basis would be extremely beneficial.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY CONSIDERATIONS IN KITIKMEOT

- 1) Bring instructors into communities to offer community based ECE training;
- 2) ECE training programs to be available in the Inuit language;
- 3) More programs offering certification, including opportunities to access training by distance;
- 4) Increased and consistent funding for professional development in order to ensure that every daycare in the region has ongoing access to PD;
- 5) Development of a mechanism to connect Kitikmeot, Qikiqtaaluk, and Kivalliq via teleconference on a regular basis to share knowledge, information and resources on Inuit ECD;
- 6) Three year funding agreements would allow centers to ensure that ongoing training and PD are available to their educators, including regular First Aid and CPR re-certification.



*My Family, Naseem Hamioui*

## KIVALLIQ, NU

Based on information shared during a brief conversation with the regional childcare coordinator, several recommendations are proposed below.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY CONSIDERATIONS IN KIVALLIQ

- 1) Early childhood education funding to be increased;
- 2) Annual training for managers and educators available;
- 3) Topics for future professional development should include workshops on cooking with country food, healthy eating, and tools for how to best run child care centres.

## QIKIQTAAALUK, NU

The key to offering accessible training in Qikiqtaaluk is to bring it to communities. A one-year community-based certification allows educators to stay with their families and continue working. However, budget restrictions pose a challenge to offering community based training on an annual basis. Despite population growth, funding for ECE in the region has remained stable since 1998. Increased funding could go towards improving the salaries of educators, thus preventing high staff turnover in the field. Greater recognition of the field of early childhood education as a whole through higher salaries, better benefits, and more opportunities for training, is needed.

Networking, particularly in the very large region of Nunavut, was also emphasized. A budget that would allow coordinators to pick up the phone and exchange ideas with colleagues in other regions is needed. Additionally, there is a desire for a coordinator who could arrange regular conference calls with child care coordinators across Nunavut.

Professional development could be supported by affording early childhood educators PD days, as is the case with teachers. Possible topics for PD in the region could include: culturally appropriate and age appropriate games, toys, and supporting educators to work in Inuktitut. The Manager of Childcare, Youth and Disability for Kakivak Association emphasizes that professional development inspires and motivates early learning educators, and this trickles down to children.

Policy needs to reflect the value of early childhood education. Early childhood Educators should be consulted about what they want and need in regards to PD and training. There is the need for the development of culturally appropriate ECE training curriculum that will be delivered in Inuktitut.



*My Mommy, Rayelle Allen*

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY CONSIDERATIONS IN QIKIQTAAALUK

- 1) Increase funding to ensure that community based ECE training programs are available every year;
- 2) More resources need to be allocated to professional development in order for educators to have regular access to a diverse range of training;
- 3) A budget dedicated to fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange across Nunavut;
- 4) Culturally appropriate ECE training programs delivered in Inuktitut;
- 5) Daycare staff to be remunerated appropriately. This will prevent high turnover.



## INUVALUIT SETTLEMENT REGION

The small size and remoteness of communities in the Inuvialuit Region pose particular challenges to the accessibility of ECE training and certification. Educators in the region prefer to stay in their communities instead of travelling far from their home and family, and are encouraged to train by distance when they're hired. To complete all 13 required distance certificate courses part-time takes roughly 4 years. The Inuvialuit Regional Corporation funds training for all full time center staff. While studying by distance is a good option for educators in the region, there is a need for community-based, on-site training programs. The creation of accessible, community-based training opportunities needs to be accompanied by higher salaries and better benefits so that early childhood educators do not leave the field for higher paying jobs once they are trained. A community-based occupational standards course would also be highly beneficial for educators in the region. The suggestion to hold an orientation for educators and directors each September, informing them of policies and expectations, was highlighted.

In the Inuvialuit Region, there is a pronounced need for increased, ongoing and consistent funding for professional development (PD). Professional development and networking should include allocating the budget and time to go on tours of early childhood programs in other communities and regions to learn from them. There is a desire for funding proposals and agreements to be consolidated, as proposal writing and contract management presently require a significant amount of administrative resources.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY CONSIDERATIONS IN INUVIALUIT

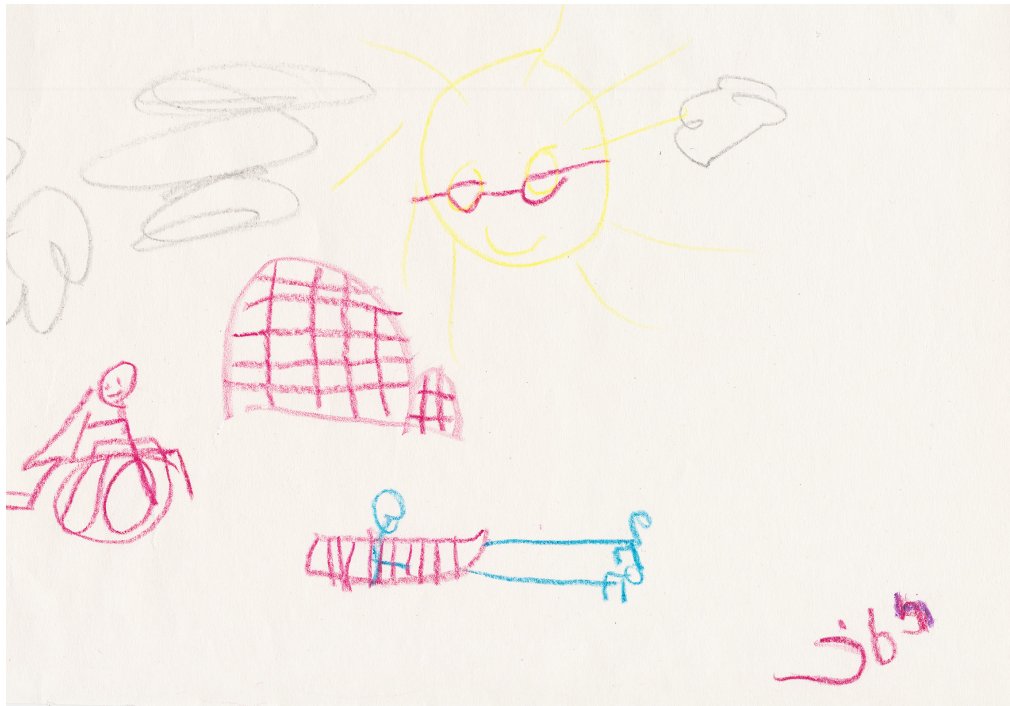
- 1) Early childhood educator training programs should be offered in the Inuit language and grounded in Inuit knowledge;
- 2) Early childhood language immersion programs should be available in communities. Language training for early childhood educators should be offered in order to sustain language immersion programs for young children.
- 3) More opportunities for community-based ECE training are required, including an occupational standards course covering budget, proposal writing, and weekly/monthly/yearly program planning;
- 4) Increased capital investment to ensure better benefits and higher salaries for educators;
- 5) Increased and ongoing support for professional development;
- 6) ECE programs in the region would benefit from consistent, consolidated, direct, multi-year funding.

## GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY CONSIDERATIONS ACROSS INUIT NUNANGAT

“Trained early years teachers know about children and learning; they know about communicating with parents; they know about the value of play, and environment. They know about the importance of interacting with children.”

This report gathered information on gaps in the field of early childhood educator training and professional development across Inuit Nunangat. After a careful review of the key messages put forward in previous reports and an examination of the information shared by regional representatives responsible for child care, general recommendations for policy considerations are presented here:

- The specific training and professional development needs of distinct regions and communities need to be identified on an ongoing basis through consultation with early childhood educators;
- Early childhood educator certification programs need to be made more geographically and financially accessible across Inuit Nunangat;
- As a fundamental contributor to successful education outcomes later in life, Inuit Early Childhood Education requires higher capital investments in training, professional development and capacity building;
- Policy change is needed in order to increase professional recognition of early childcare educators and their important role in educating young children.
- Increased funding needs to be dedicated to achieving pay parity between ECEs and other educators;<sup>14</sup>
- More resources supporting knowledge exchange practices need to be allocated to bring educators from various communities and regions together to learn from one another;
- Resources, both financial and human, are required to develop an Inuit-specific early childhood educator training program rooted in Inuit worldviews and Inuit knowledge of ECE, that can be delivered in the Inuit language;
- While increased access to Inuit-specific ECE training would contribute to professional recognition and rich programs, Elders and non-certified unilingual speakers of the Inuit language must continue to have a prioritized role in educating young Inuit children;<sup>15</sup>
- Efforts need to be made towards developing a mechanism that allows early childhood educators to have their certification recognized across regions, provinces and territories in Canada.



*Igloo and Qamutik, Lucas David Dagg*

## CONCLUSIONS

The Inuit Early Childhood Development Working Group (IECDWG) undertook this project to gain a better understanding of the training and certification needs of early childhood educators across Inuit Nunangat. While the process for gathering the research for this project was not intended to be rigorous, the resulting document provides an important review of some of the Inuit-specific literature on early childhood education. It also gave regional representatives an opportunity to voice their opinions on the training needs of early childhood educators across Inuit Nunangat which is often overlooked. Moving forward, addressing these training needs will require collaboration amongst partners across Inuit Nunangat, as well as the elaboration of regional strategies developed in consultation with early childhood educators.

## END NOTES

- 1 Health Canada. Retrieved May 2013 from [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/famil/develop/ahsor-papa\\_intro-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/famil/develop/ahsor-papa_intro-eng.php)
- 2 Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (2011). Updated Inuit Early Childhood Development Strategy. Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Ottawa, ON.
- 3 Tagataga Inc. (2010). Considering Inuit Childhood Education. Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Ottawa, ON.
- 4 Rowan, C. (2005). Inuit Early Learning and Child Care Discussion Paper. Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Ottawa, ON, p.27.
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- 6 Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. (2011). Inuit Children with Special Needs: Perspectives of Early Childhood Educators. Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Ottawa, ON, p.7.
- 7 Tagataga Inc. (2007). Inuit Early Childhood Education and Care: Present Successes, Promising Directions. Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Ottawa, ON.
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- 9 Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (2011). Updated Inuit Early Childhood Development Strategy. Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Ottawa, ON, p.2.
- 10 Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (2011). Updated Inuit Early Childhood Development Strategy. Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Ottawa, ON. p.4.
- 11 Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (2011). Updated Inuit Early Childhood Development Strategy. Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Ottawa, ON.
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- 13 Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (2011). First Canadians, Canadians First: National Strategy on Inuit Education. Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Ottawa, ON.
- 14 Adapted from Tagataga Inc., Inuit Early Childhood Education and Care: Present Successes – Promising Directions, 2007.
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## APPENDIX A

### Inuit Ece Training and Professional Development Draft Questionnaire for Regional Childcare Coordinators

#### CERTIFICATION

- 1 What are the core competency that you look for when hiring an Early Childhood Educator?  
(Please send a copy of a job description that has recently been used)
- 2 How many educators in your centres have their ECE 1 certification?  
How many have their ECE 2 certification?
- 3 What is the ratio of certified Educators per centre in your Region?
- 4 Where is ECE Certification programs offered in your Region?
- 5 Are there online learning opportunities available in your Region to be certified?
- 6 How much does a year ECE Certification program cost? How much does the ECE 2 Program cost?
- 7 Who pays for ECE Certification in your Region? (i.e. Is it covered by your organization or the provincial/ territorial government? Or is each individual responsible to pay?)
- 8 What is the salary scale for Early Childhood Educators in your Region?  
(Has it changed since 2007)?
- 9 How is this salary scale determined? (i.e. what experience, certification, etc is involved?)
- 10 What is entailed for the Regional Child Care Coordinator position? (Send job description if available)
- 11 Are educators required to have a criminal record check completed in order to work in childcare centres? Has this been a barrier?

#### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 12 Is professional development and/or training provided to educators at least once a year?
- 13 If so, who funds this training?
- 14 What does this training look like? What topics are covered?
- 15 Is there any regular training provided specifically around supporting children who have special needs?
- 16 What do you need to provide more professional development?

#### REGULATION AND LAW

17. What is process to gaining control over licensing and regulation?





## **THE INUIT EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP**

This report was done in collaboration with the Inuit Early Childhood Development Working Group. The Group is made up of representatives who have a keen interest in Inuit Early Childhood Development from the following organizations:

The Nunatsiavut Government  
The Kativik Regional Government  
Kakivak Association  
Kivalliq Partners in Development  
Kitikmeot Inuit Association  
Inuvialuit Regional Corporation  
Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada  
Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

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