



Early Literacy Alliance of Waterloo Region

Partnering for early literacy. Ensuring a stronger future.

Terms of Reference – 2018

Early Literacy Alliance of Waterloo Region

Vision (Our Ideal Future):

Every child achieves their literacy potential. Families know the importance of early literacy, actively participate in their children's literacy development daily and when their children need more support they know how to readily access the help they need. Providers of children's services work well together to deliver exemplary programs and services. Our early literacy movement benefits the community, contributing to life-long success and well-being for all.

Mission (Our Role in Creating Ideal Future):

Early Literacy Alliance of Waterloo Region ignites and drives a sustainable early literacy movement.

Objectives

In meeting the above mission, the following objectives have been developed:

1. To **share** information about early literacy, programs, services and initiatives in Waterloo Region and communicate this information to all community service providers and families.
2. To **promote** early literacy, programs, services and initiatives in the Waterloo Region by bringing together community groups and agencies from diverse sectors.
3. To **educate** the community to improve literacy practices through collaborative training.
4. To **advocate** for responsive early literacy programs, services and initiatives.

Values (What We Hold Dear):

1. Universal access to early literacy programs and services
2. Early literacy is integral to life-long success and well-being
3. Collaboration among children's service providers
4. We speak with a united voice
5. Respect for all stakeholders

Principles (How We Approach Our Work):

- Current, relevant and evidence-based practices
- Early literacy is nurtured through playing, singing, talking, writing and reading
- Strength-based approach

Community Connections

ELAWR will maintain presence at the Children and Youth Planning Table (CYPT), will be actively involved at this Table through its place as a nested group with representation on the Steering Committee and look for opportunities to participate at other community tables ie. Wellbeing Waterloo Region, Smart Cities, Cambridge Mobilization Team etc.

Membership

Membership may include but is not limited to representatives from the following sectors:

- Preschool Speech and Language Program (PSL)
- EarlyON
- First 2000 Days Project
- Public Libraries
- School Boards
- Child Care Community
- Health Care Sector
- Colleges and Universities
- Special Needs Resourcing/Child Development Agencies
- Adult and Family Literacy Agencies
- Community Based Initiatives that support early literacy
- Literacy advocates from the community
- CYPT Members interested in early literacy
- Members from Collective Impact Initiatives with a vested interest in our work

Member agencies are encouraged to participate in the Early Literacy Alliance Committee for a minimum of two years. Distribution of minutes may occur to others who are interested in the Early Literacy Alliance.

Member Roles and Responsibilities

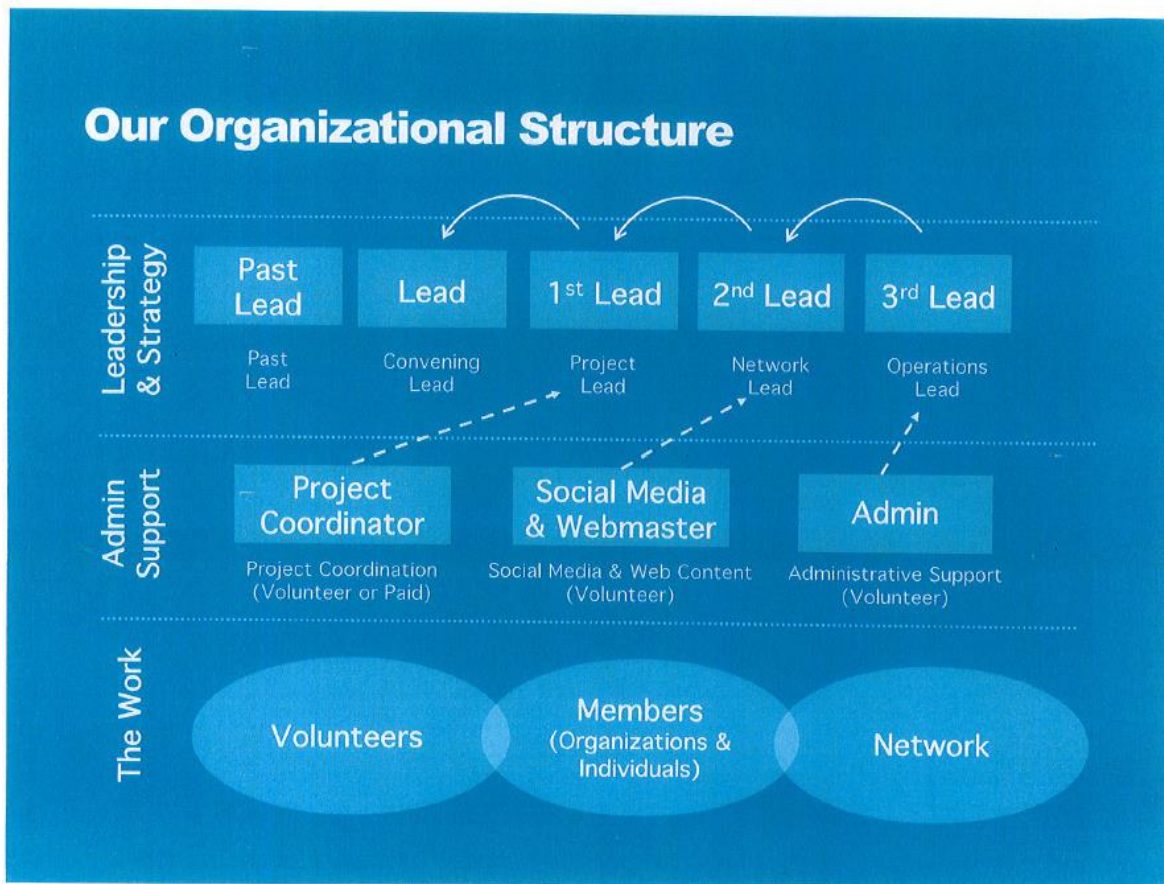
Members of the Early Literacy Alliance of Waterloo Region Committee will:

- Have a broad vision of early literacy
- Gather information from their sector
- Report back to their sector and individual organizations
- Be willing to speak to community groups/organizations about early literacy
- Have one vote per member/member organization
- Be encouraged to participate on an ELAWR subcommittee or event
- Be expected to attend regular meetings

Leadership

Leadership of ELAWR will be held by a series of 5 rotating leads, with each Lead position being held by an organization for approximately one year. The goal with a rotation Lead model is that a new organization moves into the Operations Lead position, does that work for a year, then moves into the Network Lead position, does that work for a year, then moves into the Project Lead position and so on. This model will build capacity within ELAWR. All member organizations are encouraged to serve as Leads. Currently, the Operations Lead position will be held by Project READ Literacy Network. This Lead position provides ongoing administrative and operational support for ELAWR. The intention in subsequent years is that an Operations Lead comes from the membership and that Project READ provides administrative support. Duration of terms may be impacted by project completion dates. This will be managed on a case by case basis at the approval of the Leadership Team who are directly impacted.

The Leadership Team will meet regularly to set direction for ELAWR, including reviewing the Terms of Reference, Strategic Plan objectives, orientation of new members and budgetary planning. The Leadership Team will be supported by an administration team comprised of ELAWR members.



Time Frame and Meeting Frequency

The strategic plan will be reviewed annually and the terms of reference will be reviewed bi-annually. Meetings will be 2 ½ hours in length and will be held five times per year.

Decision-Making Recommendations

Decisions will be made and recommendations generated through consensus whenever possible. When this is not possible, a majority vote will be taken. Members are expected to support decisions made by consensus or through voting.

Financial Accountability

Any major financial decisions, such as applying for grants, will be made by the ELAWR collaborative as a whole and recorded in the meeting minutes. If financial decisions are made by e-voting between meetings, the voting results will be emailed to members within two business days and added to the minutes of the next meeting.

The ELAWR operating budget will be held by KidsAbility. Any ELAWR special project/grant budgets will be held by the Project Lead Agency as identified in the project. Quarterly budget reports will be sent to Operations Lead by KidsAbility and the Project Lead Agency. Financial updates will be a standing item at each Leadership Team and general member meeting and will be recorded in meeting minutes.

The budget for any special projects/grants will be accessible to ELAWR members.

Any significant amendments within the special project/grants budget must be approved by the Leadership Team. If an expenditure has been included in the budget and the receipt/invoice has been signed by two members of the Leadership Team, no further approval is needed.

Project expenses/invoices – original invoices must be submitted to the Project Lead, who will garner the signature of a second lead and then submit for payment by the Project Lead Agency.

The signature of two members of the Leadership Team is required to process expense claims/invoices. Original receipts/invoices must be submitted to the Operations Lead. The Operations Lead will garner the signature of a second Lead and will forward the signed receipt/invoice to the Finance Manager at KidsAbility for reimbursement. All expenses must include the name of the payee, details of the expenses, and the address to which the cheque will be mailed. ELAWR does not have its own bank account.

Hiring of and communication with any consultants/support services will be led by the Leadership Team with consultation of members as necessary.

Approval Date: March 30, 2009

Reviewed: March 2010, May 2011, September 2012, September 2014, November 2016.

Revised and Approved: May 10, 2018