

Peel Inclusion Resource Services PIRS

Memorandum of Understanding

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1. Introduction

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) explains roles and responsibilities of Child Care Service Providers (service provider), Peel Inclusion Resource Services (PIRS) Special Needs Resourcing (SNR) agencies, and Peel Region (Peel).

Service providers who hold an *Early Years and Child Care Funding Agreement*, or have signed the PIRS MoU Letter of Acknowledgement, agree to authentically participate in PIRS by engaging in services and supports as outlined in the MoU.

PIRS Special Needs Resourcing agencies who hold an *Early Years and Child Care Services Special Needs Resourcing and Funding Agreement*, agree to authentically deliver PIRS by engaging in services and supports as outlined in the MoU.

2. Relationship Statement

Service providers, SNR agencies, and Peel are committed to working together. Each partner has a unique set of experiences and expertise that they contribute that has a positive impact on high-quality, inclusive supports and services for children and families in Peel.

2.1. Authentic Participation

Authentic participation is the willingness of the service provider to engage in PIRS services and supports, and to work with the SNR agency's Resource Consultant (RC) and supervisor. Authentic participation includes being open to the supports provided, implementing actions based on roles described in the MoU, and embracing change in practice. It is also about the ability of RCs to deliver consistent, quality PIRS supports in all programs and with all educators.

Authentic participation supports the four foundational elements that the PIRS consultative model is built on: access, inclusion, participation and belonging. See [**Appendix 1: PIRS Foundational Elements – Access, Inclusion, Participation, and Belonging Definitions.**](#)

2.2. Authentic Participation - Quality Assurance and Compliance Framework

Peel has included the Quality Assurance and Compliance (QAC) Framework in the MoU to enhance system accountability, strengthen authentic participation and increase oversight for the delivery of SNR services.

The MoU defines authentic participation and related activities while the QAC framework outlines expectations for service providers and SNR agencies who participate in PIRS and consequences related to non-compliance or non-authentic participation.

The QAC framework will:

- Increase accountability

- Implement a continuous improvement cycle; and,
- Support Peel to make data-driven changes to improve the PIRS model

The following principles support the implementation of the QAC framework and guide interactions with the system:

- **Collaborative:** work together towards a common goal
- **Accountable:** implement compliance mechanisms in a fair, consistent and timely manner
- **Transparent:** share requirements, activities, and results to support continuous improvement cycle
- **Evidence Informed:** make decisions or recommendations based on analysis of all relevant data
- **Risk Based Approach:** weigh potential risk against opportunities to improve performance and outcomes

3. PIRS Model

The PIRS model provides SNR supports that are available to licensed child care programs participating in PIRS (centre-based, home child care programs and school age programs) to help service providers demonstrate access, inclusion, participation, and belonging to meet the needs of all children.

The PIRS partnership is committed to supporting:

- Children (aged 0- 12 years) who attend a child care program in Peel which is licensed under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*
- Early identification of children who may benefit from SNR supports
- Positive early childhood education experiences for all children
- Access to community services and supports for families
- Professional learning opportunities and supports for service providers

The PIRS model requires partners to work together to support families and child care programs with a focus on ensuring the right support is in place. Collaboration with Early Years Specialists, Quality Initiatives Mentors, and other community partners and professionals helps to ensure that program educators receive support from a variety of professionals with different perspectives.

The following SNR agencies provide PIRS resource consultation services to the Early Years and Child Care System in Peel:

- Brampton Caledon Community Living
- Community Living Mississauga
- ErinoakKids Centre for Treatment and Development
- EveryMind Mental Health Services

Note: Expectations of all parties are the same whether PIRS services are provided virtually or in person.

4. Role of Peel Region Early Years and Child Care Services

Peel is the Service System Manager under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, S.O. 2014, c.11, Sched.1*. This means Peel manages funding for SNR in Peel.

Peel is responsible for making sure special needs resourcing support is provided to licensed child care programs that provide child care services to families and children from birth to 12 years. Peel oversees and plans SNR supports, such as Resource Consultation and Enhanced Program Support Funding as part of PIRS. The following accountability measures are in place to support inclusion.

4.1. Policy and Program Development

Peel develops policies, procedures, and guidelines that follow legislative requirements, support best practices and respond to the needs of early years and child care programs in Peel. SNR policies and programs link directly to the strategic priorities outlined in the *Early Years and Child Care Service System Plan 2019-2024*.

To make sure that consistent, high quality SNR services are provided to child care programs and families, Peel regularly monitors, reviews, and evaluates PIRS services. Beginning in 2023, this includes understanding and assessing the authentic participation of service providers and SNR agencies through the mechanisms identified below:

- **Targeted Input:** Collect information on service delivery experiences from families, service providers and SNR agencies
- **Management of Concerns or Escalated Issues:** Follow processes to understand and address concerns and issues raised by families, service providers and SNR agencies
- **Data Review:** Review data to determine if partners are meeting service standards and required service delivery activities
- **Contractual Compliance:** Review to make sure required reporting is submitted on time and error free

Using the mechanisms above to understand authentic participation will increase Peel's oversight on how services are being implemented and builds a culture of accountability for all parties.

4.2. Gathering PIRS Feedback

To understand how PIRS services are working for service providers, families and SNR agencies, Peel has implemented the following:

- **Child Care Program Online Concerns Form:** Parents/caregivers can submit concerns about access to a child care program through Peel's website
- **PIRS online Feedback Form:** Service providers, families, SNR agencies, and community partners can share experiences, concerns, or suggestions about PIRS services through Peel's website

- **Escalation Process:** Service providers and SNR agencies can escalate concerns related to service delivery or authentic participation in PIRS by following the Escalation Process

SNR agencies are required to share information with Peel about a child care program's participation in PIRS. Child care programs can also provide feedback directly to Peel about how PIRS supports are being delivered by SNR agencies.

All information and feedback received provides Peel with a chance to understand service delivery in real time, to address concerns, and plan for changing supports as needed.

4.3. Concerns with PIRS Service Delivery

Service providers are encouraged to talk to their SNR agency about any concerns related to SNR service delivery with the goal of working towards a solution. If, after following the steps outlined in the Escalation Process, the service provider feels that the issue remains they can escalate their concern to Peel. See **Appendix 2: PIRS Escalation Process**.

4.3.1. Action Plans

As part of the authentic participation – QAC framework, if a service provider or SNR agency is not authentically participating, Peel will create action plans to help them meet the requirements of the MoU or applicable guidelines.

An action plan is a supportive approach that will allow service providers and SNR agencies the chance to change their practice while focusing on the goal of giving families access to inclusive programs that support their children's inclusion, participation and belonging.

Peel will develop the action plan which includes:

- Identifying actions for the program
- Timeframes for completion and follow-up meetings

Peel will decide when a service provider or SNR agency has completed the action item, when the issue is resolved, and/or the investigation is closed. If a service provider or SNR agency does not implement the action plan to improve authentic participation, corrective actions may be applied that could include the removal of funding or termination of a service agreement. Corrective actions for issues with authentic participation will only be used when:

- There are multiple issues with a service provider or SNR agency not following MoU requirements and/or guidelines and
- There is clear evidence that the service provider or SNR agency is not willing to change practice

4.4. Distribution of Child Care Programs

Peel is responsible for making sure child care programs are equitably distributed between SNR agencies. The approach considers several factors, including but not limited to, system growth and increased demand for SNR supports. To balance support needs across the system, there are times when child care programs will be transferred from one RC to another, or from one SNR agency to another. To limit service disruptions, every effort will be made to make changes during a time of natural transition such as winter break or summer.

4.5. Child Care Program Inclusion Policies

As a best practice it is recommended that service providers have an Inclusion Policy that speaks to their beliefs and actions related to the inclusion of children within their program(s).

Child Care Provides who require support to develop or update their inclusion policy can:

- Reference the [Inclusion Policy Development Resource](#)
- Speak with a Specialist by e-mailing PIRS@peelregion.ca

4.6. Student Learning Opportunities

Peel encourages SNR agencies to offer opportunities for student learning including RC placements. For student learning to be successful we expect service providers to allow students to visit child care programs with the RC.

5. Role of the Service Provider

The service provider's commitment to their program's authentic participation in PIRS is key to a successful partnership. As such, the service provider will:

- Maintain awareness of the roles, responsibilities and expectations in the MoU
- Work with, and provide support to, the child care program supervisor/manager/home visitor to support their program's authentic participation in PIRS
- Provide support to the program supervisor/manager/home visitor for situations that need the PIRS New Placement Process and Continued Placement Process. See [Appendix 3: New Placement Process](#) and [Appendix 4: Continued Placement Process](#)
- Escalate PIRS participation concerns by following [Appendix 2: PIRS Escalation Process](#)
- Respond to requests from Peel for information on authentic participation in PIRS, and PIRS services and support. Requests could include participating in a focus group, completing a survey, or connecting by phone or email.

6. Role of the Child Care Program Supervisor / Manager / Home Visitor

The child care program supervisor/manager/home visitor (including centre-based programs, licensed home child care programs and school age child care programs) plays an important role in a successful PIRS partnership and demonstrates a commitment to:

- Support a child/family's access, inclusion, participation and belonging
- Inform parent/legal guardian(s) of PIRS supports
- Use *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years (2014)* as a guide to deliver high quality experiences and positive outcomes for children's learning, development, and health and well-being
- Provide RCs access to all rooms/settings within the program (as applicable)
- Support educators/home child care providers to fulfill their role as outlined in the *Role of the educator/home child care provider* section of this MoU
- Disclose to Peel (email PIRS@peelregion.ca) and discuss with the PIRS RC if a resource teacher/special education teacher or additional support staff, not funded by Peel, are supporting the program and work together to clarify roles and avoid duplication
- Refer to the PIRS New Placement Process and implement identified actions prior to denying a child access to a child care program. See **Appendix 3: New Placement Process**
- Refer to the PIRS Continued Placement Process and implement identified actions prior to terminating the care of any child. See **Appendix 4: Continued Placement Process**
- Escalating PIRS participation concerns by following **Appendix 2: PIRS Escalation Process**
- Respond to requests from Peel for information on authentic participation in PIRS, and PIRS services and support. Requests could include participating in a focus group, completing a survey, or connecting by phone or email.

7. Role of the Educator / Home Child Care Provider

The educator/home child care provider plays a significant role in a successful PIRS partnership and is expected to:

- Model behaviours that demonstrate a belief that all children belong by supporting access, inclusion, participation and belonging
- Facilitate interactions between children to support a sense of belonging, well-being, engagement, and expression
- Continue to be the primary contact for, and encourage communication with, the child's family
- Share observations with child care program supervisor/manager/home visitor about children who may benefit from resource consultation and plan for discussion with the family for additional resources, such as introducing the role of the RC
- Participate in ongoing professional learning related to inclusion and special needs, including opportunities recommended by the RC
- Actively work with the RC to help children participate in every aspect of the program by:
 - Engaging in consultation discussions

- Understanding children’s learning styles
- Implementing the recommended general strategies and goals that support access, inclusion, participation, and belonging
- Making reasonable program changes to ensure every child is included in the program
- Discussing plans or changes to the daily routine or program that may impact a child’s participation
- Using input from professionals involved with a child and family to support a child’s participation
- Participating in the development, implementation, and documentation of a child’s Individual Program Plan (IPP)
- Supporting a child’s transition to another classroom, to a new program or to school (as applicable)
- Support the PIRS New Placement Process (when applicable) to support a child’s enrolment into the program. See [Appendix 3: New Placement Process](#)
- Support the PIRS Continued Placement Process prior to terminating the care of any child. See [Appendix 4: Continued Placement Process](#)
- Escalate PIRS participation concerns by following [Appendix 2: PIRS Escalation Process](#)
- Provide feedback on PIRS Services

8. Role of the PIRS Special Needs Resourcing Agency

SNR agencies are responsible for oversight and delivery of quality, consistent PIRS services that support service providers to demonstrate access, inclusion, participation, and belonging to meet the needs of all children in licensed child care settings. This includes children whose cognitive, physical, social, emotional, communicative, or overall development needs would benefit from additional supports. SNR agencies must ensure staff participate in discussions with Peel regarding concerns or escalated issues, data, and general feedback about PIRS services and supports.

9. Role of the PIRS Resource Consultant

RCs are early childhood educators with specialized knowledge of child development, children’s mental health, early intervention, special needs, and inclusive practices. RCs provide consultative support to service providers. They work with educators/home child care providers to ensure that all supports and services are being used, and to establish strategies that support access, inclusion, participation, and belonging for all children in their programs. RCs will:

- Visit all rooms/settings within the program (as applicable); however, RCs are never counted in the adult/child ratio
- Understand the program’s philosophy and provide strategies that can be incorporated into routines
- Support educator awareness of, and engagement in, all SNR supports
- Conduct program and/or child specific consultation, upon request and with consent, and provide strategies to support the inclusion of children within the program
- Support the capacity building of educators/home child care providers related to access, inclusion, participation, and belonging to meet the needs of all children by

providing or recommending professional learning opportunities, sharing evidence-informed resources, and accessing the Specialized Consultation Team

- Coach and model strategy implementation
- Refer families to program educator/home child care provider or child care program supervisor/manager/home visitor to address program specific questions
- Consult with the child care program supervisor/manager/home visitor and parent/legal guardian(s) to facilitate a PIRS referral (for children who would benefit from resource consultation)
- Be an active participant in the implementation of the PIRS New Placement Process and Continued Placement Process (when applicable). See [**Appendix 3: New Placement Process**](#) and [**Appendix 4: Continued Placement Process**](#)
- For children actively engaged with a PIRS RC, work collaboratively with the educator/home child care provider and family to:
 - Develop an IPP that supports the child's participation in the program, meet regularly to discuss strategy implementation and progress toward goal(s)
 - Connect with therapists, doctors, and professionals supporting the child to discuss strategies and information to enhance success in the child care environment
 - Support a child's transition to another classroom, to a new program or to school
- Escalate PIRS participation concerns by following [**Appendix 2: PIRS Escalation Process**](#)
- Respond to requests from Peel for information on authentic participation in PIRS, and PIRS services and support. Requests could include participating in a focus group, completing a survey, or connecting by phone or email.

10. Role of the PIRS Manager and Supervisor

The PIRS manager and supervisor have oversight for the services delivered by their SNR agency and demonstrates a commitment to:

- Ensure PIRS supports are consistently and authentically delivered to all child care programs
- Support their RC teams to meet service standards
- Coach RCs on the delivery of services and how to work through conflict, challenges, and issues
- Facilitate team discussions to support a shared understanding of service delivery expectations
- Build relationships with service providers, child care program supervisor/manager/home visitor, educators/home child care providers through regular visits and phone calls or email connections
 - Connections provide opportunities to discuss how a program is experiencing PIRS services and hear about successes and challenges
- Address concerns brought forward by a service provider or child care program supervisor/manager/home visitor and work towards a resolution by following [**Appendix 2: PIRS Escalation Process**](#)
- Work with PIRS supervisors to support a consistent delivery of service
- Collaborate with SNR agency partners and Peel to inform ongoing evaluation of the PIRS model

11. Duty to Report

PIRS RCs comply with the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* in their duty to report suspected child abuse and neglect to the Children's Aid Society.

Appendix 1: PIRS Foundational Elements – Access, Inclusion, Participation and Belonging Definitions

Access: demonstrated when families choose to enroll in a program, placements are maintained for the full term, and children, and families have appropriate support from child care programs to pursue and achieve goals

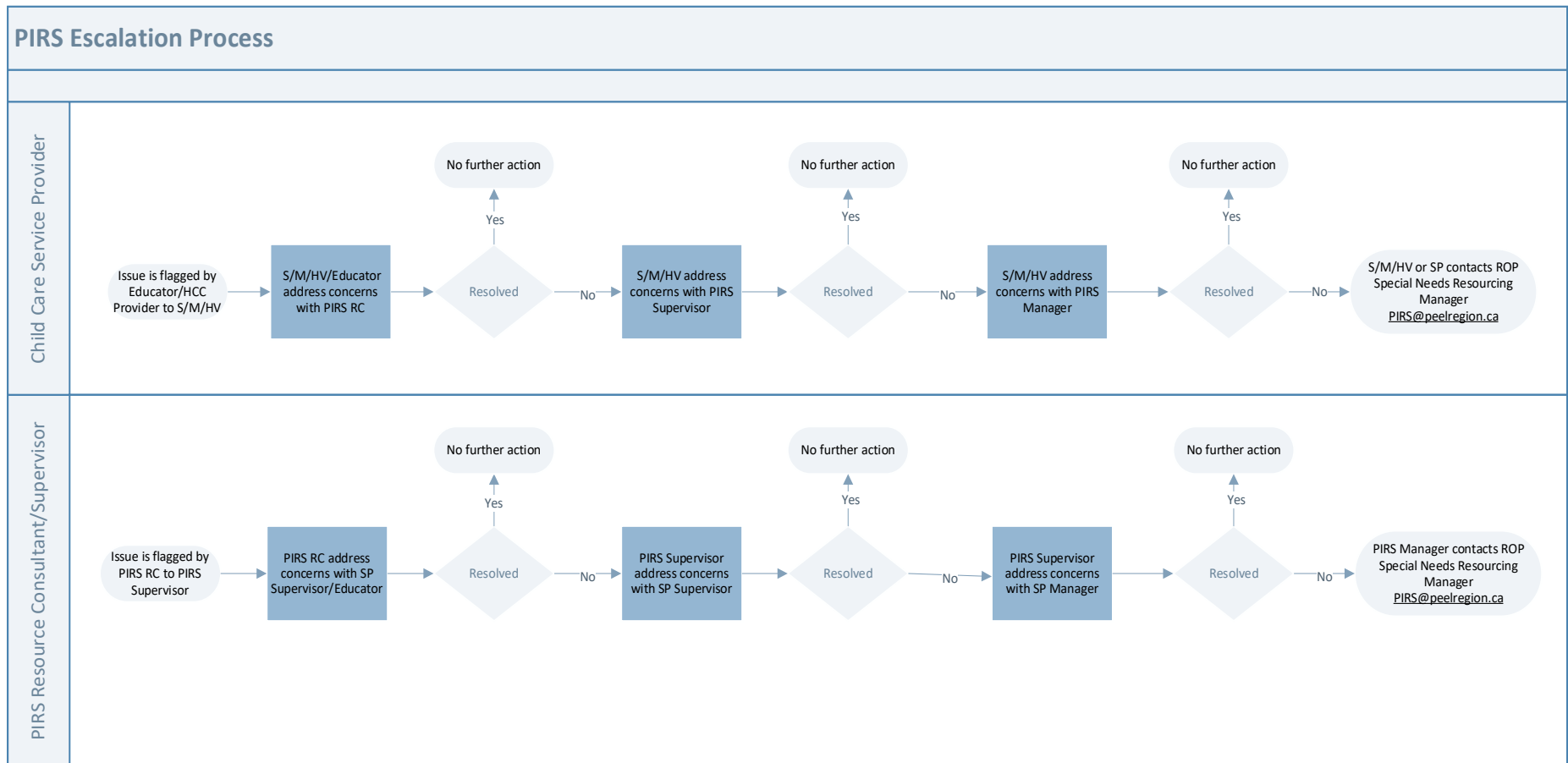
Inclusion: demonstrated when service providers attend to the individual needs of each child and support opportunities for all children to learn with their peers. Inclusive practice includes being actively aware of the capabilities, personalities and circumstances of all children and understanding the diversity of development.

Participation: demonstrated when a range of instructional approaches and accommodations are used to support every child in making choices, developing real relationships, and having a voice for maximum engagement in play, learning activities and social interactions.

Belonging: demonstrated when children feel accepted, cultivate authentic relationships and have a sense of connectedness to others in the child care program. Children demonstrate a sense of belonging when they feel included and safe in relationships and can engage fully in ways that are most comfortable to them.

Appendix 2: PIRS Escalation Process

| Legend | |
|---------|----------------------------------|
| Acronym | Description |
| PIRS | Peel Inclusion Resource Services |
| RC | Resource Consultant |
| S/M/HV | Supervisor/Manager/Home Visitor |
| SP | Service Provider |
| ROP | Region of Peel |



For more information visit peelregion.ca



Appendix 3: PIRS New Placement Process

The *New Placement Process* is designed to support families in accessing child care that is right for them. It reflects the individual child and/or unique situation. When the process is used in a proactive, timely and effective manner, it will help increase access, support children and families, and build on the strengths of the service provider team.

Supporting new placements means child care program staff implement the steps within the *New Placement Process* before denying access to child care for any child.

The service provider will identify who from the program will take the lead, for example, program supervisor/manager/home visitor.

Process:

Provide an open and welcoming enrolment process that is inclusive of all children and families.

Actions with Family

Have discussions with the child's parent/legal guardian(s)

- Discuss child's strengths, needs and interests
- Discuss any observations related to areas of concern/challenge
- Explore factors that could impact a child's successful transition into the program such as medical, physical health, emotional and mental health, culture and language and cognitive factors

Discuss services currently being accessed by the child and family (e.g., speech and language services) to determine if or how strategies can be used to support their transition into the program

Introduce PIRS supports

- Discuss PIRS support and the role of RC
 - Review the RC information (posted on the parent board)
 - Share [PIRS video](#)

Direct families to Peel's [Support for children in licensed child care web page](#) for more information or to complete a PIRS referral

Actions with Resource Consultant

Have discussions with the RC to brainstorm ideas to support access (maintain confidentiality by not sharing personal family/child information)

- Flag issues that may prevent placement
- Discuss general strategies to support access
- Discuss and assess the program, cohorts, environment, schedule, etc. to identify opportunities to make small program changes that could support access

Introduce PIRS supports

For more information visit peelregion.ca



Invite the RC to participate in a meeting with the family to discuss PIRS and the role of the RC

If, after implementing the New Placement Process, Providers are unable to proceed with enrolment they will complete the actions below.

Actions with Family

- Provide clear communication to the family about why the Program is not able to enroll their child at this time.
 - Offer to place the child on the program’s wait list as appropriate

Provide InfoPeel information to assist the family in exploring other child care options

Actions with Resource Consultant

- Discuss messages that can be shared with the family

Programs are to document the actions they have taken to support a child’s access to the program including, but not limited to, dates of meetings and discussions, meeting attendees, plans and strategies discussed, actions taken and by whom.

For more information visit peelregion.ca



Appendix 4: PIRS Continued Placement Process

The *Continued Placement Process* is intended to support existing placements and will reflect the individual child and/or unique situation. When the process is implemented in a timely and effective manner, it is a successful way to increase inclusion, support children and families and build on the strengths of the service provider team.

Supporting existing at-risk placements when concerns arise means child care program staff implement the steps within the *Continued Placement Process* prior to terminating the care of any child.

The child care program manager/supervisor/home visitor will identify who from the program will take the lead, for example the educator/home child care provider.

Process:

Provide an open and welcoming enrolment process that is inclusive of all children and families.

Actions with Educators

Collaborate as a team

- Assess the environment, schedule and program to identify opportunities to make changes that could support success
- Document informal observations related to the area of concern or challenge
- Record the child's strengths, needs and interests
- Put additional strategies in place to support the child and educators such as:
 - Action plan
 - Safety plan
 - Communication strategy between family and service provider (Communication book)

Implement all agreed upon strategies consistently

Actions with Family

Engage in discussions with the child's parent/legal guardian(s)

- Discuss child's strengths, needs and interests
- Discuss observations/concerns including both positive comments and constructive feedback related to area of concern/challenge
- Explore whether there are other factors that could be affecting a child's participation in the program for example, medical, physical health, emotional and mental health, culture and language and cognitive factors
- Discuss services currently being accessed by the child and family (e.g. speech and language services) to determine if or how strategies can be used within the program
- Seek consent to work with the Resource Consultant (if applicable)
 - Schedule ongoing meetings with the family and other partners to review and evaluate progress

For more information visit [peelregion.ca](https://www.peelregion.ca)



Introduce PIRS supports (if applicable)

- Discuss PIRS support and the role of RC
 - Review the RC information (posted on the parent board)
 - Share [PIRS video](#)

Direct families to Peel Region's [Support for children in licensed child care web page](#) for more information or to complete a PIRS referral

Actions with Resource Consultant

Engage in discussions with the RC to:

- Brainstorm ideas to support continued placement (maintain confidentiality by not disclosing personal family/child information)
- Seek resources including requesting a General Classroom Consultation or Child Specific Brief Consultation (with consent)
- During the brief consultation process, seek support to implement all agreed upon strategies and suggestions consistently

Introduce PIRS supports (if applicable)

- Invite the RC to participate in a meeting with the family to discuss PIRS and the role of the RC

If, after the above noted steps and actions have been implemented, it is found that the child's needs cannot be met within the program, the service provider may choose to end the child's placement and will:

Actions with Family

- Provide clear communication about why the program is not able to continue to meet the needs of their child
- Give a reasonable period of notice
- Provide [InfoPeel](#) information to assist the family in finding other child care options

Provide appropriate community resource information to support the child and family

Actions with Resource Consultant

- Discuss messages that can be shared with the family
- Discuss any appropriate community resources to support the child and family

Programs are to document the actions they have taken to support a child's access to a program including, but not limited to, things such as dates of and attendees at meetings or in discussions, plans/strategies discussed, actions taken and by whom.

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