

























## 6. Impact on educators: A Community of Practice

Educators participating in CR4YC have established a network and community of practice that goes beyond individual districts, groups, and roles. Over 4 years, as participants have discussed, documented, and shared stories of their work with their “wonder children”, key themes associated with effective practice and Indigenous principles of learning continue to stand out.

- Recognizing children’s strengths
- Facilitating child-led play
- Listening to children’s voices
- Giving children time
- Connecting with the outdoor environment

Participants have responded to an annual survey about their practices over the last 5 years. The items for the survey were originally chosen because they reflected practices that were evident in contexts where children were becoming confident and capable learners with a strong sense of well-being.

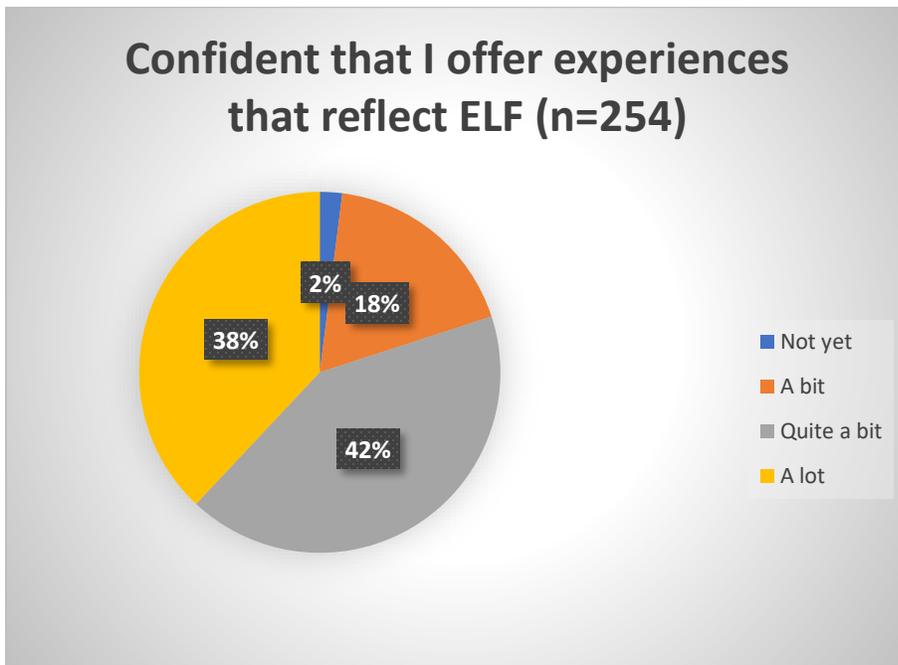
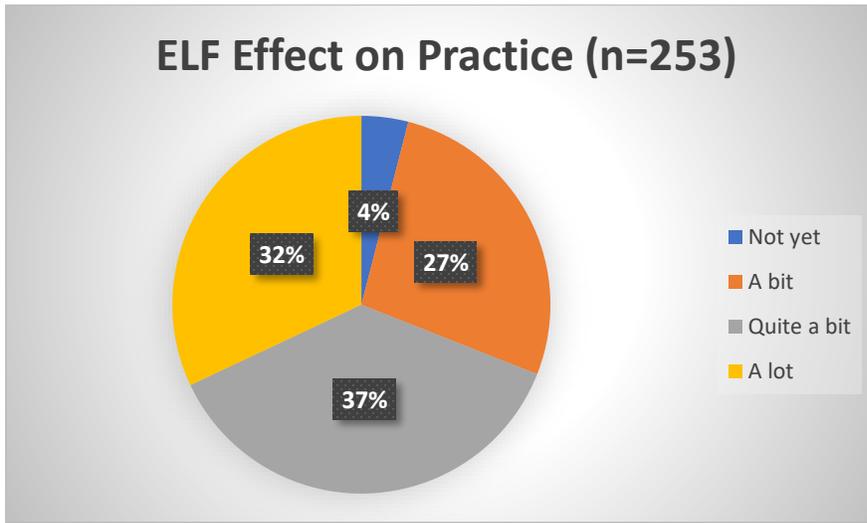
Initially, educators’ responses and reported practices varied from one setting to another. However, with the publication of *The Early Learning Framework* in 2019, and ongoing experiences and collaboration with their colleagues in *Changing Results for Young Learners*, results become more and more consistent from one setting to another. Whether the participants initially came from Strong Start Centres, Kindergartens, or Community Early Learning programs, educators shared similar beliefs and aspirations about their learners. We continue to ask a few of the same questions, but there is now little variability in the results.

### Impact on practice

The 256 participants that responded to the surveys indicate strong endorsement of both the *Early Learning Framework* and the experience of being part of a Changing Results for Young Children group: nearly 85% reported that CR4YC had affected their practice “quite a bit” or “a lot.” The result is slightly more positive than in the previous year, and is particularly striking in a year when groups were often unable to meet face-to-face, or had to accommodate odd hours or sites. Community-based educators faced strong challenges, often unable to find a way to meet because there was no coverage. School-based educators were often in situation where districts had stopped providing TOCs for professional development because there simply weren’t any. The high level of positive responses speaks to the commitment of these educators, the support they found in coming together, and the bonds they formed with each other.

Approximately 70% of the educators reported that the ELF had impacted their practice *a lot*, or *quite a bit*. Again, this was a more positive result than we had anticipated in a year when educators had minimal face-to-face interaction.

Two looks at the same concept (difference is level of confidence)



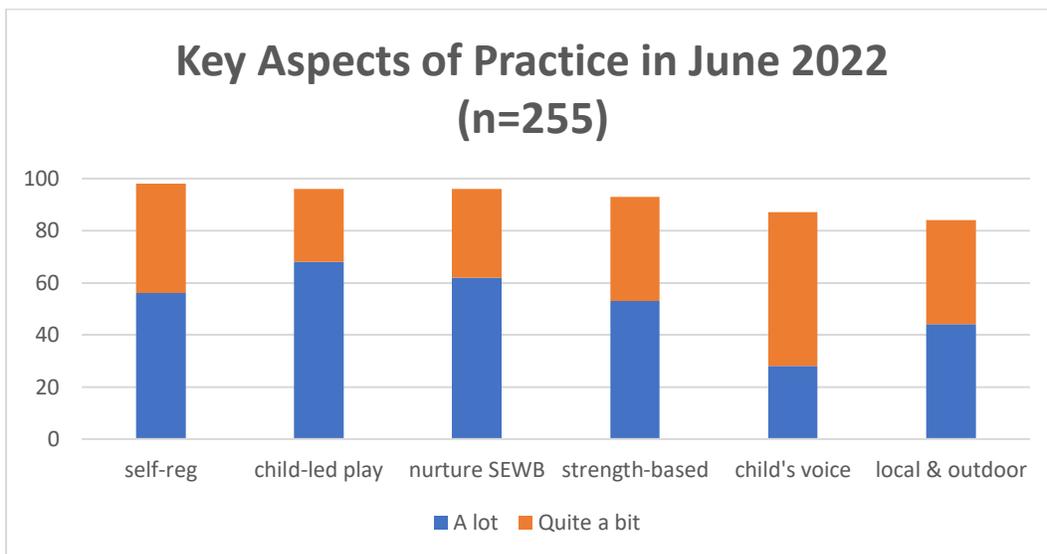
## Specific practices

Similar to 2021, after participating in CR4YC, over 90% of participants reported that they focused on:

- Helping children develop self-regulation (98%)
- Creating opportunities for child-led play (96%)
- Nurturing children’s SEWB (96%)
- Stating and building on children’s strengths (93%)

Over 80% reported focusing on:

- Listening to the child’s voice (87%)
  - Opportunities to connect with local communities and outdoor environment (84%)
- Note: COVID-19 protocols affected opportunities to make these connections. These results strongly suggest that there is a community of practice – that these educators generally value and demonstrate a similar body of practice that is consistent with the Early Learning Framework. In fact, 80% are confident that they offer experiences that reflect the ELF.

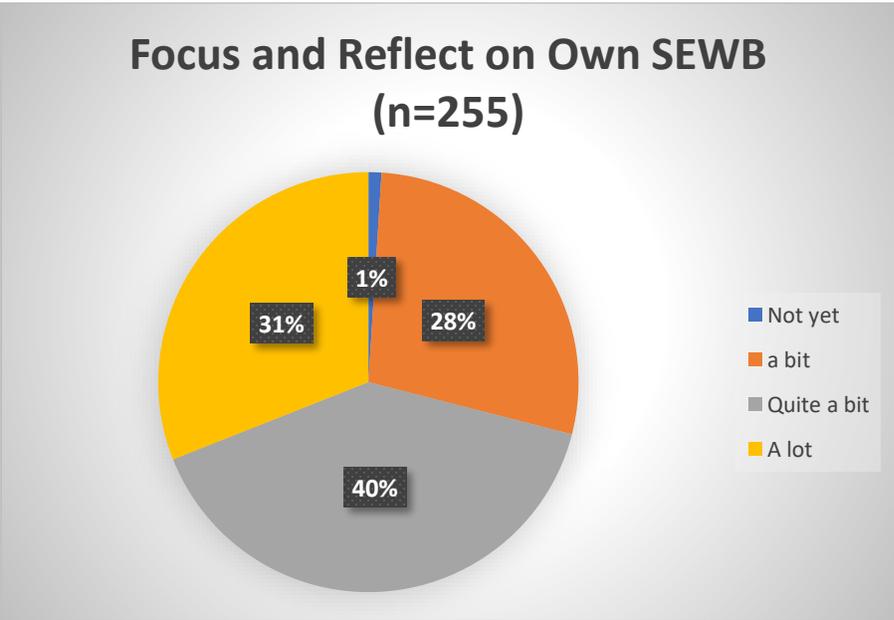


Collaboration is one of the key features of CR4YC – collaboration among Strong Start educators, community-based preschool educators and Kindergarten teachers in the same community. Under COVID protocols and related barriers, traditional forms of collaboration were often impossible. Educators rarely met face-to-face; they were generally not able to visit each others’ classrooms and centres. However, they did continue to seek out opportunities to collaborate, to use social media to make connections, and to support each other:

- Approximately half reported that seeking opportunities to collaborate was “A lot like me”, and a further 39% said it was “quite a bit like me.”



Participants were also asked about their own SEWB:



- Forty-percent of participants reported that CR4YC had affected the extent to which they focused on reflected on their own SEWB.

*CR4YC has changed my career as a teacher. It has brought out the passion I have for working with children and helped me validate and advocate for our young learners. It has even made a huge impact on my own social emotional well-being. Life changing!!!!*

### What have we learned about educators' practices?

- The educators in CR4YC are part of a community of practice that values and reflects principles of the ELF including:
  - Children are strong, capable in their uniqueness, and full of potential
  - Play is integral to well-being and learning
- They value their experiences with CR4YC and recognize its impact on their practice and their intentional focus on SEWB
- They seek out opportunities to collaborate even under challenging circumstances
- They recognize the importance of their own and their colleagues SEWB