

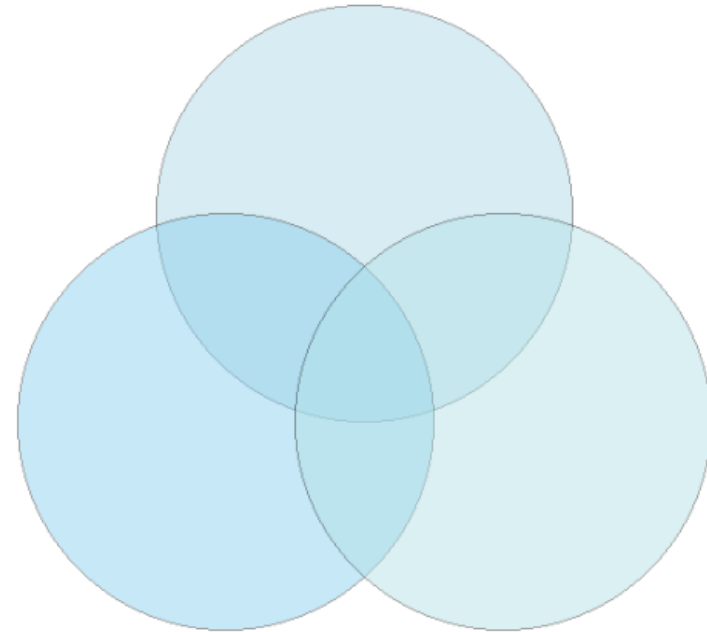
Strengthening Practice Through Policy & Professional Learning

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What This Session is Really About

A system story in three parts:

- What shifted in the AQI language and why it matters
- How shared understanding is built across the sector
- Supporting practice through professional learning and resources



Why This Matters



The AQI is not neutral.

The language within it shapes how quality is understood, interpreted, and supported across the system.

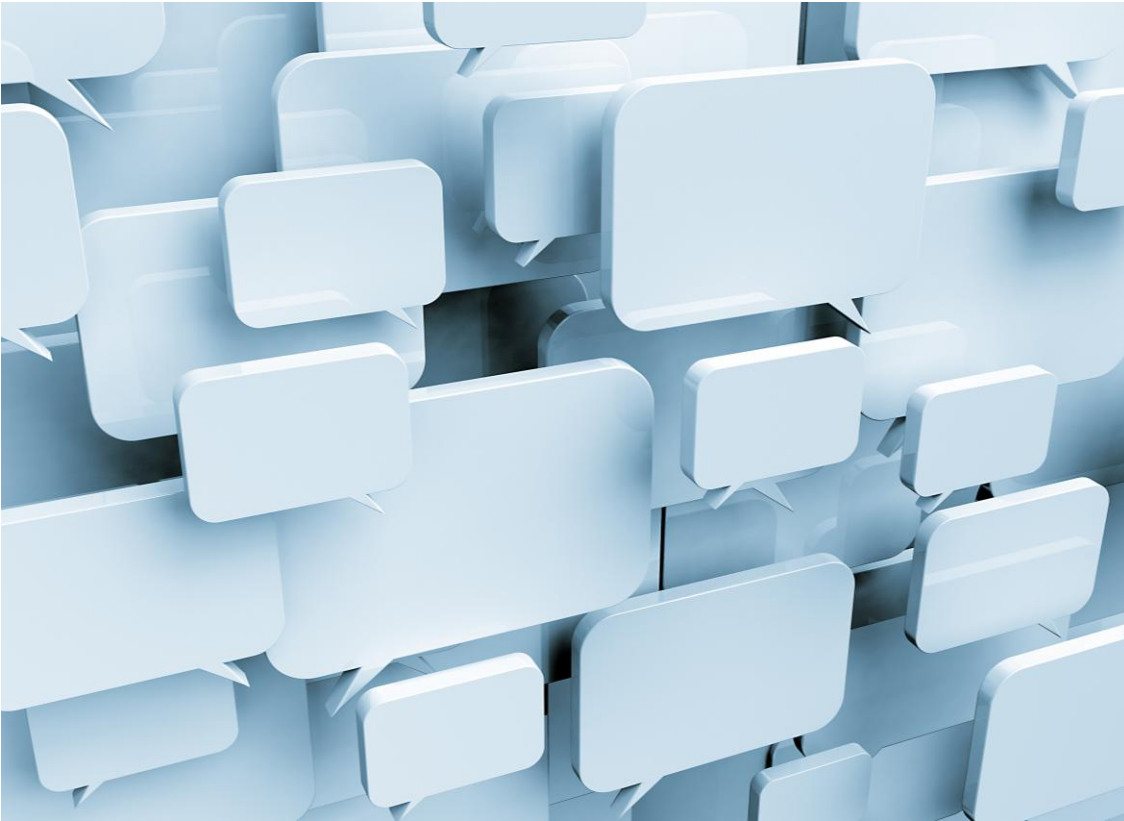
Understanding the AQI

Assessment for Quality Improvement (AQI)

- Clear expectations and universal service standards
- Self-evaluation and planning tool
- Only validated QRIS in Canada
- Tools by setting/age group, including Home Child Care & Outdoor Environments



Why the Language Update Happened



- Reflect inclusion, equity, and responsiveness to diverse children and families
- Align AQI language with current best practices and research
- Developed over two years in collaboration with sector partners and subject-matter experts

What Did Not Change

- AQI expectations remain the same
- What AQI looks for during quality assessment visits remains the same
- The language has broadened the lens, not the measure



AQI Language Updates

Some Examples

- Developmentally appropriate → Responsive to the developmental needs of children
- Parents → Families
- Staff → Educators
- Disabilities → A wide range of abilities and disabilities
- Diversity → Sociocultural identities

Language updated to clarify intent - not expectations.

The "So What?" Example



Same expectation.

Broader interpretation.

Example:

Two or more play materials reflecting sociocultural identities are accessible in at least three areas.

Implementation: How Toronto Supported the Sector

- Sector-wide information sessions with a coordinated FAQ approach
- eLearning module introducing the language updates
- Ongoing support spaces grounded in a community-of-practice model
- Created greater consistency across the sector
- Reduced confusion in interpreting the updated language



Professional Learning Across the Sector

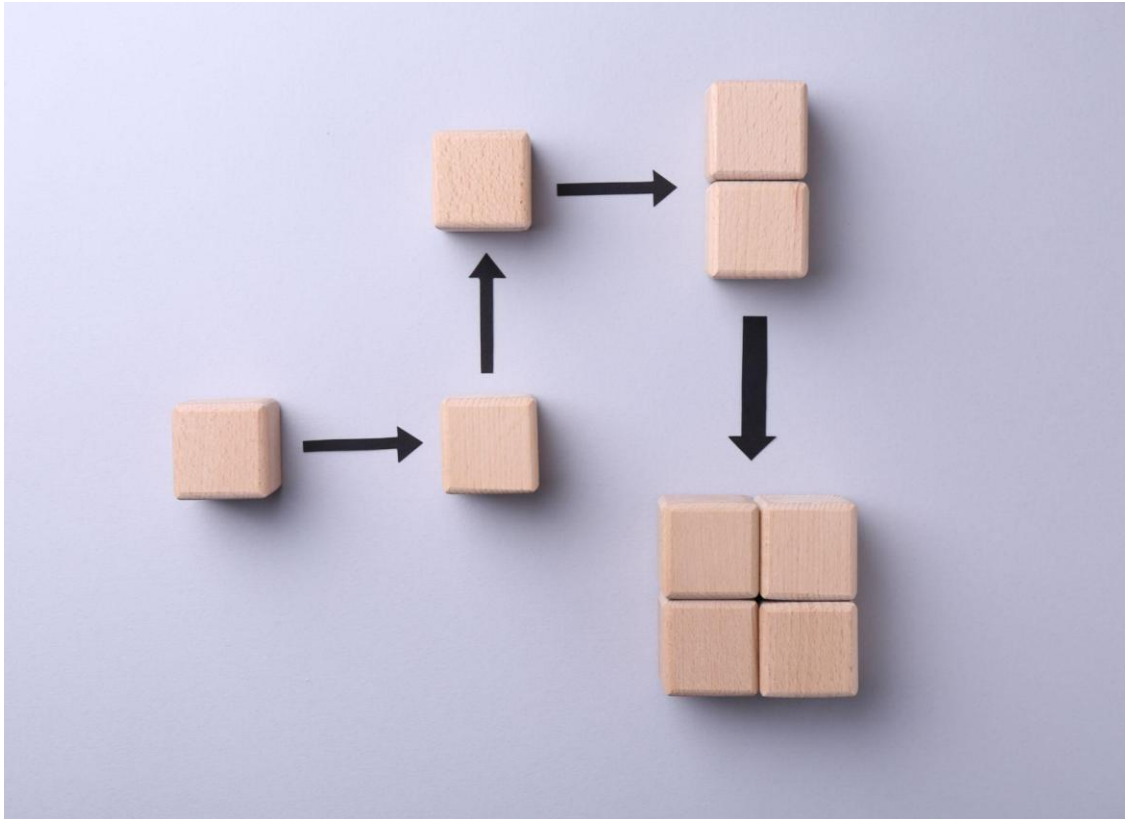
Professional learning focus

- Workforce funding for system-wide learning
- Sustained focus on inclusive practice
- Ongoing learning across the sector

System-wide learning areas

- Indigenous perspectives and cultural awareness
- Confronting anti-Black racism
- Equity, inclusion, and identity-affirming practice
- Mental health and trauma-informed approaches
- Community-partner learning

Professional Learning as System Infrastructure



- Not an add-on. Core system infrastructure.
- Builds shared understanding across the sector
- Supports clear, aligned interpretation of expectations
- Reduces reliance on individual interpretation
- Strengthens alignment across early learning environments

From Professional Learning to System Alignment

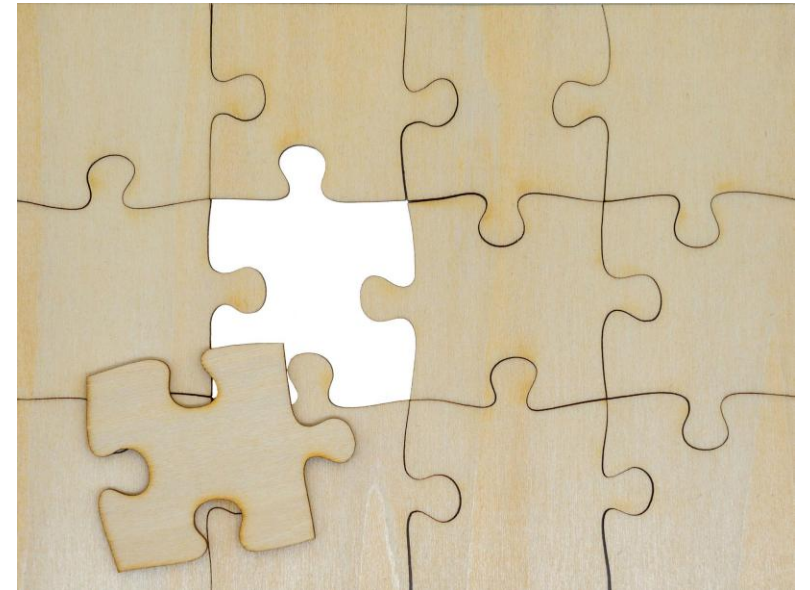
What professional learning made possible

- A shared foundation for interpreting inclusive practice
- Greater clarity in how expectations are understood across the sector

How this shows up in AQI updates

- Language reflects learning already shaping practice
- Alignment across assessment, guidance, and daily practice
- Clearer expectations for educators and leaders

Professional learning created the conditions for system-wide alignment.



Resourcing Practice: TCS Resource Kits & Hello Hair



Resourcing as a system support

- Resource kits used to make inclusive practice tangible
- Distributed through a City-approved vendor to eligible centres
- Materials and books aligned with Indigenous perspectives, equity, and inclusion

From Resources to Practice: The SIM Room

Community of practice learning

- Simulated environment exceeding AQI expectations
- Hands-on exploration of inclusive language in practice
- Reflection, dialogue, and peer connection

From resources to practice

- Resource kit materials embedded in the environment
- Engagement with materials, including Hello Hair dolls



Mentorship as a System Support



Embedding inclusion through relationships and leadership

- Began as a pilot mentorship program for Black educators
- Expanded into three distinct mentorship streams:
 - Black Educators
 - Indigenous Educators
 - Francophone Educators

From Policy to Practice: Key Takeaways

- Policy shapes practice across the system
- Professional learning is core system infrastructure
- Shared understanding drives alignment
- Updated AQI language strengthens alignment between policy, practice, and expectations
- This alignment supports more consistent experiences where children and families see themselves reflected

Inclusive systems are built when policy, professional learning, and practice are aligned.

Thank you!