



TORONTO FIRST DUTY

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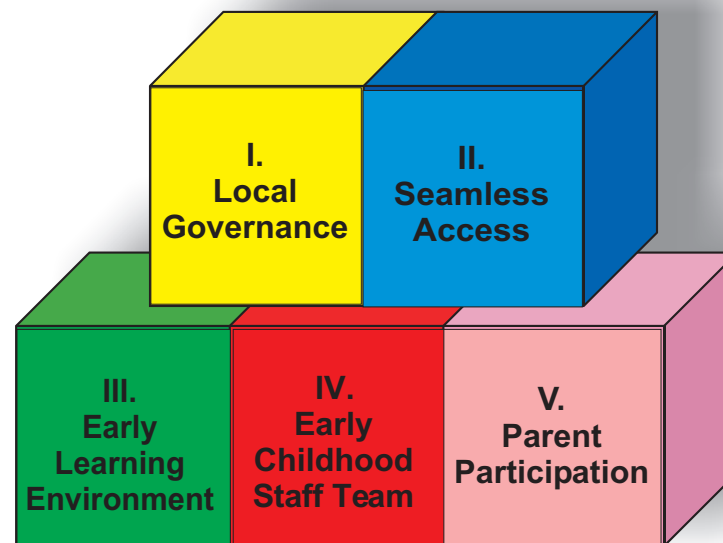
Indicators of change - Assessment

What the Experts Say ...

Why Integrate Early Childhood Services?

“Today if a government wants to invest in the early years, it decides between child care, kindergarten or parenting programs. It's a Hobson's choice because the child who benefits from improvements in her kindergarten can still be short-changed when she arrives at daycare. Integration therefore creates a foundation for new public funding. With integration also comes accountability. When Johnny is in grade 5 and can't read we expect the school system to respond. Yet, when a child in grade one is disruptive and unable to participate what institution do we hold responsible, but more importantly where do we intervene?”

Dr. Dan Keating, TFD Research Team



TFD Core Program Elements

Various groups involved in early childhood service provision will find this guide useful:

- **Systems managers** Municipal children's service managers, school board directors and supervisors, community agency, public health, and specialized service directors. Integration entails using staff, space, funding, and other resources in different ways. This requires a new look at procedures, risk-taking, and providing the needed supports to those who will be implementing the new program.
- **Service managers** School principals, child care, family support, public health, and specialized service supervisors who will lead service integration, deal with the daily problem-solving, and provide the essential motivation and support to staff, allowing them to be risk-takers.
- **Front-line staff members** Early childhood educators, kindergarten, and resource teachers, family support practitioners, program assistants and health, and social service professionals who will work as a team to plan and deliver an early learning, care, and family support program.
- **Support staff** Municipal, provincial, and school board early childhood advisors, early years policy teams, Best Start and service planning tables who want to inform and be informed by service integration.
- **Staff and service representatives** Professional organizations, unions, advocacy groups interested in the benefits of early childhood service integration for children, parents and staff members.
- **Policymakers** Federal, provincial, municipal, and school board representatives responsible for developing early childhood services policy that promotes optimal child development, ready access for parents, public accountability and cost-effectiveness.

A broad range of stakeholders will be interested in early childhood service integration. However, this guide directly addresses those who are leading and implementing the process.



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This guide follows the *Indicators of change*, a tool developed by the TFD team to assist sites to plan and monitor progress.

The indicators describe and track progress towards integration through **five core elements: local governance, seamless access, early learning environments, early childhood staff team, and parent participation**. The elements are broad categories that work together to create an integrated service delivery model. Taken together, the elements represent the building blocks of Toronto First Duty (Figure 2).

B. TFD Core Program Elements outlines these core elements of early childhood service integration.

Local Governance provides decision-making strategies that will guide service integration.

Seamless access defines the geographical area, population, and service targets. These are elements that must be in place to allow staff to plan and deliver the integrated program.

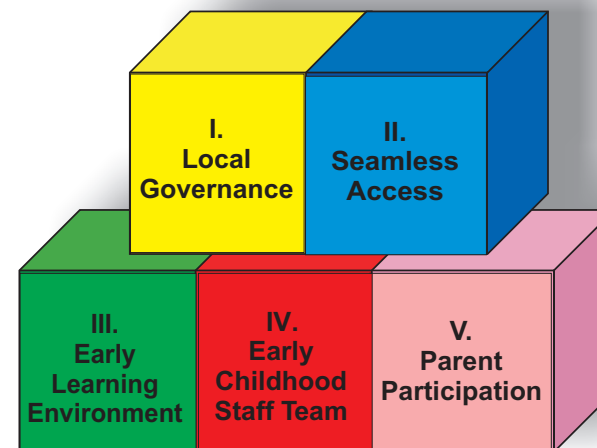
The integrated program is guided by three elements: the **Early Learning Environment**, which includes strategies such as shared space, resources, and pedagogical approaches; the

Early Childhood Staff Team that jointly plans the early learning environment, with each member delivering key aspects of it. Meaningful, active **Parent Participation** is integrated into all the other elements.

While the elements are numbered 1 to 5 (Figure 2), they should not be seen as sequential. Progress can, and in fact needs to, happen simultaneously. For example, the integrated learning environment can not be developed without agreeing on space or the roles and responsibilities of the teaching team.

The *Indicators of Change* can be used to plan integration strategies and assess progress. TFD sites have used them to reach a common understanding of goals and timelines among partners, to develop meeting agendas, and to pinpoint challenges.

Figure 2



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A unique set of program indicators define specific activities and practice for each of the key elements. Indicators track the progress that First Duty sites are making towards implementing the five core elements. There are a total of nineteen program indicators.

Core Element 1.0 Local Governance

A local governance structure is responsible for program policies, resource allocation, service planning and monitoring, and human resource decisions.

- Indicator 1.1 **Program mandate, policy & practices**
- Indicator 1.2 **Service planning and monitoring**
- Indicator 1.3 **Allocation of financial resources**
- Indicator 1.4 **Human resources**

Core Element 2.0 Seamless Access

Seamless access is available to an expanded and comprehensive early learning and care program, providing a continuum of supports and services to all families and young children prenatally to 6-years.

- Indicator 2.1 **Capacity**
- Indicator 2.2 **Child care provision and affordability**
- Indicator 2.3 **Intake, enrollment & attendance**

Core Element 3.0 Learning Environment

High quality learning environments combine learning expectations, activities, and routines from existing

kindergarten, early childhood education/child care, and parenting/family support programs.

- Indicator 3.1 **Curriculum framework & pedagogical approach**
- Indicator 3.2 **Daily routines and schedules**
- Indicator 3.3 **Use of space**
- Indicator 3.4 **Children's development & progress**
- Indicator 3.5 **Program quality**

Core Element 4.0 Early Childhood Staff Team

Develop an early childhood staff team that works together to deliver and achieve program goals.

- Indicator 4.1 **Program planning & implementation**
- Indicator 4.2 **Behaviour guidance/child management**
- Indicator 4.3 **Roles and responsibilities**
- Indicator 4.4 **Staff development**

Core Element 5.0 Parent Participation

Parent participation in children's early learning and development should be increased through direct involvement in programs, planning, and decision-making.

- Indicator 5.1 **Parent input & participation in programs**
- Indicator 5.2 **Parenting capacity**
- Indicator 5.3 **Relationships with families**

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The terms in this guide are defined as follows:

Child care/early childhood education - Child care centres, home child care, nursery schools, school readiness programs, preschool programs, special needs resourcing, and preschool early intervention group programs. Children may attend without a parent or guardian.

Kindergarten - Junior & senior kindergarten offered to all children 3.8 to 6 years by school boards.

Family support programs - Parenting centres, family resource programs, Ontario Early Years Centres, prenatal/postnatal groups, family literacy, parenting groups, home visiting, community kitchens, and family health and nutrition programs. The focus is on parents and children. Parents may attend alone. Children are usually accompanied by a parent or caregiver. **Family support practitioner** is the designation used for a professional who works in these various programs.

Partner programs - Community-based child care and family support agencies, school boards, municipal children service managers, public health, recreation, etc., that agree to participate in a cross-sector partnership to integrate early childhood services.

Integrated learning environment - Combines the functions and elements of child care, kindergarten, and family support programs. Elements include combining space, pedagogical approach, daily routines and schedules, assessing children's development and progress, and establishing and monitoring program quality.

Specialized services providers - Resource teachers for children with special needs, public health nurses, children's mental health, and other intervention professionals.

The early childhood staff team - Includes the **early learning team** and **frontline staff**.

Frontline staff: Those who provide direct service or programming to children and families, including Public Health nurses, children's mental health, and other intervention professionals.

Early learning team - Those who provide the daily program, including early childhood educators, early childhood assistants, kindergarten teachers, educational assistants, family support practitioners, and may include special needs service professionals if they are part of the daily program delivery.



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