



Early Childhood Community of Practice: Launch Meeting - Main Themes

December 7, 2022

Main Themes

Since the PUF funding model changed in 2019, service providers have observed:

1. Less children receiving services, some not receiving any (mild/moderate)
 - 1.1. Seeing the impact in ECS/grade one - children lack basic school readiness skills (permanent learning challenges)
 - 1.2. Children are older when services are initiated
 - 1.3. WMA is disincentive for agencies to increase capacity
2. Less supports for children who do receive services
 - 2.1. Less aide time (funding makes it difficult to provide 1:1 support)
 - 2.2. Less time for Common Approach and therefore less collaboration between home and school
 - 2.3. Interdisciplinary supports have significantly declined
 - 2.4. Less opportunity to individualize programming to meet child/family needs
 - 2.5. Some families opting to pay privately for service (two tiered system)
3. Funding makes it difficult to deliver services in inclusive settings
 - 3.1. Move towards congregated models
4. Services Providers asked to do more
 - 4.1. SLPs have become the “dumping ground” and are being asked to practice outside of their scope, risking burnout
 - 4.2. Educational Assistants are being asked to do more and burning out
 - 4.3. Expertise is leaving the field
 - 4.4. Agencies have closed
5. Diagnosis
 - 5.1. Waitlists/capacity issues result in children being diagnosed later
 - 5.2. Health and education systems are not working together to facilitate diagnostic assessments
6. Indigenous children
 - 6.1. Gaps in services for children on reserves

6.2. Jordan's Principle is not protecting children

What has been done and what do people want to see:

1. Significant systemic change is required
 - 1.1. Complete review and restructuring of FSCD and PUF
 - 1.2. Bill that mandates services for children with disabilities
2. Communication/collaboration
 - 2.1. A mechanism like Regional Coordinated Service Delivery to facilitate communication and collaboration
 - 2.2. Clarify why RCSD was dismantled
 - 2.3. Inter-ministerial collaboration (Health, Education and Seniors, Community and Social Services)
 - 2.4. Lobby at the provincial level
3. Mandated cap on caseloads
4. Focused and coordinated advocacy
 - 4.1. SLP advocate hired by SAC - Karen Sevcik
 - 4.2. Autism Edmonton has hired an advocate
 - 4.3. Alberta's Autism Alliance
5. Indigenous children
 - 5.1. Allow communities to decide if they want to manage educational programs or if they want to province to
 - 5.2. Equitable funding
6. Diagnostic evaluations
 - 6.1. Build capacity - more funding/services for outside major centers
 - 6.2. Reduce age of diagnosis
7. Increase number of PUF spots to meet community need

Ideas for capturing data (qualitative and quantitative)

1. Gather family stories (how funding cuts have impacts Alberta children and families)
2. Number of SLS referrals in Kindergarten
3. Staff attrition rates (pre/post funding model change)
4. Caseload sizes (pre/post funding model change)
5. Ask programs how funding changes impacted their ability to provide inclusive model
6. Look at age of diagnosis/age services initiated
7. Look at number of PUF spots available