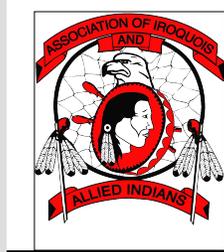
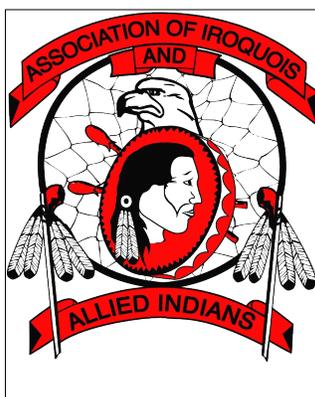


Association of Iroquois & Allied Indians

EARLY LEARNING REPORT



November 2011



Political Message

It is the intent of the participants to leave with a political message to our leaders, “that our children do matter”. Our communities have the resources and we need our political leaders to lead our communities forward with the newly AIAI Early Learning vision and principles. We must remember that “one size does not fit all” but as diverse AIAI member Nations, we can come together and collectively envision an AIAI Early Learning vision. Our leaders must continue to lobby and educate the federal and provincial governments regarding the issues of Early Learning and the underfunding for Day Cares and Education. Furthermore, we must continue to work side by side with all First Nations in Ontario to establish an Early Learning network so that our youngest children will benefit from our vision.

Preamble

Overview of AIAI

AIAI currently represents eight (8) First Nations in Ontario with a membership of approximately 20,000 people. Our member Nations are geographically diverse, living in northern, eastern and southern Ontario. Our tribal affiliations are equally diverse consisting of Mohawk, Potawatomi, Oneida, Ojibway and Delaware. Despite the diversity, AIAI is a non-profit organization which advocates for the political interests, such as education, for the eight (8) member Nations.

This Early Learning report is a response on behalf of the eight (8) First Nations that the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians represent. The member Nations include:

- Batchewana First Nation
- Caldwell First Nation
- Delaware Nation Moravian of the Thames
- Hiawatha First Nation
- Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation
- Oneida Nation of the Thames First Nation
- Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte (Tyendinaga)
- Wahta Mohawks First Nation

AIAI Early Learning Summit

An AIAI Early Learning summit was initiated on behalf of member Nations to address the Ministry of Education Early Learning initiative regarding the transfer of jurisdiction of Day Cares from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) to the Ontario Ministry of Education (MOE) and implementing full time kindergarten in provincial schools.

As a result, lobbying was initiated by AIAI to the Ontario Ministry of Education (MOE) to have the opportunity for the eight (8) member Nations to collectively come together to discuss an overarching AIAI Early Learning vision. An Early Learning planning committee consisting of AIAI health, social and education staff was established to plan the summit.

Financial support was provided by the Ontario Ministry of Education (MOE) and AIAI to host an AIAI Early Learning summit which was held on November 21, 2011 hosted by Batchewana First Nation of Ojibways.

Participants attending the AIAI Early Learning summit consisted of day care and headstart supervisors, school principals, education directors, health representatives, First Nations' Chiefs and portfolio councillors from seven (7) member First Nations. A follow up session was provided to the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte First Nation on December 16, 2011 consisting of the same participants as listed above.

The format of the summit consisted of whole group discussions, breakout groups and member Nations groups.

An overview was provided by Patti Barber, Mississaugas of New Credit Day Care supervisor on the impacts of the Ministry of Education (MOE) Early Learning initiative in First Nations' Day Cares. A follow up presentation was made by Gina McGahey, AIAI Education Coordinator regarding the issues and gaps in the possible implementation of full time kindergarten in First Nations communities.

Discussion questions consisted of:

- What do you think First Nations children should know by the age of 6?
- What themes can you identify as a result of what First Nations children should know?
- What does a collective AIAI vision look like?
- What are the most important principles to support the vision?
- What strategies could be utilized to support the collective AIAI Early Learning vision?
- What barriers and partnership linkages could be identified to support the AIAI Early Learning vision?
- How can each member Nation implement the collective AIAI Early Learning vision in their community?

As a result of the AIAI Early Learning summit, this report reflects AIAI member Nations collective response of their respective First Nation communities, to the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Chiefs of Ontario regarding the future direction of a collective AIAI Early Learning vision, principles, strategies, partnership linkages and individual member Nations plans in supporting the collective AIAI Early Learning vision in their respective communities.

For additional information or comments, contact

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Early Learning Initiative Presentation

Patti Barber, RECE – Supervisor of Ekwaamjigenang Children’s Centre provided the background on the Ontario Ministry of Education Early Learning Initiative which includes:

- Offering of full-day kindergarten programs for four and five year olds.
- Early Childhood educators to be registered and work side-by-side with certified teachers.
- Optional before and after school programming.

Questions & Comments

- Child care initiatives have been moved from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to the Ontario Ministry of Education (MEDU).
- Communication has been deemed a priority with the Ontario Ministry of Education. It is important that information flows directly to the Child Care Centres, and not solely to the Chiefs and Administrators.
- Participants were encouraged to review reports by Dr. Charles Pascal.

Early Learning Issues & Gaps Presentation

Gina McGahey, AIAI Education Coordinator, provided a powerpoint overview on the current issues and gaps regarding the Ontario Ministry of Education Early Learning Initiative which included:

- **Funding** to implement full time kindergarten equivalent to the Provincial model, infrastructure to accommodate additional classroom space, start up costs, limited salary supports, multi-year agreement barriers, various funding sources maze.

- **Education Issues** regarding culture and language in provincial kindergarten programs, professional development for teachers and ECE, supervision of teachers in day cares, and underfunding.
- **Day Care Issues** regarding space and infrastructure changes, reduction in nap time, lack of nutritious meals provided in schools, no before and after school programming for working parents, job loss and program integration-training.
- **Program Supports** such as, specialized support services for children; parent engagement activities, collaboration, and merging of existing community programs to support the Early Learning program.

A review was conducted of the existing funding supports available in First Nations communities, an update on the Chiefs of Ontario early learning activities; reasons for the development of an AIAI Early Learning model and setting the stage by providing an interactive discovery activity for the participants.

Questions & Comments

- Before and after school programming is different in every community. The cost for before and after school programming could be up to \$30.00 per day.
- Three (3) Hub Centres are being investigated by the provincial government, which could include the amalgamation of the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children (HBHC), Maternal Child Health (MHC), Day Care, Head Start etc. under one roof connected to a school. Innovation funding is being considered and Aboriginal funding would be tied to this.
- Best Start funding in the amount of \$3K per ECE is available for provincial ECE's only – First Nations are not included.

- Although the provincial government develops the system, it doesn't mean First Nations have to follow it. We are here to plan programming for children ages 0-6. Do we want to house the program in the day cares or education facilities or somewhere all together different?
- We should be endorsing, enhancing, and promoting our own program, a holistic model. Once we develop the model we need to seek support from the 133 First Nations and educate them on the possibilities we can achieve if we want to move forward with Early learning. It's a good idea to have political leadership and technicians here today.
- Concern expressed about Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) commitment in developing a five (5) year plan however there isn't anything rolling out. We want the autonomy as the program will look different in every community. We hope that the Chiefs will take it forward on our behalf. Early Learning needs to be free and it needs to be affordable.
- Comment that the province has a goal for our children. The big disconnect in the community is the spiritual and emotional well being of our children. Children 0-6, that is the time when they form most of their learning. Those are the times for spiritual and social learning to be entrenched in them. If we go by the provincial and federal model we are missing out. What made us strong was the connection to the parents and grandparents. It's important to develop a system we can design for our own people.

Breakout Discussion:

What Children Should Know by the Age of Six (6)?

- **Academics** - literacy - alphabet, words & sounds, concept to print, numeracy - math concepts, numbers
- **Cultural & Language** – identity, clan system, ceremonies, native language, social songs, Seven Grandfather teachings, Great Law, exploring the natural environment
- **Social Skills** – self regulation skills, interacting and playing with others, cooperation, sense of independence, ability to adapt or transition, advocating, coping skills, respect, manners, difference between right and wrong and consequences, following rules and routines at home, school and community
- **Physical** – opportunity to experience and explore, feel safe, cyberspace safety, bus safety, stranger danger, bully awareness, body awareness, healthy nutrition, gross motor development, developmental speech and language readiness

Whole Group Discussion:**What common themes can you identify as a result of what First Nation children should know?**

- Pre Natal Care
- Cultural & Language
- Connectedness
- Citizenship
- Nutrition
- Resilience
- Safe & Loved
- Sense of belonging and wanted
- On the Land – Physical
- First Nation Learning Framework
- Academics
- Parents & Grandparents
- Social Structure
- Belief System
- Self regulation
- Engaging
- Inclusiveness – physical, special education and gifted
- Supportive environment in the community

Whole Group Discussion:

What does a collective AIAI Vision look like?

- Build on a foundation of a Holistic approach to include mind, body and spirit
- Community investment
- From conception to eight (8) years old
- Pre Natal care
- Cultural & Language
- Connectedness
- Citizenship
- Nutrition
- Resilience
- Safe & Loved
- Belonging – wanted
- On the Land - Physical

Whole Group Discussion:

What are the most important principles to support the vision?

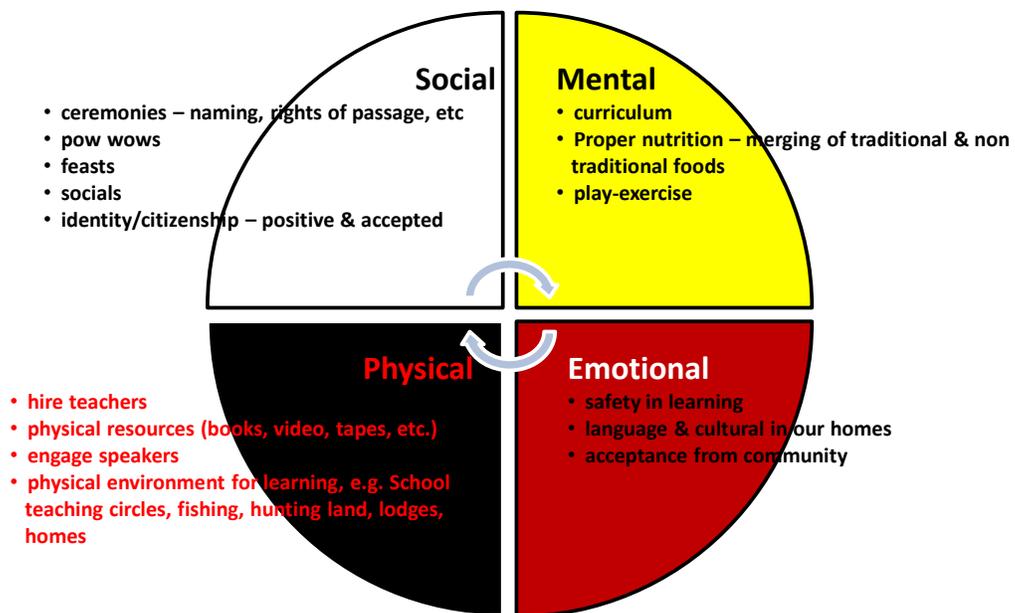
The participants were provided with stickers to prioritize the most important themes to be the principles of the AIAI Early Learning vision.

- Cultural & Language
- Parent Engagement
- Inclusiveness
- Supportive Environment
- On the Land – Physical & Nutrition

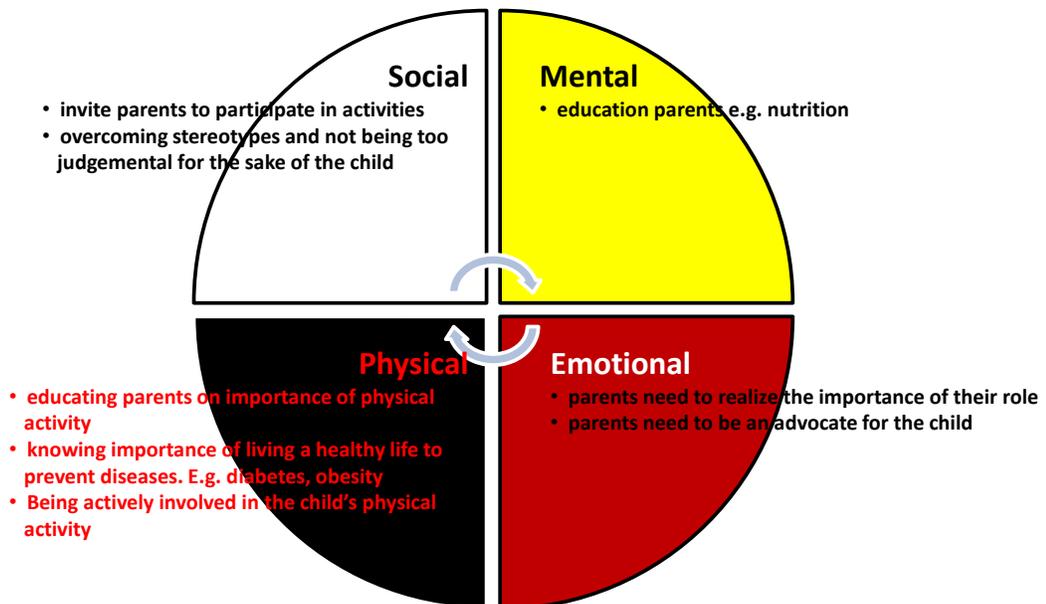
Breakout Discussion:**What strategies could be utilized to support the collective AIAI Early Learning vision?**

The participants utilized the medicine wheel concept to develop the strategies to support the main principles of the AIAI Early Learning vision and principles. Listed below are the results of their discussions.

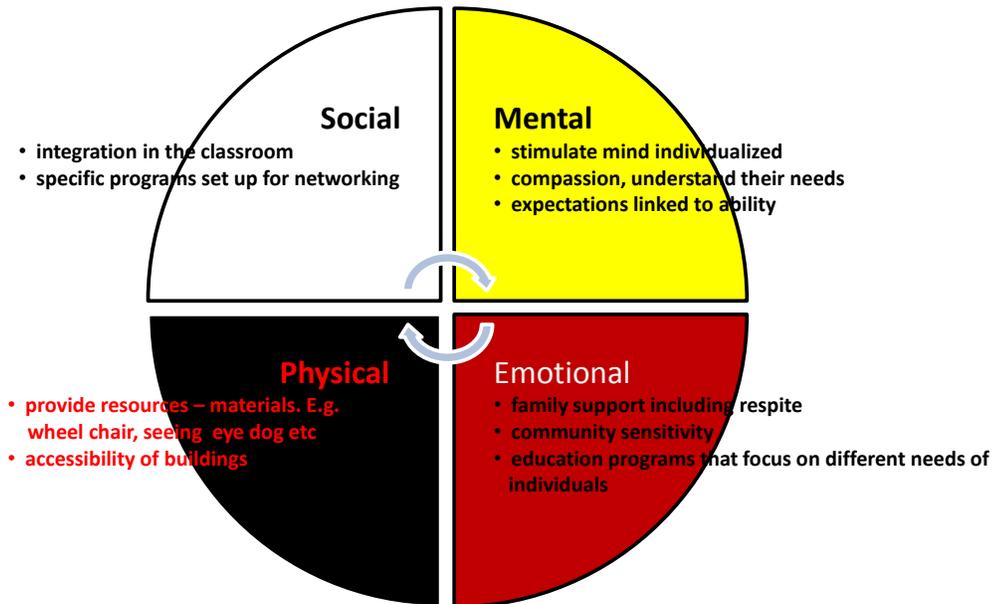
AIAI EARLY LEARNING STRATEGY Culture & Language



AIAI EARLY LEARNING STRATEGY Parent Engagement



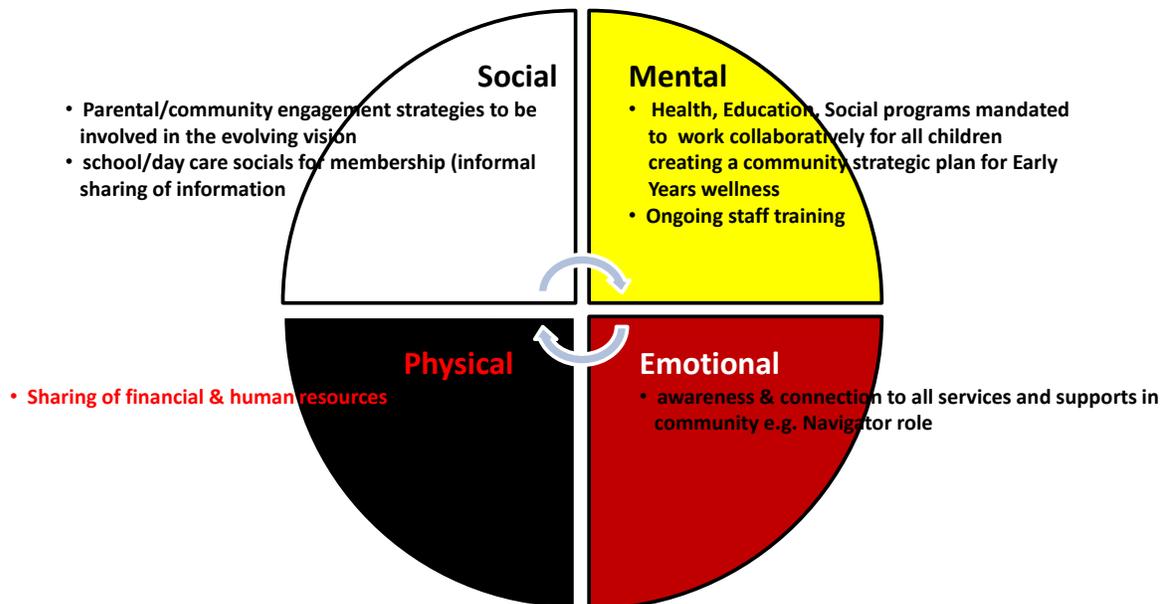
AIAI EARLY LEARNING STRATEGY Inclusiveness



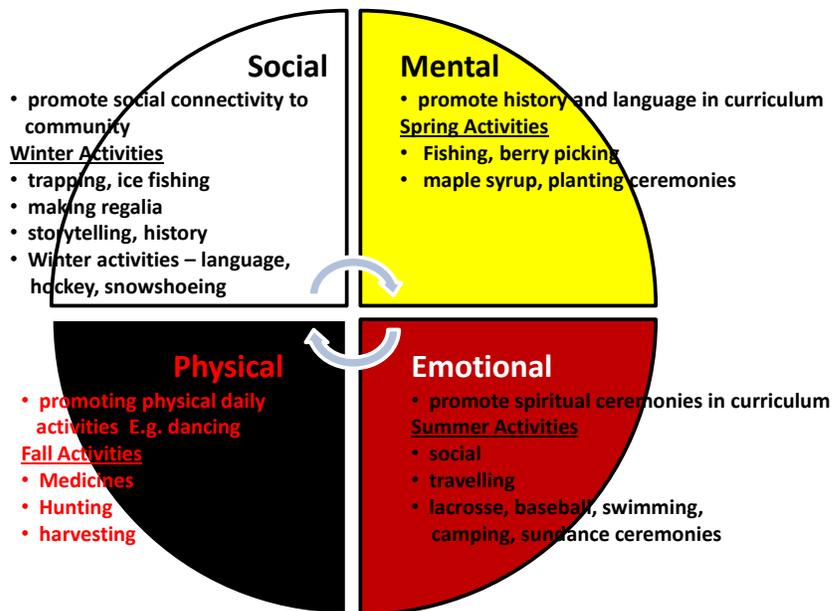
Notes

- funding for all
- Flexible
- One on one support
- All services involved pool resources
- Individualized programming (IEP which touches all areas)
- Chief & Council to develop a “Children’s Bill of Rights”

AIAI EARLY LEARNING STRATEGY Supportive Environment



AIAI EARLY LEARNING STRATEGY On the Land – Physical/Nutrition



Breakout Discussion:**What barriers and partnership linkages could be identified to support the AIAI Early Learning vision?**

Listed below are the outcomes of the participants' discussion.

Cultural & Language

Breaking Down the Barriers	Potential Partnership Linkages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Networking, understanding funding and be creative in “working together” to accomplish outcome, pool funding resources · Increasing cultural knowledge · Make it a community priority · Buy in thinking for seven (7) generation ahead · Training opportunities · Establish a common goal · Left hand knows what the right hand is doing by working together and to be aware of what others are doing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Sharing of funding from health, day care, education and social to support community initiatives. E.g. community garden, food box program, breakfast program, parent engagement activities,

Parent Engagement

Breaking Down the Barriers	Potential Partnership Linkages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Accessibility to programs geared for children ages 0-8 years old. · Nutrition programs. · Offer programs to both working and non-working families. · Parent Engagement is dependent upon a common goal amongst these funded resources · 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · All programs have to work together as a collective group to ensure that there is no duplication of services · “Free” the purse strings to have access to funds available.

Inclusiveness

Breaking Down the Barriers	Potential Partnership Linkages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · A policy that supports inclusion with the First Nations Council/departments. · Involvement of community, parents and extended families. · Sharing personnel, staff and resources. · Involve volunteer organizations. · Seek fundraising activities at the community level and with larger corporations. · Provide building capacity, sharing expertise within First Nations. · Provide a children advocate. · Utilize the “Jordan’s Principle” philosophy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Support from Councils/departments. · Build relationships with service organizations within and outside the First Nation community. · Support from large corporation/foundations. E.g. RBC, Goodlife, Nike, RUSH Trucking · Support from volunteer organizations. · Partner with other First Nations. · Allow for accessibility to buildings and funding. · Harmonize services to produce a healthy community.

Supportive Environment

Breaking Down the Barriers	Potential Partnership Linkages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Chiefs and Councils to mandate change from working in silos. · Provincial Territorial Organizations (PTO) to advocate with the Chiefs of Ontario (COO) to move the Early Years plan forward. · Capacity building, ongoing and consistent support for all department staff on child development. · Yearly strategic plans. · Interdepartmental supports. · Early Years Coordinator position. (Navigator) · Parent and children and community involvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Chiefs & Council supports · Internal department supports · Provincial and federal funding sources · Area school board supports. E.g. Native Advisory Councils · 2nd level service supports. E.g. Indigenous Education Coalition · PTOs and tribal councils. · Elders · Post Secondary supports · Education committees

On the Land – Physical/Nutrition

Breaking Down the Barriers	Potential Partnership Linkages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Pooling resources from programs · Develop and implement a needs assessment. · Develop a list of community experts e.g. hunting/trapping, elders and fundraising. · Involve the whole community, parents, grandparents and extended families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Outside help – partnership with province and federal government · Utilizing and sharing of community resources. E.g. community garden · Utilizing internal community resources. E.g. coming back together as a community, round dance · Develop leadership skills

First Nations Discussions Groups:

Briefly explain what your current Early Learning program is in your community and discuss what strategies your community will initiate to support the collective AIAI Early Learning Vision.

Oneida Nation of the Thames

Current Early Learning Program	Community Direction
<p>Day Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 months- 4yrs, - funded 80% provincial, 20% federal funded, FNC11 child care funding initiative. <p>Head Start</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2.5 years to 4 years - Funded by Health Canada <p>School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Junior Kindergarten to Grade Six - Implemented Full day Kindergarten since 2002 <p>* Parent choice to attend any of the above programs.</p> <p>* Children age 6 must enroll in school program.</p>	<p>Model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Currently happy with current programs but always room for improvement. <p>Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To address mental health, educating parents/guardians about child’s needs and support <p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · parent/child interactions, model positive parenting · parent participation in Head Start program, school and day care. · Better promotion of evening programs · Use of Oneida Radio. · Get “at risk” families more involved, use Family Co-ordinator, Social Education Worker.

Moravian of the Thames Delaware Nation/Caldwell First Nation

Current Early Learning Program	Community Direction
<p>Delaware</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Day Care – 18 months and before & after school program. - Head Start – uses the highslope curriculum. - JK/SK School – K4/K5- 3 days all day program, 14 students, with staff and language program. - Day Care & Head Start share two staff. <p>Caldwell</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tutoring done by high school students - Back to school supplies program - Traditional circle weekly - language 	<p>Model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current system in place <p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Address language, transition, parent involvement <p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Increase in culture, language from all Day Care, high school, JK/SK · Find funding for staff in promoting our history · Increase in transition activities students/staff and Early Learning program · Implement ongoing training for all staff. · Increase parent involvement in JK/SK and education

Hiawatha First Nation

Current Early Learning Program	Community Direction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Child care program - Brighter Futures, Healthy Babies etc - Students attend the provincial school system - No language in JK or SK, not until Grade 1 for 20 minutes and all students are grouped into one class. 	<p>Model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Current system in place <p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Address language, parent and community supports <p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · To increase language time in provincial school. · More focus on parenting, life skills and family/community investment 26 hours a day

Batchewana First Nation of Ojibways

Current Early Learning Program	Community Direction
<p>Rankin Day Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children ages 18 months to 5 ½ years, ALFDC, School's Cool program and 123 to Literacy <p>Batchewana Education Department</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - JK, SK, provincial school system, family math, tutoring, special education, family supports <p>Health Department</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Healthy Babies/Healthy children, CPNP, Prenatal programming, FASD, Aboriginal Head Start, ECD, parenting programs, nutrition, immunizations, traditional health. <p>Niigaaniin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Child Benefits, Food Bank <p>Nog Da Win Da Min</p> <p>Nimkii Naabkawagan Family Crisis Shelter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial donations <p>Summer Day Camp</p> <p>Recreation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rebates, community social programming, LNHL <p>Youth Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programming ages 6-8 years 	<p>Model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Development of an Early Learning Resource Centre <p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · To address communication and networking to develop an Early Learning Resource Centre. <p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · To continue dialog with all children's services · To develop an Early Learning Resource Centre involving children from ages 0-8 including Pre Natal and Teen Education. · To implement an on-reserve full day JK/SK language/cultural based program · To develop an Early Learning Coordinator position to be a navigator. · Look for funding for new building · To secure 2nd level services. E.g. resource teachers, special education teachers, speech & language teachers, behavioural teachers, traditional teachers, educational assistants · To look at Early Identification for students · To provide capacity building for personnel/community · Repatriation of BFN children · To provide a parent support committee · To develop a cultural curriculum · To promote nutrition and exercise · To have "free" for all families

Wahta Mohawks

Current Model	Community Direction
<p>Kinderkids: 1995-99</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full day program, hired a JK teacher along with community staff - JK Teacher provided academics and familiar with transition from community to school - Staff provided language, traditional teachings/values - Funded by health and social <p>Day Care: Early 2000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Primarily non native paying customers - Less emphasis on culture, more on routine and structure <p>Currently</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More of a focus on health issues. E.g. healthy babies - Not a full time program, few programs provided. - All students attend provincial schools with full time Kindergarten program being provided in September 2012 which most parents will opt into. - Some parents are taking children to local off reserve day care for transition and no cultural content provided 	<p>Model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Current system in place <p>Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · To address language and culture programming in the community. <p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · To offer language nests where parent and child come together using speakers for ½ day · To have young mothers to learn from elders. i.e. traditional cooking, crafts · To incorporate a session for young moms for academic learning – one credit at a time in an area where their children come together. · To offer family camps by bringing all of the community together for language and traditional practices · To build connections within the community in building support systems to ensure children needs are met e.g. belonging, learn about our land and relation to land and animals, cultural and language needs get met or at least exposure to culture and language

Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation

Current Model	Community Direction
<p>Day Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding for infants to 5 years old and works with Lansdowne Children’s Centre provincial program <p>Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides parental & community engagement activities - 2nd year with largest SK children coming of 26-28 children and will have one high need special education student. <p>Social/Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 0-6 years old Healthy Babies/Healthy Children - 0-6 years old Early Childhood Development Worker from Head Start. - 5-12 years old After School program - 0-6 years old Resource Coordinator position, FASD, CPNP, Pre natal, NCB. - Youth Group - Immunization program - 5-12 years old Summer Program 	<p>Model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · To build a new Early Learning Centre <p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · To provide Early Learning program and to increase capacity building for the community. <p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · To increase capacity to accommodate the whole community · To build a new Early Learning Centre attached to the school to include 0-6 years of age programs and before and after school program.

Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte

Current Model	Community Direction
<p>Head Start Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct home visits for 0-6 years of age and make referrals to other programs. - Provide information on early child development, Health, and maternal child health. - provides baby wellness visits up to 18 months, play groups with parents and a “Daddy & Me” program. - Provides a 9-11 year program. - Provides nutrition program to the elementary school, day care and head start. - Co-host social events and trips. <p>Elementary School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A federal operated elementary school which offers a part-time Jr. Kindergarten program and a full time Sr. Kindergarten program. <p>Day Care Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides day care services up to 18 months for working parents and parents attending school. - Offer a pre-school and a before/after school program 	<p>Model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Currently system in place <p>Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · To improve communication between the current programs. · To build trust and engage parents in their child’s early learning. · To promote language and culture in the early learning programs. · To address the special needs of the family. · To promote physical and mental well being. <p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Develop a “Circle of Services” initiative to consult with each program on changes and to provide updates. · Develop a co-operative open door policy for all programs. · Empower the role of the parent, promote early learning benefits, time management and emotional parenting skills. E.g. Men wellness program. · Support language nests, women circles and implement a culture and language program for the day care. · To provide speech and language assessments in day care and head start. · To provide workshops in FASD, addictions, mental health issues · Offer cultural ceremonies on nutrition. E.g. community garden, medicine walks.



ASSOCIATION OF IROQUOIS & ALLIED INDIANS

EARLY LEARNING REPORT



SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS

NOVEMBER 2011

AIAI Early Learning Vision

The Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians is committed to a Nation-based, Nation-developed and Nation-delivered Early Learning program that will enhance the mind, body and spirit of our youth from conception to eight (8) years of age.

Our children will learn and grow in an environment that is loving, caring, and recognizes the connectedness of our people to each other and to the land.

We will engage our parents and the community to work together to foster holistically thinking and resilient children.

Achievement of the Early Learning Vision will require emphasis in the following areas:

- **Community investment**
- **Creation of a holistic foundation approach**
- **Connection to people**
- **Connection to land**
- **Citizenship**
- **Resilience**
- **Being loved and safe**
- **Belonging**

Principles

- **Language & Culture:** Indigenous knowledge and language formulates the spiritual and social learning of the holistic child. It is important to infuse, revitalize, promote and strengthen First Nations' history, culture and language into their world.
- **Connection and Roles:** In order to ensure our Nations are strong, we need to ensure the connection with parents, grandparents and elders. These roles and connections are vital in First Nations in order to entrench all learning.
- **Delivery to Reflect Diversity:** Member Nation's Early Learning programs shall be recognized for their diverse delivery system to address their community's needs and to exercise local jurisdiction. E.g. Early Learning Centre, Provincial Kindergarten, school/day care housed.
- **Sharing of Resources:** To break down the barriers in existing community's programs, member Nations will move forward in developing a community holistic approach through the sharing of resources, funding and programs.
- **Academic Learning:** Every child will be provided with the academic skills necessary to live in harmony with Mother Earth and to lead a good life.

Strategies

Culture & Language

- **Cultural & Language Infusion:** To infuse indigenous knowledge, language and cultural activities within the Early Learning curriculum along with developing a community based curriculum.
- **Revitalizing First Nations Languages:** To develop activities to support the revitalization and implementation of First Nations languages e.g. language nests and/or family camps

Parent Engagement

- **Engaging Parents in Early Learning:** To promote and engage parent involvement in Early Learning in the areas of promoting physical activity, networking, nutrition, learning stimulation, ability expectations, advocating skills and parental skills.

Supportive Environment

- **Community Sense of Belonging:** To ensure community support systems inclusiveness to ensure a sense of belonging to the community for the child. e.g. Elder teaching circles
- **Learning Environment:** To provide an accessible physical Early Learning environment for children, parents and elders.
- **Navigation of Support Services:** To provide coordination, infusion and support services in the communities to assist in navigating Early Learning services. e.g. Early Learning Coordinator

Inclusiveness

- **Addressing Special Needs:** To ensure every child's educational, social, mental and physical needs are met through an early identification process and 2nd level resources are provided.
- **Child's Bill of Rights:** To develop a child's Bill of Rights in each community to ensure inclusiveness in the community and to address their needs.

On the Land

- **Relationship with Mother Earth:** To ensure learning includes the use of the natural environment to promote a physical and healthy relationship with Mother Earth.
- **Family Support:** To provide forums to family to promote social, mental, physical and emotional healthy lifestyle. E.g. respite, community sensitivity, healthy living programs, addictions, mental health.

Next Steps

To secure funding for an **AIAI Early Learning Coordinator**, (Navigator)

- **Assessment & Action Plan:** To conduct an AIAI Early Learning needs assessment to determine where merging of existing programs can occur, additional supports, gaps and to develop an action plan to reflect the collective AIAI Early Learning vision.
- **Framework to encompass Sharing:** To develop a community Early Learning holistic framework and policies to ensure the sharing of financial, resources, and programs available within education, health and day care programs.

- **Consultation & Framework:** To develop an AIAI Early Learning Framework paper to encompass the implementation on the collective strategies.
- **Partnerships and Funding Support:** To establish partnerships with provincial, federal and other organizations to assist in the AIAI Early Learning Framework
- **Lobbying to Address Funding:** To advocate and lobby the provincial and federal governments to address the underfunding issues with day cares and First Nations schools. E.g. formula, infrastructure, program supports.

Political Message

It is the intent of the participants to leave with a political message to our leaders, “that our children do matter”. Our communities have the resources and we need our political leaders to lead our communities forward with the newly AIAI Early Learning vision and principles. We must remember that “one size does not fit all” but as diverse AIAI member Nations, we can come together and collectively envision an AIAI Early Learning vision. Our leaders must continue to lobby and educate the federal and provincial governments regarding the issues of Early Learning and the underfunding for Day Cares and Education. Furthermore, we must continue to work side by side with all First Nations in Ontario to establish an Early Learning network so that our youngest children will benefit from our vision.

Participants

November 21, 2011 Session

First Nation	Name	Title
Batchewana	Harvey Bell	Elder/Councillor
	Chief Dean Sayers	Chief
	Dion Syrette	Youth
	Druanne Boyer	Day Care Supervisor
	Laura Robinson	Health Director
	Kim Lambert	CEO
	Trevor Sayers	HBHC
	Angela Neveau	Community Member
	Amy Fornier	Day Care Worker
	Dorothy Gingras	Councillor
	Dayna Fluery	Day Care Worker
	Elaine McDonough	Education Director
Caldwell	Chief Louise Hillier	Chief
Delaware	Chief Greg Peters	Chief
	Jody Joseph	Councillor
Hiawatha	Tina Howard	Assistant Health Manager
	Duane Cowie	Education Portfolio
	Chief Sandra Moore	Chief
New Credit	Donna Seary	Education Director
	Patti Barber	Day Care Supervisor
Oneida	Olive Elm	Education Portfolio
	Debra Hill	Health Portfolio
	Faye Ireland	Head Start Supervisor
	Gwen Lavalley	Principal SSS

Participants

First Nation	Name	Title
Whata	Carol Holmes	Education Director
AIAI Staff	Gina McGahey	Education Coordinator
	Stan Cloud	Social Services
	Brandy Cornelius	Health Assistant
	Denise Stonefish	AIAI Grand Chief
	Rochelle Cornelius	Executive Assistant
	Cathryn Mandoka	Health Director

December 16, 2011 Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte Session

Tyendinaga	Julia Brant	Maternal Child Health
	Johanna Goodfellow	Healthy Babies, Healthy Children
	Corinna Francis	Eskao'kon:a Child Care
	Lisa Maracle	Senior Manager, Operations
	Tracey Gazley	Tahatikonhsotontie Head Start
	Angela Maracle	Administrator
	Cathy Brant	Primary Teacher
	Julieann Brant	