Sector Call - Questions and Answers from Spring 2026 Session

Wednesday, April 22, 2026 from 1:00 – 2:00 pm

This FAQ builds on information shared during the April 22, 2026 ELCC Sector Call and is intended to summarize key messages and respond to common questions from the sector. The call focused on the new ELCC Quality Framework, the role of the Sector Development and Partnerships team, and the work of Quality Assurance Specialists, with an emphasis on quality, inclusion, and an education-first approach to oversight. This FAQ reflects what is known now and outlines where additional information will be shared as work continues. **Content leads were Hoa Truong-White, Director of Quality, Innovation and Professional Learning and Krystal Therien, Director of Operations.**

Note: *Questions do not appear in the order they were asked but have been grouped by agenda/content theme. Questions and answers have been edited for clarity.*

Quality Framework & Curriculum

Q: Will the new ELCC Quality Framework replace *Capable, Confident, Curious?*
A: No. *Capable, Confident, Curious* remains the early learning curriculum used in programs. The Quality Framework is a system-level framework that guides policy, funding, and decision-making across the ELCC system. Both are intended to work together.

Compliance & Oversight

Q: What does an "education-first" approach to compliance mean?
A: An education-first approach means the department will provide guidance, resources, and support to help centres meet requirements wherever possible. It views education as the first tool to be used in trying to encourage compliance. Enforcement actions may still be used when there is risk to health and safety, repeated non-compliance, or unwillingness to comply.

Q: Will there be updates or modernization to regulations (for example, nutrition regulations)?
A: Yes. Regulatory modernization is recognized as necessary and is part of broader ELCC system transformation work. Further details and timelines will be shared as this work progresses.

Quality Assurance Specialists (QAS)

Q: What does an "Education first" approach mean?

A: An education-first approach means that the QAS prioritize education, coaching and support on the Regulations when it is the most effective path towards compliance. For example, if there are new staff or Director and education and support on the Regulations is most likely to encourage compliance in areas that are not at high risk to the health and safety of children such as high priority violations (unattended children, vulnerable sector checks). **This does not mean the QAS will not issue violations**, but that an education-based approach may be taken when a lack of awareness of regulatory requirements or its application is likely the root cause of non-compliance.

Q: When should I contact my QAS, and when should I contact another team (like grants)?

A: QAS are your main contact for compliance, quality improvement, and navigating supports. For specific payment issues, providers should contact the grants team directly, but QAS can help flag urgent concerns and support coordination.

Training & Workforce

Q: Is there a minimum English language requirement for ECEs?

A: Yes. A minimum language benchmark is required for ECE classification and entry into training programs in Nova Scotia. Current benchmarks reflect those set for post-secondary training and classification requirements.

Q: How does the department ensure quality across accelerated, PLAR, online, and work-and-learn ECE programs?

A: All approved programs must meet EECD's Standards for Early Childhood Education Post-Secondary Programs as well as regulations set out by the Department of Advanced Education (AE), including requirements for instructional and practicum hours. Training programs are reviewed by EECD and AE on a regular cycle. The department is reviewing training standards and working with post-secondary partners to strengthen consistency and quality across programs.

Q: Will the department follow up with colleges and universities about training quality?

A: Yes. The department works with partners in advanced education to review ECE programs and is improving quality assurance processes to ensure consistency across institutions.

Certification & Classification

Q: How long does Level 1 certification/classification usually take?
A: Processing times vary. Applications linked to a confirmed job offer or prioritized streams are often processed faster than posted timelines. Applicants should ensure all required information, including job offers, is submitted correctly.

Funding & Grants

Q: Who should I contact if my ISG or other funding payment is delayed?
A: Payment questions should be directed to the grants team. If a delay is creating hardship, providers may also contact their QAS for support and assistance in flagging the issue.

Support for Leaders & Directors

Q: What supports are available for new directors?
A: The department recognizes the need for stronger supports for new directors. Work is underway to develop guidance and training, and feedback from directors will help shape these resources. More information will be shared as these supports are finalized.

Professional Learning

Q: How is the department investing in professional learning?
A: Professional learning is being coordinated provincially, with a focus on relevant, accessible, consistent opportunities across the province. Training opportunities and resources continue to be added and shared through departmental channels. Check our webpage for regular updates on professional learning opportunities.

Immigration & Workforce Challenges

Q: What is being done to address immigration challenges affecting the ECE workforce?
A: The department is aware of immigration-related challenges and works with partners across government to support workforce needs. While immigration decisions are federal, feedback from the sector continues to inform workforce planning and advocacy.

Communications

Q: Why isn't the ELCC website fully up to date?
A: The ELCC website is currently being refreshed. Some information may be temporarily outdated, but updates are underway and will be shared as they are finalized.