



EarlyON Newsletter

December 2019

EarlyON Staff Profile

Name: Kevin James Fujita

Position: Shkabewis, which means Helper in Anishnawbemowin, this role is similar to a Program Support or Family Support Worker.

Agency: Native Child and Family Services of Toronto

Years of Service: 1- However have been employed off and on for the past 7 years

What you love about your job?

I love being able to interact with the children and watch their development.

I love creating bonds and happy moments for the families and community that I am working with. I am honoured to be able to provide and share my Cultural knowledge and experience with the families and staff.

Words of Wisdom for other EarlyON staff in the sector?

Even though I am new in this sector, the words I would pass on would be - "One needs to break their shell and become an adult child". It takes a community to raise a child and passing

on the Culture, language and traditions ensures our Aboriginal Way of Learning and Life continues.



Announcements

Manager Networks

Toronto Children's Services is pleased to announce the upcoming kick-off of the EarlyON Manager Networks that will be organized by geographic area (North, South, East, West). These networks will provide a space for EarlyON Centre Managers to coordinate services, conduct local planning, share resources, collectively learn and understand community data, discuss the program standards, and provide advice to TCS on EarlyON operations, service system management and program quality. EarlyON

Consultants will contact organizations before the end of 2019 to provide meeting details. Organizations should start thinking about who will attend to represent their Centre(s).

The meeting dates for 2020 are:

East – Jan 16th, April 22nd, Oct 16th

West – Jan 20th, April 24th, Oct 20th

North – Jan 17th, April 28th, Oct 15th

South – Jan 15th, April 23rd, Oct 19th

Community-Based EarlyON Grants

Thanks to all the EarlyON Providers who submitted EarlyON Program Enhancement and Community-Based EarlyON Capital Grant Program applications! The EarlyON team is busy reviewing the applications and organizations will be notified about approvals as soon as possible.

The Ministry of Education provided Toronto Children's Services with this one-time funding opportunity and Children's Services dedicated these funds to enhance quality, equity and inclusion through two different grant streams.

Toronto Public Health and EarlyON: Working Together

The Toronto Public Health Early Years team is changing the way they support children and families in Toronto. Beginning in January 2020:

- Group-based parenting education will be offered in a more responsive, adaptable, 'just-in-time' format of workshops as opposed to the traditionally structured groups such as Living and Learning with Baby, Make the Connection, Nobody's Perfect and Healthy Eating Series.
- A significant proportion of workshops will occur through expanded partnerships with EarlyON Centres, Public Libraries and grassroots organizations in high need neighbourhoods or areas where data indicate a specific concern.

- They will pay special attention to groups such as Indigenous, LGBTQ2S, racialized and refugee families with young children, fathers, and deaf parents/caregivers, who may face specific obstacles.

Please see the attached letter from Toronto Public Health for more information. If you have more questions, please contact your EarlyON Consultant or Claudette Holloway, Manager, Toronto Public Health at claudette.holloway@toronto.ca



New EarlyON Postcards are here!

Toronto Children's Services has a new stock of English and French postcards available, including one with a small blank area to include information about your location. The TCS EarlyON team will send out postcards to library branches, midwifery services, hospitals, local community centres and other key community partners.

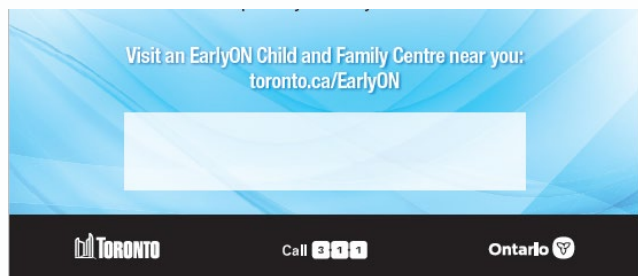
If you would like postcards mailed to your organization, please send an email to ghajanaah.jayaranjan@toronto.ca with the following information:

Organization:
Contact Name:
Mailing Address:

of ENGLISH postcards with blank box:
of ENGLISH postcards without box:

of FRENCH postcards with blank box:
of FRENCH postcards without box:

Here is an image of the version that includes the blank box which can be used to attach a personalized sticker or contact information for your Centre:



We also have electronic copies of the postcards available in the following languages: Farsi, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Tamil, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, which we can send you upon request.

We look forward to getting these postcards out of the box and into the Centres!

Community Engagement and Collaboration

Toronto Children's Services 2020-2024 Service Plan Development

Every five years, Toronto Children's Services develops a Service Plan for Toronto's child care and early years sector (including child care, EarlyON, Every Child Belongs, and before and after school programs). These plans set strategic directions, keep us accountable and help us to make decisions. They also tell the story of what we –with our partners – do, who we do it for, and why it matters. The next Service Plan will cover the period of 2020-2024.

Service Plans reflect community input and shared priorities. Many EarlyON organizations responded to an online engagement opportunity that was available in September/October 2019. We are also engaging separately with children and families

and with the other organizations that work in our sector.

We expect the Service Plan to be considered by City Council in Spring/Summer of 2020. Check our website to find out more about the development process to date.

Collaboration Day Recap

The TCS EarlyON team hosted the 2nd Annual Sector-Wide Collaboration Event on September 25, 2019 at the beautiful Centennial College Event Centre. EarlyON Service Providers and our key community partners spent an engaging and interactive day learning about the new EarlyON Program Standards, documenting practice examples for each standard, generating ideas on implementation, and having a lot of fun voting for the top ideas to prioritize in 2020 and beyond.

You Asked, We Answer!

The first activity that our Collaboration Day participants engaged in was to identify the big questions they had coming in to the event. In the next few EarlyON Newsletters we will highlight some of these questions (and our answers) as just one way to address some of the key questions related to the EarlyON Program Standards

Q: "What are the standards – are they fixed or flexible?"

A: This is a great question that has come up more than a few times, and the answer is both!

The EarlyON Program Standards are the result of almost over two years of research and community input and engagement, and they describe how EarlyON Centres can meet the core service requirements.

It is important to know that the intention of the Program Standards is NOT to create a cookie cutter approach to EarlyON service delivery. Therefore, while the program

standards and elements will not change, the way that programs implement them may differ from Centre to Centre. This is expected as programs are meant to be responsive to the communities they serve, and every Centre has diverse spaces, staff teams, program materials and community partnerships.

This is why the City is working with community partners to develop a reflective tool and practice examples that will support EarlyON service providers in identifying their strengths, areas for improvement, and personalized action plans.

November Staff Network Meetings

During the EarlyON Staff Network Meetings in November, program staff were introduced to the EarlyON Program Standards and their associated elements. Staff enjoyed a great day learning more about the broader EarlyON system, discussing the evidence that supports the new Program Standards, connecting and networking, and generating their own examples of the Program Standards in action.

Updates from the EarlyON Advisory Committee and Working Tables

The EarlyON Advisory Committee and Working Tables were established to support specific EarlyON system transformational tasks and are time-limited. These groups are made up of a wide range of EarlyON service providers, community partners and TCS staff. As we complete key activities outlined in the EarlyON Action Plan (2018-2020), this structure will slowly dissolve over the course of 2019 and into early 2020.

Over the past 18 months, **the EarlyON Advisory Committee** has provided strategic advice to Toronto Children's Services on overarching system transformation initiatives. Items that are discussed at the Working Tables go to the Advisory for final review and strategic discussion focused on alignment with other

system transformation activities. In September, the Advisory Committee met to advise on the IT registration development, the development of the Manager Networks and the strategy for the roll-out of the EarlyON Program Standards. Now that we've moved through the key transformational areas of EarlyON the Advisory Committee role has officially concluded. Moving forward, Toronto Children's Services will work with the EarlyON Leadership Network regarding system-wide initiatives and activities. Thank you again to everyone who participated in the Advisory Committee!

The Professional Learning Working Table

has been discussing opportunities to facilitate more EarlyON practicum assignments in EarlyON Centres by articulating the benefits of strong relationships with ECE training institutions. Are you regularly working with ECE students? If not, what would support you in doing so? Stay tuned for further information and opportunities for input in the coming months. The staff lead for this table is Jessica Abraham (jessica.abraham@toronto.ca).

The Program Standards Working Table met in July and provided feedback on the details of the program standards and program elements. The program standards and program elements were finalized and introduced at the annual collaboration event in September. The staff lead for this table is Maureen McDonald (maureen.mcdonald@toronto.ca).

At the October meeting of the **Inclusion Working Table**, we discussed the key findings of the research and model review and the best practice approaches for a holistic inclusionary model within EarlyON Child and Family system in Toronto. The staff lead for this table is Maureen McDonald (maureen.mcdonald@toronto.ca).

The Data and Evaluation Working Table

continues to provide important guidance on data related planning and use. Members

provided input on what templates and support are needed by programs to help implement the program standard on monitoring and evaluation and are supporting a planned pilot test of the e-registration software. The staff lead for this table is Ellen Tate (ellen.tate@toronto.ca).

Operational Updates

New Indigenous-led EarlyON

We are pleased to introduce a new Indigenous-Led EarlyON - Eshkiniigjik Naandwechigegamig, Aabiish Gaa Binjibaaying (ENAGB) EarlyON. The following description was written by ENAGB's Executive Director, Cynthia Bell-Clayton:

As the Indigenous community continues to grow each day within Toronto, we recognize the need and want to provide culturally-relevant early years program and services that will support improved outcomes for Indigenous children and families.

It gives us great pleasure to announce our new ENAGB EarlyON program within Wandering Spirit School. We are honoured as a Youth Agency to have the capacity to support children and caregiver's prenatal-6 years old.

ENAGB EarlyON provides drop-in and registered programming on Monday (8:30 to 4:30), Tuesday - Friday (8:30 - 6:00 p.m.) and Saturday (10 a.m. - 6 p.m.). We are located in the lower level of Wandering Spirit School at 16 Phin Ave. We also provide transportation to and from our programming to reduce this possible challenge and/or barrier for families.

[The 2020 EarlyON Operating and Business Practice Guidelines](#) are now available online here:

[City of Toronto EarlyON Planning](#)

EarlyON rides the TTC!

Look out for EarlyON during your travels – our transit ads will be reposted between February 24th and March 22nd, 2020.



E-Registration and Sign-In

In 2020 the EarlyON sector will be introduced to a new e-registration and sign-in system. The system will assist EarlyON providers in collecting client information to support evidence-informed system planning, streamline processes for parents/caregivers accessing multiple EarlyON Centres, and help to reduce administrative burden for service providers.

The prototype of the software has been shared with the EarlyON Data and Evaluation Working Table and the EarlyON Leadership Network. A survey was also circulated to help in determining the technical capabilities of your Centre(s). Phase two will see us piloting the software with a select group of organizations to determine if modifications are necessary.

Phase three will include a gradual rollout of the system to all EarlyON service providers throughout 2020.

We look forward to sharing additional information with you in the coming months.

Key 2020 EarlyON Dates

January 24, 2020 – 2019 Year End Report due

Leadership Network

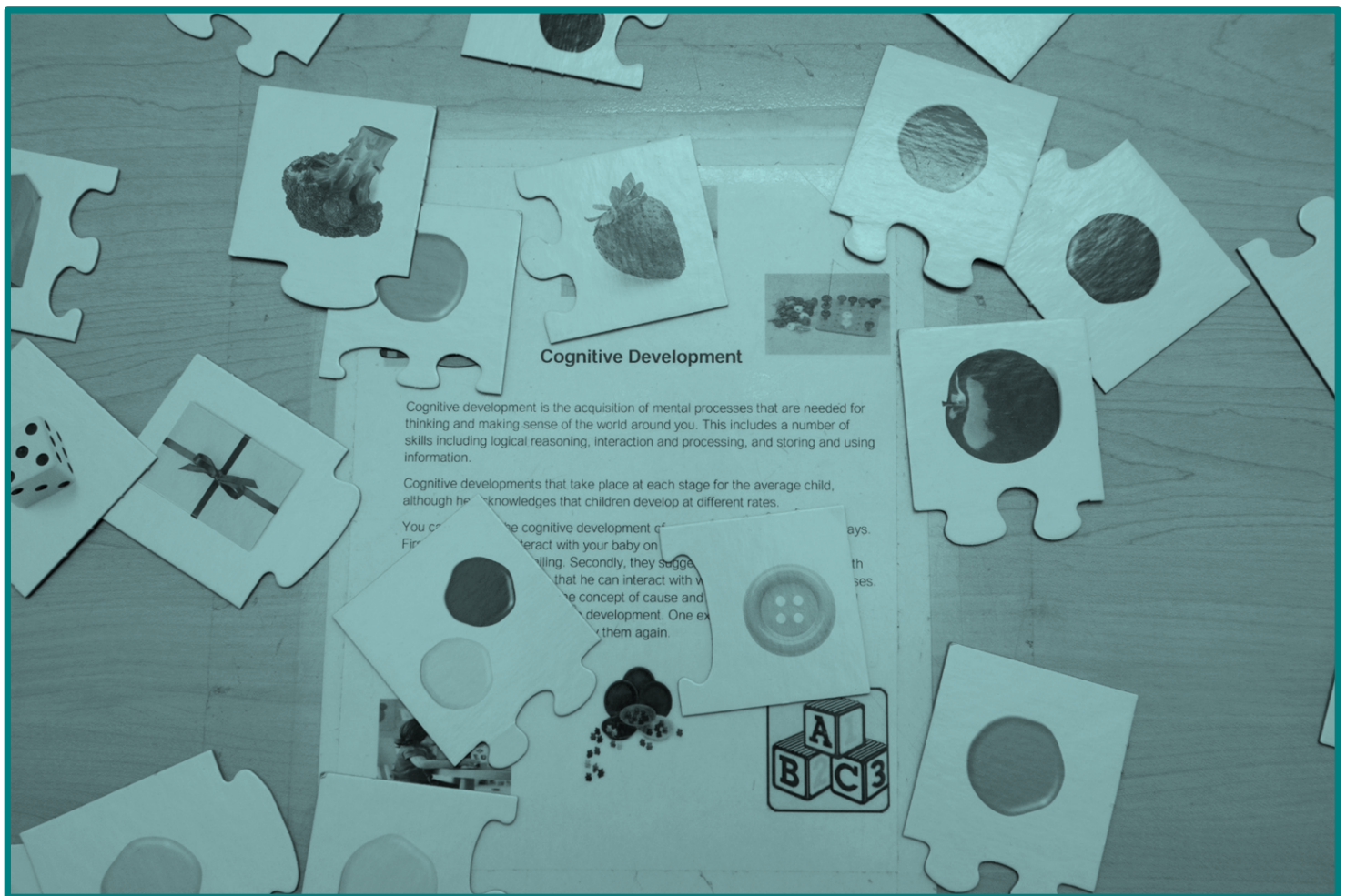
- February 27th

- June 18th
- November 19th

Staff Networks

Will now run from 9:00am-4:00pm!

- South – Feb 6th, June 10th, Nov 6th
- East – Feb 7th, June 4th, Nov 10th
- West – Feb 11th, June 8th, Nov 12th
- North – Feb 12th, June 9th, Nov 5th
- French – Feb 13th, June 3rd, Nov 13th



EarlyON Data Corner

The EarlyON Data Corner will be a new regular feature of the EarlyON Newsletter. The focus is on sharing updates, content and knowledge about data collection, analysis and use for service system planning for EarlyON Child and Family Centres across Toronto

Understanding the EarlyON System through Data

- **52** Agencies
- **272** Sites
- **4637** Hours per week
- **241,124** Hours per Year

Participants

- **89,689** Children
- **75,503** Adults

Staff

- **361** Total
- **287** FTE's (150 FTE's are REC)

Diverse Data Sources Deepen Our Understanding



#1

Budget



#2

Semi-annual/
Annual Reports



#3

Program
Snapshot



#4

Site Profile Tool

Data to Drive Access, Equity and Quality

Better data is positioning the system to achieve our sector goals to improve access, equity and quality of the EarlyON system for children, families/caregivers and communities in Toronto. These early data-focused collection activities are enabling the system to:

- Describe with data what we do and how we do it
- Advance understanding of service utilization patterns
- Provide a firmer foundation for evidence-informed program planning
- Improve capacity to be responsive, proactive and strategic in prioritizing our actions

Data quality is an on-going pursuit

By diving in this year to ask for your data, we learned about how data is perceived, areas of strength and areas for improvement.

Thank you!!

Throughout 2018 and 2019, we asked for your support to improve our knowledge about the system. You stepped up and provided us with a great foundation by sharing your time, perspectives and data in a variety of forms. A big thank you for your role in building the sector's data capacity.

Next Steps in Building Data Capacity in the Sector

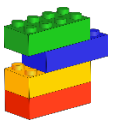
Identify Data Priorities

1, 2, 3...

Develop a Data Strategy



Build data processes and tools



Continue data discussions

