Learning Circle -
Ensuring Success For Our Earliest Learners

A Learning Partnership between Renfrew County Catholic, Renfrew County District School Boards and the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan
Why was it called the Learning Circle Project?

- **Based on the Circle of Life and the four directions, both Boards have focused on students at the elementary, secondary and Post secondary levels, and felt that the final stage to complete the circle was with our potential early learners.**
Based on Ministry of Education Objectives

- Reducing the gap in student achievement
- Building public confidence and partnerships
Board Objectives

- To foster a collaborative relationship based on mutual trust and reciprocal learning
- To ensure that all children who attend both institutions, be benefactors of the common goal
- To assess potential “at risk” learners
• To create an alignment between the two education systems, that completes the “Learning Circle Project”

• To enhance the academic programming of aboriginal preschool learners

• To prepare for full day learning and transition to provincial schools

• To offer cultural experiences for aboriginal and non-aboriginal preschool children who attend both institutions
Partnership in Early Learning

- **Question of Inquiry:**
  - If our kindergarten teachers meaningfully partner with the daycare teachers to share data and to implement teaching strategies will our shared kindergarten-aged students achieve greater successes in literacy?
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**Background information:**

- Compelling why?
- Initial data including: oral language, pm and letter/sound recognition
- Structure of the partnership
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First Nation Students not achieving at Grade Level in Reading
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- First Nations students presenting a concern
  RE: Letter and sound recognition
Partnership in Early Learning
Partnership in Early Learning

“School boards will strive to create strategic partnerships with First Nations to help students make a smoother transition from schools in First Nations communities to provincially funded elementary and secondary schools”

*Ontario First Nation, Metis and Inuit Education Policy Framework*
Partnership in Early Learning

Three ways to increase learning & performance:

1. Increase knowledge and skill of teachers

2. Change the content and/or the instructional approach

3. Alter the relationship of the student to the teacher and the content

Elmore
Partnership in Early Learning

- Increase skills and knowledge of educators:
  - Reciprocal visits - Education & Culture
  - Collaborative inquiry
  - Data collection process for Kindergarten students
  - Read Aloud training
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- **Change the content:**
  - *Day Care - restructured the Day Care schedule*
  - *Small group instruction/explicit instruction*
  - *Re-emphasis on learning through purposeful play*
  - *Oral Language*
  - *Cultural exposure*
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- Change the relationship between the student to the teacher and the content:
  - Day Care - small groups, circle time, interactive learning
  - Sharing data to inform instruction - explicit teaching
Challenges

- Design of the Day Care facility
- Three year old levels of energy
- Different government regulations (three tiered partnership)
- Staffing challenges.
- Future of First Nation Day Care? Culture? Language?
Steering Committee

- Committee made up of Principals, Aboriginal Student Success teachers, Trustee and School Support Counsellor, Managers of Social Services, and Education for the First Nation community, met at least three times to assess program, make changes if required.
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