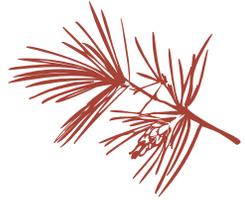


FOREST SCHOOL: THE ROAD TO REGULATION



A THREE-YEAR
PARTNERSHIP WITH
THE LAWSON
FOUNDATION



AGENDA

What is Forest School?
Is it good for children?
Why Regulate?
How to Get There



THE VISION

Partnership between NL and Lawson Foundation to

- Operate a regulated all-weather, all-season ELCC program
- Develop a lab school to train educators and inspectors in play-based, place-based learning



EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING IS A KEY SOCIAL DETERMINANT OF HEALTH

- **Play is central** to healthy child development
- Average Canadian 3-year-old spends **more than 2 hours a day staring at a TV or computer**
- Sedentary habits, screen time, limited access to green spaces are harming children's health
- The WHO recommends all children **be physically active at least 3 hours a day**
- **Growing demand** for child care and outdoor learning



FOREST SCHOOL IS...

... an educational ethos and practice that centres the Land and the child-at-play. Children and educators build a relationship with the Land through regular and repeated access to the same outdoor space over an extended period of time. Educators support learning through a pedagogical framework that is rooted in place and play, directed and inspired by the child (emergent curriculum), and driven by a process of inquiry.

Child and Nature Alliance of Canada

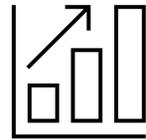


FOREST SCHOOL RESEARCH FINDINGS



WELL-ESTABLISHED

Established since the 1950s in Denmark & exported worldwide



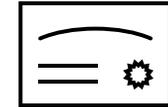
WELL RESEARCHED & EVALUATED

Extensive body of evidence in multiple jurisdictions especially Scandinavia, Europe, UK & North America
Some research gaps
Weight of evidence overwhelmingly positive



EFFECTIVE & BENEFICIAL

Long-term benefits across developmental domains
Risk benefit assessment approach teaches child competence, connection, trust & confidence



QUALITY & LICENSING

Common principles based on holistic child development theory
Child outcomes central
Risk benefit assessment model & tools
Trained practitioners
Precedence & models for licensing

CLOUDBERRY FOREST SCHOOL YEAR ONE EVALUATION

- High-quality, child-centred Forest School
- Staff-child ratios exceed regulatory standards
- Highly trained, exceptional leaders & staff
- Explicit teaching of risk monitoring & consent
- Survey shows families strongly support FS
- FS child benefits & impacts occurring
- Daily reflective practice & strong mentoring
- Transitioning to a non-profit organization
- Community partnerships in place, growing
- Gap analysis showed closer alignment than expected with existing regulations



AN INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED EDUCATIONAL APPROACH

Country	Name
Denmark	Naturbørnehaven
Sweden	I Ur Och Sku
Germany	Waldekindergarten
United Kingdom	Forest School, Forest Nurseries
Canada	Forest & Nature School
United States	Nature preschools
Australia	Bush Kindergarten
New Zealand	Enviroschool
Japan	Mari-no-youchien

WHY REGULATE?

- Bi-lateral priority is more quality, affordable & accessible child care spaces to improve child outcomes, enable parents to work
- Growing demand for outdoor learning in NL is necessitating regulation
- FS approach is well-aligned with NL's Early Learning Framework, Health Accord & Social & Economic Well Being Strategy (in progress)
- It can be done here, & pre-empts future problems



SCOTLAND

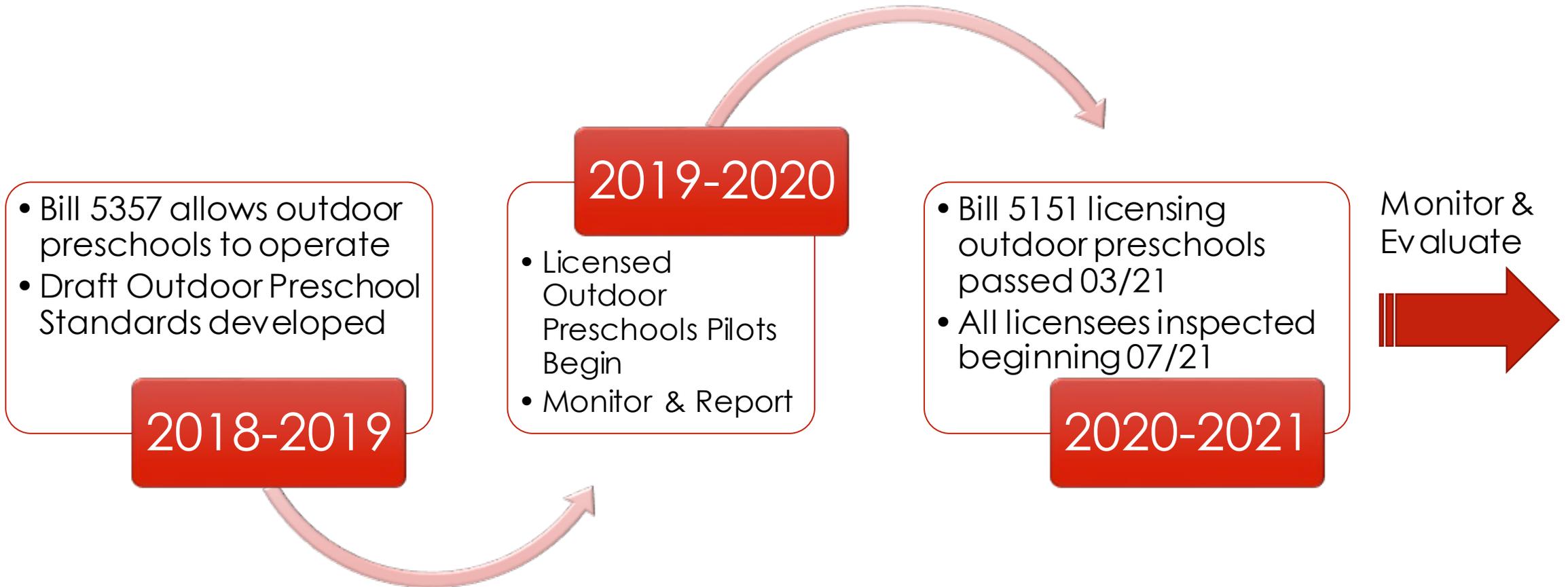
What They Did

- EL framework, ELCC investment, play mandate, child outcomes, & best practices including outdoor settings
- Accessible, high-quality ECE training on outdoor play, risk-benefit assessment, specific FS training
- Ongoing professional training & development, professional networks
- Collaborative framework of continuous improvement between inspectors, operators; specific guidelines & best practice materials in place

Results So Far

- FSs have been receiving higher grades than the national average for children's daycare services
- Number of outdoor ELCC services growing rapidly
- FS guidelines & practices influencing conventional child care services, training
- Evidence base expanding & strengthening

WASHINGTON STATE

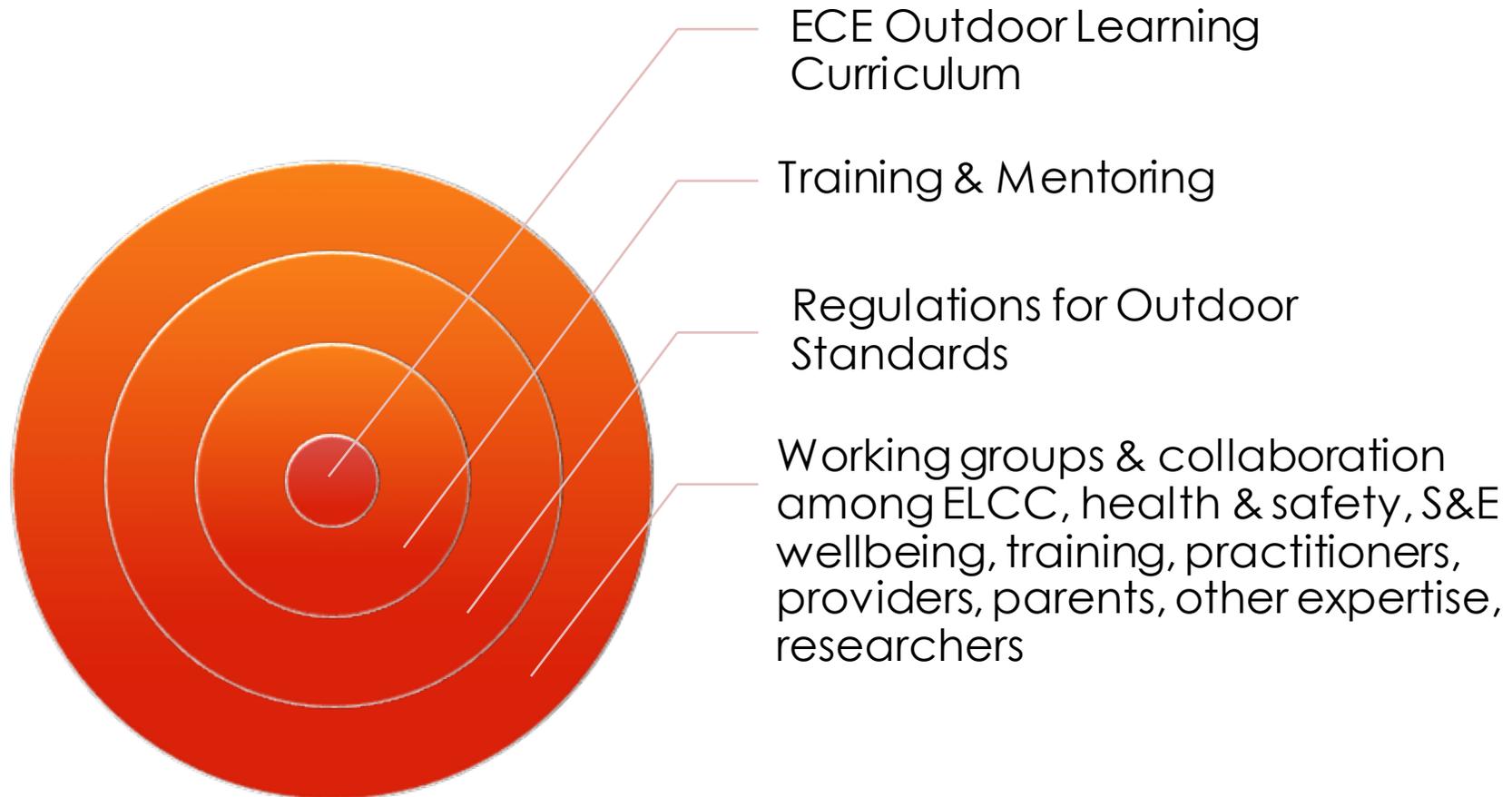




OUTDOOR NATURE-BASED CHILDCARE TOUCHSTONE STANDARDS

- Staff qualifications & training
- Written policies on outdoor nature-based risk assessment
- Detailed site inspections (removal of hazards, mitigations) & emergency plans
- Risk management plan (e.g., wildlife, foraging, missing children, & seasonal changes to hazards)
- Weather-related policies & practices (clothing, conditions, limits)
- Outdoor active supervision & outdoor toileting
- Food safety & food preparation
- Fire prevention & fire safety policies & practices
- Environmental policies & practices

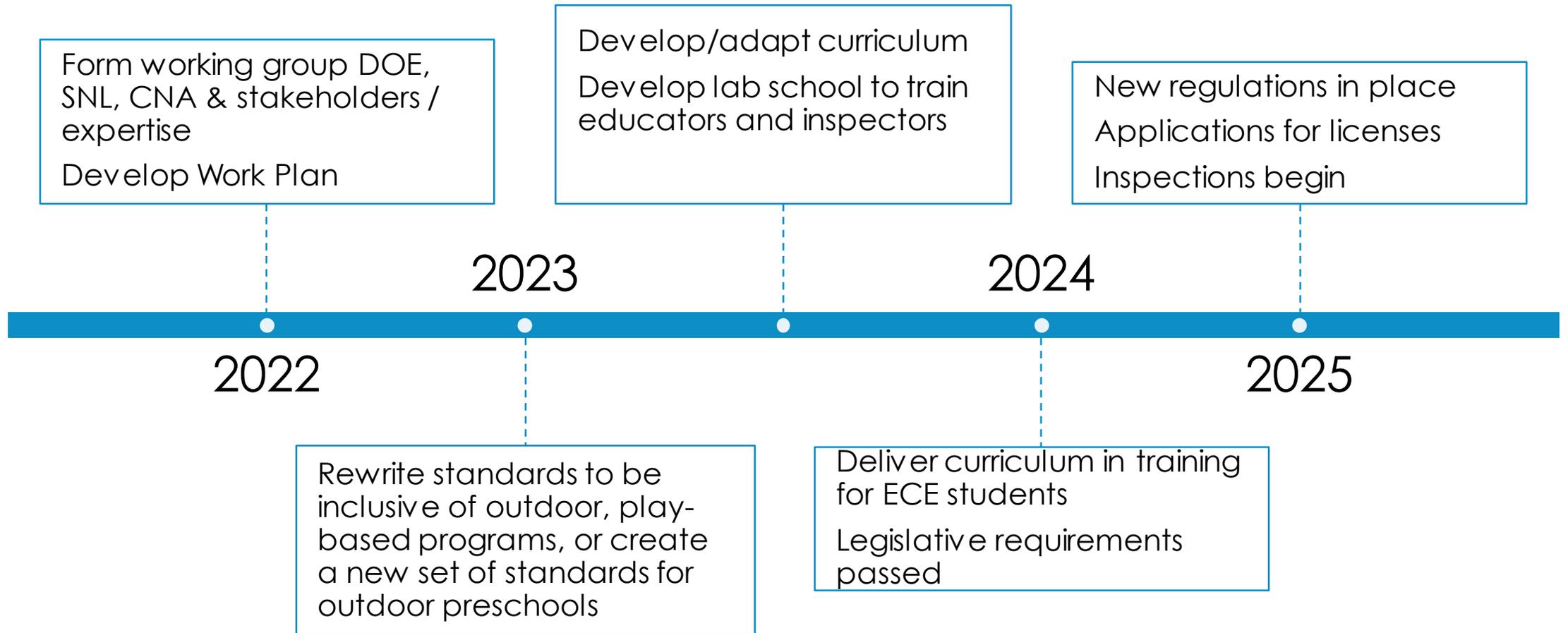
KEY ELEMENTS OF CHANGE



OPTIONS & PATHWAYS

- Range of options for ELCC play-based, place-based outdoor learning
- Develop regulations with new standards to be inclusive of outdoor, play-based programs, or create a new set of standards for outdoor preschools
 - Addresses gaps in regulations & standards for outdoor spaces
 - Qualifies outdoor preschools for new fees, wage & training subsidies, inclusion support
 - Aligns outdoor preschools to meet increased demands & needs
- Partner with AECENL to develop forest school classification in ECE training
- Develop curriculum for ELCC play-based, place-based outdoor learning
- Deliver accessible, affordable high-quality training for ECE students & training for inspectors
- Provide ongoing training for pre- and post-service educators
- Support community of practice and mentorship networks

TIMELINE

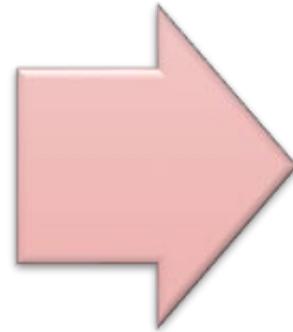


TRI-FOCAL LENS & PARADIGM SHIFT

Rules-Based
Conventional Early
Years Curriculum &
Centres

- Mainly
indoors

- Education
- Health & Safety
- Child Well-Being



Aligned Play-Based,
Place-Based EL
Curriculum & New
Outdoor Standards

- Mainly
Outdoors

THANK YOU

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