



Early Years  
Engage

Continuous quality improvement  
in Waterloo Region

# Early Years Engage Evaluation

Presenter:

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Region of Waterloo, May 31, 2018

# Why focus on Quality?

Early Years Engage is a change initiative, shifting the ELCC sector from the Raising The Bar model of quality towards a culture of continuous quality improvement.

*“The positive relation between child care quality and virtually every facet of children’s development that has been studied is one of the most consistent findings in developmental science.”* – The National Academy of Sciences

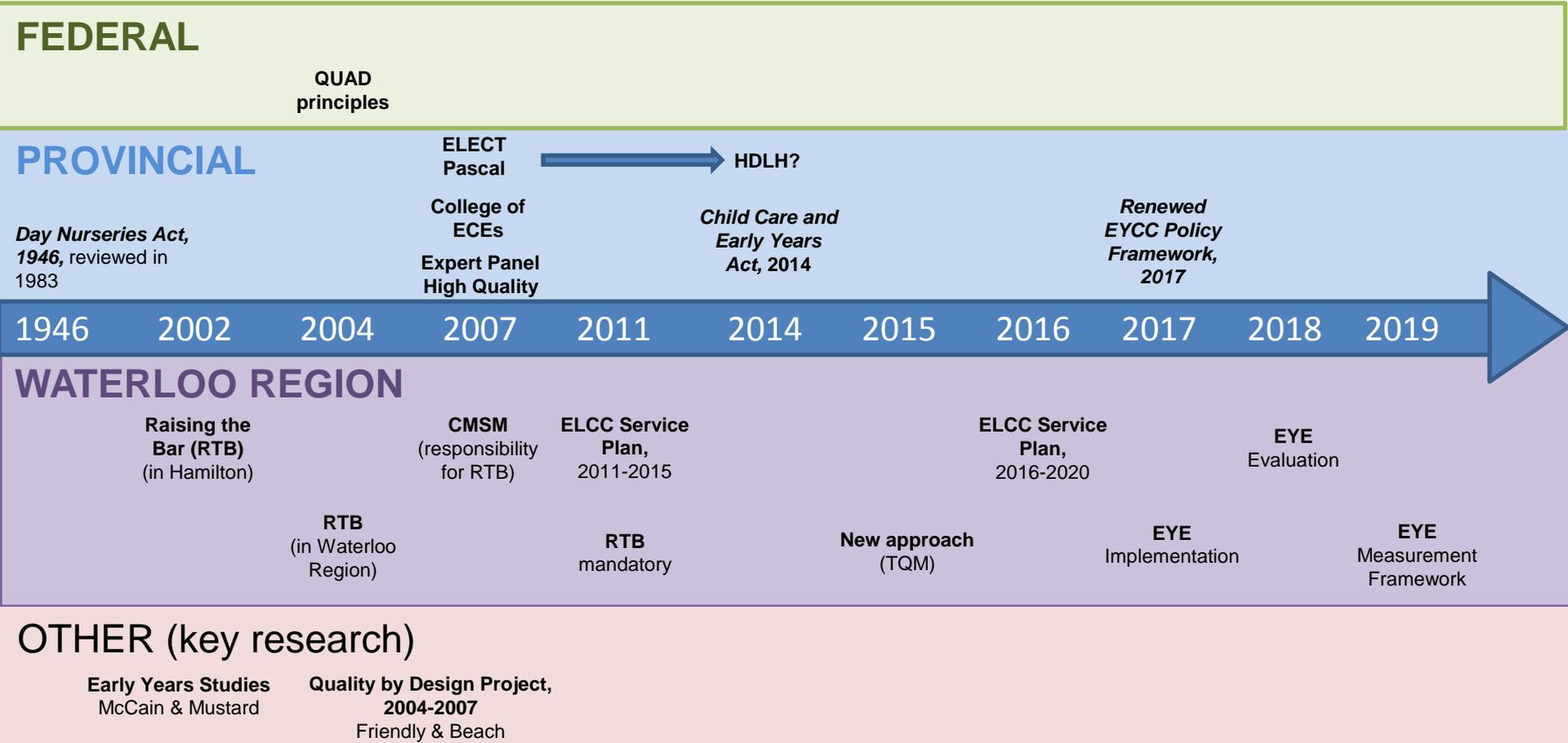
Quality is a journey and not an end state



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# The Quality Journey



# Three Phases of Early Years Engage

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## Phase 1 (2017): Implementing EYE

## Phase 2 (2018): Evaluation

## Phase 3 (2019): Measurement Framework



- Ask about service provider and CMSM experiences in implementing EYE
- Determine mandate and scope of Early Years Engage
- Clarify roles and expectations of service provider and CMSM
- What does the 2017 data tell us?
- What should we focus on next?

### *Aligning with the Province:*

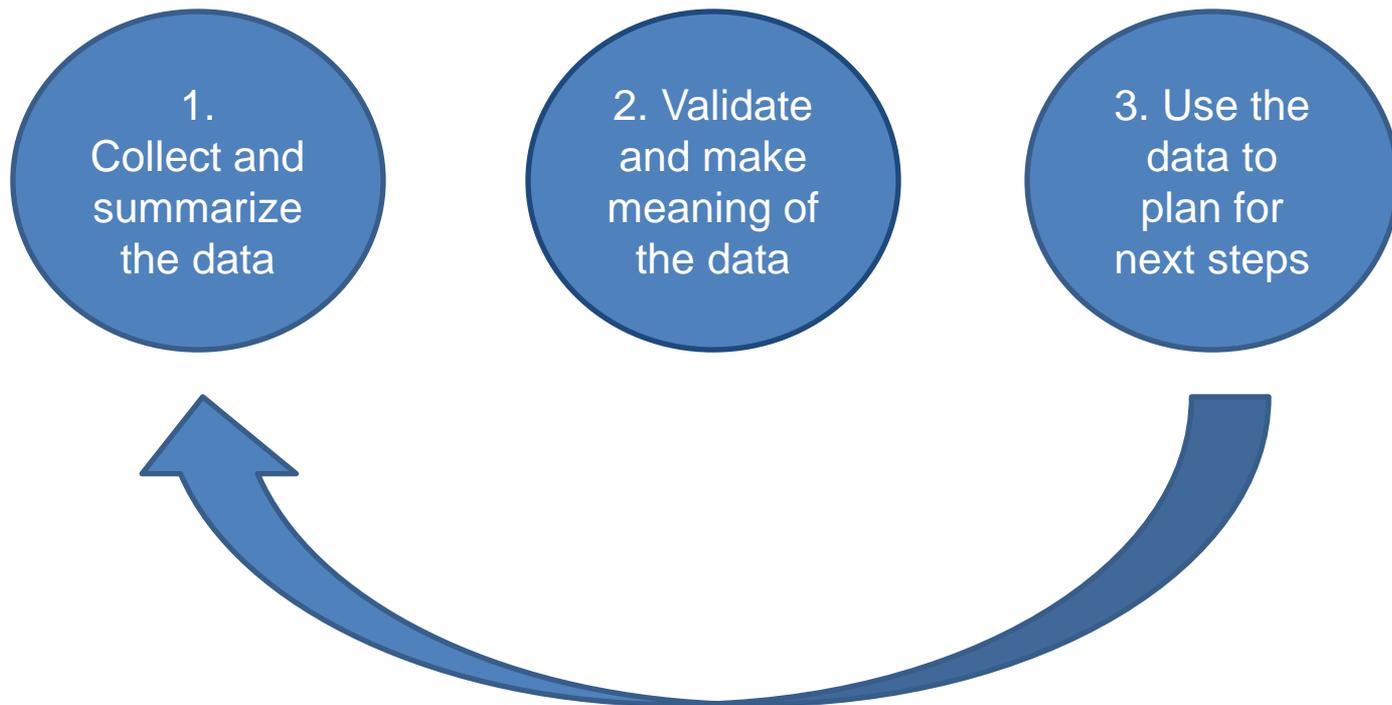
- Define program and system level quality
- Determine metrics to assess and monitor quality improvements at the program and system level
- What difference does Early Years Engage make in improving program and system level quality?

# The process

To evaluate EYE and to develop a framework to measure quality improvement is a collaborative effort.

## Sources of data from 2015 to 2017:

- ELCC forums (x6)
- Surveys
- Expert/key informant sessions (x10)
- Community sessions (x5)
- Key documents/ Literature reviews
- 2017 site visits



# 2017 Accomplishments and Challenges

## **Methodology:**

- Exploratory form, "Accomplishments and Challenges Form"
- Separated by staff and management
- Submitted by all programs
  - mostly individual responses, but some were group/team responses

## **Data analysis**

- Over 2,000 comments in total
- Coding by organization, program, and themes
- Themes were based on minimum 5 comments and 5 different programs
- 100% overlap between staff and management results, differences in # times mentioned and perspective.

# Summary of Accomplishments

Accomplishments	Examples
Made space more welcoming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Warm/welcoming interactions with families</li><li>• Providing healthy meals/snacks</li><li>• Designing space to be more like 'home'</li></ul>
Incorporated curriculum components based on child's interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program based on HDLH?/High Scope</li><li>• Supporting independence, interests, and learning styles of all children</li><li>• Using tools to support children's expression of feelings and problem solving</li></ul>
Used different methods to foster children's expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observing and building on children's interests</li><li>• Providing opportunities for creative expression</li><li>• Promoting and encouraging self-help skills, independence and problem-solving</li></ul>

# Summary of Accomplishments continued

Accomplishments	Examples
Used different methods to communicate with parents/caregivers and peers about children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Documenting and sharing with parents and families to make learning visible</li><li>• Dialogue with families/asking for input</li><li>• Using electronic tools</li></ul>
Added new/different types of open ended materials and loose parts to indoor and/or outdoor space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Addition of materials/loose parts to expand learning, adapting to interests of children</li></ul>
Engaged with families through events/socials/other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Organized evening events, open houses, social/fundraising committees</li></ul>
Naturalized outdoor play space or creatively used available natural outdoor space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Addition of natural elements</li><li>• Going on forest walks</li><li>• Using outdoor classroom, community garden</li></ul>

# Summary of Accomplishments continued

<b>Accomplishments</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Provided individualized supports for children with special needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adapting programs, inclusive programs</li><li>• Providing extra support</li><li>• Referrals to SNAP, collaboration with KW Hab, KidsAbility</li></ul>
Used different methods to foster children's communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Using sign language</li><li>• Encouraging the use of words</li><li>• Having rich, authentic conversations with children</li></ul>
Created and/or offered diverse and inclusive programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learning new phrases in other languages</li><li>• Creating inclusive environments, respectful programs, embedding culture of families</li></ul>

# Summary of Challenges

Challenges	Examples
Need for continuous professional learning (e.g., training) and time to complete it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supporting children with complex issues (e.g. behavioural and mental health)</li><li>• Basic computer skills, cultural diversity, HDLH?, curriculum</li></ul>
Lack of dedicated paid time - to plan, prep, and document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Having time to just sit and engage with the children</li><li>• Keeping up with workload</li></ul>
Lack of funding - for materials and equipment (including technology equipment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of French resources</li><li>• Inadequate technology</li><li>• Limited materials – buying own supplies</li></ul>
Problems with retaining and sustaining qualified staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Frequent staff changes</li><li>• Not being paid enough, shifts</li><li>• Recognition of RECE</li><li>• Supply staff – not enough, not trained</li></ul>

# Summary of Challenges continued

Challenges	Examples
Lack of space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Not enough storage space</li><li>• Small rooms/shared space</li><li>• Not enough safe, accessible indoor space</li><li>• Not enough safe, shady outdoor space</li></ul>
Lack of dedicated paid time - to communicate with parents/caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Challenging keeping everyone on the board, coop, and parents updated.</li><li>• Limited time to talk to parents</li></ul>
Lack of dedicated supervision time - to train, mentor, develop, and performance manage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supervisor is busy, no time to do evaluations or to train new staff</li><li>• Coverage/scheduling</li><li>• Disciplining staff, dealing with difficult situations with parents, staff, and school</li></ul>

# Summary of Challenges continued

Challenges	Examples
Lack of clarity around accountability and meeting Ministry's expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Challenges with wider age range and reduced ratios</li><li>• Expectations of ECE's, Roles, College of ECE</li></ul>
Lack of funding - for enhanced staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rising number of children with special needs, not enough support/funding for enhanced staffing</li></ul>
Problems with keeping pace with Ministry changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Not enough information or time to implement ministry changes properly</li><li>• Keeping up with, grasping and understanding all the new changes</li></ul>
Inconsistencies between how non-profit and for-profit centres are viewed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Not being able to access funding</li><li>• Limited to current funding structure</li><li>• Perception of quality</li></ul>

# May 31 ELCC Forum exercises

Themes included 10 accomplishments and 11 challenges

- Participants used voting technology to validate and prioritize the accomplishments and challenges.
- Small group picked one challenge to discuss - to get a better understanding of the root of the problem and begin to identify solutions.

# Evaluation Next Steps

- Summarize results gathered from May 31, 2018 forum
- Gather additional data (e.g., surveys, interviews etc.)
- September 2018 Forum – share back evaluation so far and continue the journey



# Contact Information

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