



Three-Year  
Summary  
Report on the  
**Early  
Learning  
and Child  
Care**

Bilateral Agreements  
2017 to 2020



**Three-Year Summary Report of the Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC)  
Bilateral Agreements 2017 to 2020**

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## **41 SUMMARY**



## **MINISTER'S MESSAGE**

I am pleased to present the Three-Year Summary Report of the Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Bilateral Agreements 2017 to 2020. The early years of life are critical to a child's development and wellbeing. As this report demonstrates, the Government of Canada, together with our provincial and territorial partners, has been delivering real results to increase access to high quality, affordable, flexible, and inclusive ELCC across the country.

Since 2017, the Government of Canada has been supporting each province and territory through bilateral agreements, providing funding that reflects their unique early learning and child care needs. Through these agreements, we committed \$1.2 billion over the three-year reporting period for ELCC programs.

We had a target of 40,000 new and more affordable child care spaces across the country by March 2020. That target was surpassed one year ahead of schedule! With the first set of bilateral agreements now concluded, I am pleased to announce the creation of approximately 50,000 new and more affordable spaces between 2017 and 2020. The successful creation of these new spaces is making a difference in the lives of so many families in Canada, but we know there is still more work to do.

The important accomplishments highlighted in this report give me the confidence that we are on the right path toward ensuring that all families in Canada have access to high-quality early learning and child care, and children have the best possible start in life.

Minister of Families, Children and Social Development,

**Jenna Sudds**

## KEY FINDINGS

The Three-Year Summary Report of the Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Bilateral Agreements 2017 to 2020 is based on provincial/territorial annual reports. It consists of a rollup report at the national level that aggregates the results of provinces and territories (P/Ts). It describes the progress made from 2017 to 2020 toward the quality, affordability, access, flexibility and inclusivity of ELCC as a result of federal transfers.

Key findings from this report include:

- The number of new and affordable ELCC spaces surpassed the projected target of 40,000 spaces. As of March 2020, P/Ts reported around 50,000 new and affordable spaces.
- Most P/Ts invested in improving the quality of the early childhood workforce. From 2017 to 2020, more than 14,300 individuals were awarded bursaries, scholarships, or grants to pursue post-secondary Early Childhood Education (ECE) credentials. In addition, more than 14,800 educators participated in professional development and/or in-service training, supported by ELCC funding.
- By 2020, approximately 3,300 licensed spaces were providing more flexible arrangements. These included arrangements that recognized non-standard hours of work for parents, or increased access in underserved communities such as rural, remote, and northern regions.

**Note:** All numbers reported were calculated by the Department of Employment and Social Development using P/T annual reports. Any errors associated with this calculation rest with the Department of Employment and Social Development.



## **INTRODUCTION**

This report provides a summary of the progress reported by each province and territory in ELCC over the 2017 to 2020 period. It presents a summary of P/T activities undertaken using ELCC federal transfers and how the activities supported the development of high quality, affordable, accessible, flexible, and inclusive child care. It has been informed by annual progress reports submitted by provinces and territories on investments and results from April 2017 until March 2020.



## **OVERVIEW OF EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE**

Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers Most Responsible for ELCC agree on the importance of supporting parents, families, and communities in their efforts to ensure the best possible future for children in Canada. The Multilateral ELCC Framework recognizes that commitment and that the early years of life are critical in the development and future well-being of the child and the continuum of learning. During this period, experiences can significantly influence children's rapid brain development, creating the foundation for supporting competencies including, but not limited to, the ability to regulate emotions and enjoy positive interactions with others. These foundational skills in turn impact learning, behavior, and health today and in the future; this is particularly true for children who belong to vulnerable groups.

High quality ELCC provides rich early learning experiences and environments. It views children as capable, competent learners who are full of potential. It asserts the importance of building strong, responsive, and respectful relationships in which purposeful interactions support optimal learning for children. High quality ELCC recognizes the importance of qualifications and training for the early childhood workforce.<sup>1</sup> The evidence is clear. There are positive relationships between quality ELCC, especially for less advantaged children, parental labour market participation, especially for women, and child developmental outcomes.

In 2017, the Government of Canada began investing in ELCC under the principles outlined in the Multilateral ELCC Framework. The investment supports the development of high-quality, affordable, accessible, flexible, and inclusive child care across the country.

The ELCC Framework is a shared commitment amongst officials to work toward a long-term vision where all children can receive quality ELCC. Investments have been made to increase access to affordable high-quality ELCC that meets the varying needs of Canadian children and families.

Access to affordable and flexible ELCC supports families so they can go to work, attend school, and take care of their children. Flexible child care meets the needs of harder-to-serve populations. Inclusive ELCC systems respect different types of family situations. This could include but is not limited to children and families who

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/early-learning-child-care/reports/2017-multilateral-framework.html>



are newcomers to Canada, who live in Indigenous or official language minority communities, live in challenging circumstances, or children who need additional developmental support.

Provinces and Territories are primarily responsible for ELCC and therefore already fund their own programs in this area. P/T ELCC programs are based on P/T policy priorities and reflect P/T regional and cultural differences. Federal investment in ELCC allows P/Ts to add to their existing programs, according to their own policies and goals.

The Federal Government's investments in ELCC fall into four streams:

- transfers to provinces and territories (P/Ts) through bilateral agreements
- data, research, and outreach
- innovation
- Indigenous ELCC

This report focuses on the transfers to P/Ts, which represents most of the federal government investments in ELCC from 2017 to 2020.



# Accomplishments

## By province and territory in 2017 to 2020

The following section provides highlights of provincial and territorial accomplishments from 2017 to 2020, in accordance with the shared principles of affordability, access, quality, flexibility and inclusivity as outlined in their ELCC bilateral agreements. More information on any of these programs, as well as any other programs and services, is available from the P/Ts.

### **British Columbia**

#### Provincial Priorities

- Quality child care
- Accessible and affordable child care
- Underserved communities

#### Quality child care

British Columbia's (BC) ECE Education Support Fund received a total of \$15.9M and has provided approximately 7,800 bursaries to over 5,000 students.

A Professional Development Bursaries program provided professional development opportunities for more than 3,396 ECEs with an emphasis on supporting Indigenous ECEs and ECEs in rural and remote communities. The ECE Peer Mentoring program for new and experienced ECEs saw 19 facilitators across 17 communities support the ongoing professional development needs of 200 beginning and experienced ECEs.

Three ELCC organizations partnered to develop the BC Early Years Professional Development Hub. It is a shared online platform with e-learning modules, to support for communities of practice, and networking opportunities. By fall 2020, this platform had 500 members.

New Relationship Trust Foundation provided 159 financial awards to support 122 Indigenous post-secondary students through the Indigenous Early Years Scholarships and Bursaries program. Funds were distributed to eligible First Nations, Metis and Inuit students enrolled in recognized ECE programs or aligned early years programs (e.g., Child & Youth Care, Occupational Therapy). The NRTF provided bursaries to 89 Indigenous ECE students from summer 2019 to winter 2020.

The Aboriginal Head Start Association of BC developed an online platform and expanded training for the LOVIT Way Program Evaluation Process, sharing over 400 copies of the tool to other programs.

## Access to child care

In partnership with the Union of BC Municipalities, the Ministry of Children and Family Development created the Community Child Care Space Creation Program. This program was supported with \$18.5M in funding available to local governments to create new child care spaces for children aged 0-5 years. The program has funded 20 projects creating 489 new spaces.

## Affordable child care

BC has committed to developing child care as a core service: to be available to any family that wants it when they need it and at a price they can afford. In 2018, BC took an initial step towards child care as a core service by converting approximately 2,500 existing licensed spaces into \$10a-Day spaces. This included over 50 \$10 a Day Child Care BC Centres across the province. Each of the original \$10 a Day Sites was required to offer infant/toddler care. Families pay a maximum of \$200 per month (or \$10/day) per child for regular full-time care. By 2020, over 2,800 children attended a \$10-a-day centre.

Young Parent Programs (YPP) throughout BC offer child care services for children of young parents who are working toward completion of their high-school education. The aim of YPPs is to enable the young parents to obtain the education required to maximize their opportunities for professional success, support them in their caregiving roles, and promote their child's development through access to quality child care.

Prior to the implementation of the ELCC Agreement, parents enrolled in a YPP could receive up to \$1,000 per month toward their child care costs through the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development's former Child Care Subsidy. It was replaced by the Affordable Child Care Benefit in 2018 – an amount that exceeded the maximum level of funding available for non-YPP Child Care Subsidy clients.

- Through the ELCC Agreement, in FY 2017/18, the Government of BC increased the maximum monthly amount available to YPP clients. It was increased to \$1,500 to promote the sustainability of the programs and help ensure young families receive this much-needed support.
- In addition, through amendments made to the Child Care Subsidy Regulation, in September 2018, funding is now available based on enrollment, rather than an attendance. This provides enhanced stability for YPP facilities, and ensuring supports are available regardless of individual schedules.
- In 2020/21, the province incorporated the full funding support of the Young Parent Program under the provincially funded Affordable Child Care Benefit, maintaining the \$1,500 per child, per month level of support.

## Underserved communities

The Aboriginal Head Start Association of BC (AHSABC) and the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) received capital funding to establish new Aboriginal Head Start (AHS) programs. The programs will be on and off reserve across BC starting in 2017/18. Since then, 30 of 31 new AHS programs have opened with no fee, early care and learning support to Indigenous children and their families. Operational funding is available to AHSABC and FNHA to fund ongoing operation



of these programs. 618 of 643 spaces at these 31 programs are currently operational, (exceeding the initial target of 500 AHS spaces), 340 of which are on-reserve and 278 off-reserve.

Investments for land-based play were made at 14 AHS programs and for a cultural AHS storyteller project at off reserve AHS programs.

The bilateral ELCC agreement increases funding to \$10M annually to Supported Child Development (SCD) and Aboriginal Supported Child Development (ASCD) programs over three years. This funding will support reducing wait times for families and provide increased service. SCD and ASCD are community-based programs that offer a range of consulting and support services to children, families, and child care centres. This allows children with support needs can participate in fully inclusive child care settings. The ASCD program provides these supports in a culturally relevant and meaningful way.

Comparison of 2017/18 and 2019/20 data suggests that the \$10M ELCC annual enhancement resulted in the following:

- An average of 1,191 more children being served each month, for a total of monthly average of 7,166 children, improving overall access to inclusive child care
- A 30 per cent average increase in direct service hours across all children accessing SCD and ASCD, enabling access to increased hours of child care.



## Alberta

### Provincial priority

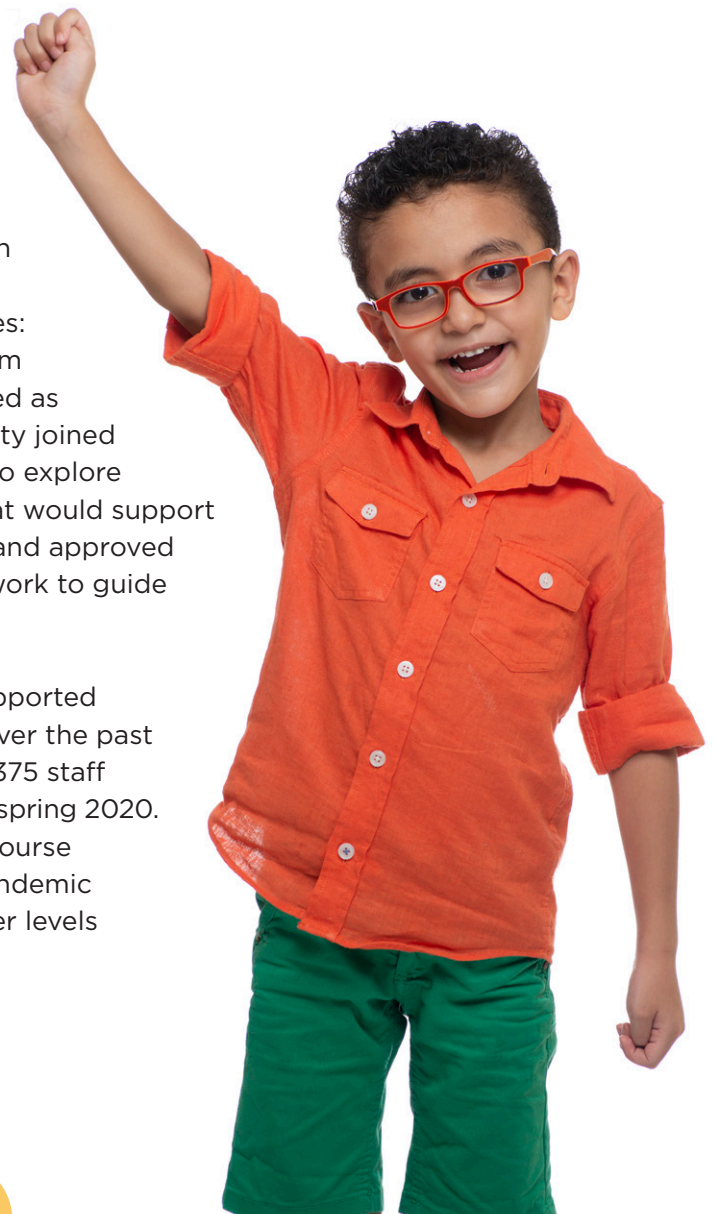
- To address and test concepts of quality, access, affordability, flexibility, and inclusion by investing in ELCC centres.

The Government of Alberta developed a pilot program to test concepts in the areas of access, affordability, and quality in selected ELCC centres. ELCC centres provide affordable (\$25/day) child care to children from birth to 5 years old. ELCC centres increase access to quality child care through the creation of new spaces or increased enrollment. ELCC funding was invested to expand the pilot program.

### Quality

With ELCC funding support, MacEwan University produced, and pilot tested the Play, Participation, and Possibilities: An Early Learning and Care Curriculum Framework for Alberta, now rebranded as “Flight” in 2018. Mount Royal University joined MacEwan University in the pilot test to explore models of pedagogical leadership that would support staff in licensed child care programs and approved family day homes in using the framework to guide curriculum planning and practices.

All ELCC centres trained staff and supported in the ELCC curriculum framework. Over the past three years, there are approximately 375 staff that have completed the course as of spring 2020. Participation and completion of the course was not adversely affected by the pandemic and in fact may have supported higher levels of engagement.



All ELCC centres were also matched with and supported by a Pedagogical Partner from Alberta Resource centre for Quality Enhancement. Core team members have participated in training, receiving onsite support, and participated in communities of practice.

ARCQE supported 16 Regional Learning Communities throughout the province of Alberta and hosted 72 ELCC centres in regional learning community sessions. To support theory to practice application of course concepts, 98 ELCC centres were provided with pedagogical supports to develop the centres pedagogical leadership and build connections to regional communities of practice for ongoing development of curriculum planning practices within a social constructivist framework.

### Access, affordability, and flexibility

As of March 2020, there were 6,089 Children enrolled in operational ELCC centres. All children participating in ELCC centres have reduced fees of \$25 per day. This fee is lower than the average child care fee in Alberta. As well, 20% of the children enrolled in the ELCC centres (i.e., 1,226 out of 6,089 enrolled) received subsidy as of March 2020. Approximately half (50) of the 98 ELCC centres offered flexible child care as of March 2020. There were 3,006 licensed spaces available in these 50 centres.

### Inclusion

All 98 ELCC centres participate in Access Support and Participation, a program that promotes and supports inclusion for children through training, onsite support, and development of action plans. As of March 2020, there are 9 Francophone ELCC centres, and an additional 5 ELCC centres supporting Indigenous programming.



## **Saskatchewan**

### Provincial Priorities

- Enhance the experience of children in licensed child care by investing in training and resources for licensed child care providers to ensure high-quality programming.
- Expand access to high quality child care in both centre-based and home-based sectors.
- Support early learning opportunities for children experiencing disability through innovative pilots
- Minority language inclusion: Supports for the Francophone sector

### Investing in training and resources

Saskatchewan made significant investments in providing training for ECEs in licensed centres and homes. Grants for resources and ECE workshops focused on Play and Exploration, the province's early learning curriculum framework. From 2017 to 2020, approximately 600 centres and homes benefited from this initiative. Additionally, the Active Play Grant impacted over 600 licensed centres and homes and involved 1,350 people in related workshops. The grant provided equipment to encourage active play.

A series of leadership training modules were offered for centre directors to enhance their skills. The module focused on employee supervision, communication, coaching, developing effective teams, and change management. Over a two-year period, more than 200 directors of licensed centres participated in 29 different leadership training sessions across the province.

In support of Truth and Reconciliation, a series of Aboriginal Awareness Training workshops were held across the province for: ECEs, Early Interventionists, Kids First community developers, program managers and home visitors. In total, 897 individuals from the early years sector participated in 15 workshops across Saskatchewan. In addition, 100 registrations were accepted for a three-hour online session.



## Expanded access to high quality child care

Creation of new spaces was encouraged through a series of grants including capital, start up, health and safety, nutrition, equipment, and programming materials. Over the 2017 to 2020 period, 1295 new spaces were created in licensed centres, and 1032 new spaces in licensed homes.

## Early learning opportunities for children experiencing disability

The Children Communicating, Connecting and in the Community (4C) Pilot was launched in fall 2018. The program provides access to early educational intervention for children who are deaf and hard of hearing to reduce communication barriers. Children's development is supported through inclusive environments with trained staff and appropriate technology. The pilot involved preschool-aged children who are deaf, deaf, and hard of hearing, or who are connected to the deaf, deaf, and hard of hearing communities. Between 2018 and 2020, 37 children participated.

The Early Learning Intensive Support Pilot supported children with intensive needs to attend selected Prekindergarten with additional supports. By 2020, 242 spaces were funded across the province.

## Francophone minority language inclusion

Over 2017 to 2020, a total of 75 Francophone spaces were created with ELCC investment for both start up and operating costs. This support will continue into 2021.





## Manitoba

### Provincial Priorities

- Support New and Newly Funded Affordable and Accessible Spaces
- Build Sector Capacity and Stability
- Rural and Northern Strategy
- Diversity and Inclusion

### Support new and newly funded affordable and accessible spaces

Manitoba funded the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation (MHRC) to invest in community capital projects to create infant and preschool licensed child care spaces in communities in greater need and/or serving higher need populations. Although slightly delayed by construction delays, 706 new spaces have been created to date.

To ensure affordability of child care to higher-need communities, Manitoba provided operating subsidies for licensed child care spaces created through expansion projects not requiring capital investments. A total of 744 new spaces received funding from 2017 to 2020 ensuring that new spaces are affordable.

A working group was established to support the conversion of family child care homes into 10 new hybrid group homes with higher capacity for spaces, prioritizing rural/ Northern communities.



## Build sector capacity and stability

In partnership with the Manitoba Child Care Association, Manitoba invested in an online training program in board governance and administration for Boards of Directors of non-profit licensed centres. From 2017 to 2020, a total of 1,409 board members from 211 unique ELCC facilities (representing 54% of non-profit centres in the province) completed the training program.

In partnership with Red River College, Manitoba created an early childhood development education and information portal for professional development. Over the 2017 to 2020 period, 10,304 unique users have accessed the portal.

## Rural and northern strategy

A new block funding grant for rural and Northern ELCC facilities was introduced in order to increase the number of flexible ELCC arrangements for children from diverse and harder to serve populations. A total of 36 centres with 2,316 spaces received this funding from 2017 through 2020.

## Diversity and Inclusion

Manitoba invested in a Dual Stream Service and Funding Approach for children with additional support needs. The funding provided resources, training, and enhanced staffing necessary for the inclusion of children with disabilities. From 2017 to 2020, 830 children with disabilities or autism received support.

Training in Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) was provided for ECEs. ABA is a therapeutic approach used with children with autism to teach social behaviours to increase acceptance. The training increased the skills of the staff and enhanced the capacity of centres to work with children with diverse needs. Over the 3-year period, 265 ECEs from 28 child care centres participated in this training.

Between 2018 and 2020, grants were available to all self-identified Indigenous ELCC facilities to support Indigenous programming. In its first year, 15 facilities serving 530 children participated. Although one facility closed in 2020, the other 14 continued to participate in the program.



## Ontario

### Provincial Priorities

- Increase access to affordable, high quality licensed child care
- Increase access to EarlyON Child and Family Centres
- Innovative approaches to providing access to high quality training and professional learning opportunities for the early years and child care workforce

### Increase access to affordable, high quality licensed child care

Ontario invested \$100 million in each of the three years 2017 to 2020 to support access to affordable, quality child care through increased subsidies and/or community-based capital. Approximately 11,000 children were supported each year through ELCC funding intended to meet the priorities of increased access, increased affordability, fee subsidies, and community-based capital projects. This funding is provided to regional service system managers, through provincial-municipal agreements.

Between 2017 and 2020, the net number of licensed centres increased by 4%. The number of licensed centre spaces increased by 14%. The number of approved homes affiliated with licensed home child care agencies increased by 9.4%.

### Increase access to EarlyON Child and Family Centres

ELCC investments led to an increase of 81 new EarlyON Child and Family Centres in 45 locations across Ontario. This was in addition to provincial investments in the program.

Ontario funded regional service system managers to support the integration of the Ministry's former 4 child and family programs into a cohesive system of services and supports for children and families.

## Innovative approaches to providing access to high quality training and professional learning opportunities for the early years and child care workforce



The Early Childhood Educators Qualifications Upgrade Program (QUP) program enables individuals working in eligible child care and early years settings to apply for grants to support them in obtaining an early childhood education diploma. The program also provides opportunities for leadership development, targeted to those who are working in supervisory roles or who aspire to do so, and who are already Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs). The program prioritizes funding for Francophone and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit applicants, as well as individuals working under director approvals or Letters of Permission. Ontario invested approximately \$2 million in federal funding in each of the three years 2017 to 2020 in addition to provincial funding. In 2019 to 2020, a total of 2,038 applications were approved under the Early Childhood Educators Qualifications Upgrade Program.

Provincial, Indigenous, and Francophone Centres of Excellence were established to support professional learning across the province. They also served to connect practitioners, educational institutions, and service providers through innovative specialized networks across Ontario. A secretariat was in place to coordinate engagement and communication strategies for the centres. The three Centres of Excellence trained their staff to lead networks across the province and offered innovative professional learning in all six regions of the province.



## Québec

### 2017 to 2020 Highlights - Act early in a united manner

Early childhood intervention has a significant impact on children's educational success as they begin their formal schooling and carry out their studies. More specifically, from 2017 to 2020, investments have made it possible to:

- enhance the integrative support measures in subsidized child care services for children with significant needs;
- increase allocations specifically geared towards projects from coordinating offices aiming to improve the education quality of home-based child care services;
- finance the development or redevelopment of outdoor playgrounds in daycare centres;
- provide financial support to help organizations reach parents of children who do not attend educational services, particularly those from disadvantaged or immigrant backgrounds, and provide them with appropriate educational services;
- establish children's education records to document children's development and communicate observations to parents, with a view to referring children with ongoing difficulties to specialized resources;
- promote the enhancement of quality education in educational child care services (ECCS);
- support the development of the network of educational child care services to increase its accessibility; and
- identify and implement strategies to reach vulnerable children who are not attending educational services.

### Additional financial support for community-based family organizations and community drop-in daycares

Quebec's Ministry of Families annually supports the overall mission and operation of nearly 270 community-based family organizations through its *Programme de soutien financier à l'action communautaire auprès des familles* [Financial Support Program for Family-Focused

Community Action] (Programme OCF). Through its *Programme de soutien financier aux activités de halte-garderie communautaires* [Financial Support Program for Community Drop-in Daycares] (Programme HGC), the department supports more than 240 organizations offering community drop-in daycare activities.

The annual budget allocated to the Programme HGC is \$4 million. Moreover, to make up for salary increases, \$3.4 million in financial assistance, spread over five years starting in 2018–2019, was granted to community-based family organizations and community-based organizations offering drop-in daycare activities.

In November 2018, the Government of Quebec confirmed the granting of an additional \$30 million over three years, or \$10 million per year starting in 2019–2020, to support the operation of organizations offering drop-in daycare activities. This funding helped strengthen the capacity of these organizations to support and equip parents, while promoting an environment conducive to children’s pedagogy.

## Plan to accelerate access to child care spaces

To better meet the needs of families and to allow as many children as possible to have access to a subsidized space in educational child care services, the Government of Quebec announced in 2019 the deployment of a plan to accelerate access to spaces in educational child care services. This plan included several concrete measures, including:

- In response to the call for projects for the creation of 2,500 new subsidized spaces launched in March 2019, 2,728 places were finally awarded, 228 places more than initially planned.
- The acceleration of projects aimed at creating nearly 11,000 subsidized installation spaces, awarded during calls for projects in 2011, 2013 and 2018, to make them available as quickly as possible.
- The distribution by home child care coordinating offices of spaces currently not allocated among home child care providers. For coordinating offices to make unallocated spaces available, they were asked to implement measures to recognize more home-based child care providers.

## Atypical child care and child care in the academic environment

During the 2018-2019 Budget, the Government of Quebec announced the implementation of a pilot project for atypical hourly child care services addressing the needs of workers and parents still studying. This three-year pilot project was awarded \$3.5 million. The 4 retained projects were announced in spring 2019.

50 projects were selected for the “students with children” component of the call for projects launched in 2019 for the creation of new subsidized spaces. These projects will create a total of 2,192 spaces, which will enhance the supply of recognized child care spaces in the academic sector over the next two years.







## New Brunswick

### Provincial Priorities

- Quality
- Access and Affordability

### Quality

Almost \$18.5M was invested to enhance the Early Learning Centre and Home Designation initiative. Designation requires adherence to elevated standards of quality, e.g., staff qualifications, mandatory curriculum training, ongoing professional development, and parent committees. By 2020, 91% of all centres and 73% of all licensed homes had achieved designation, creating 14,720 affordable spaces.

Centres of Excellence were established in Anglophone (4) and Francophone (3) communities. The Centre of Excellence (Anglophone) provided professional development sessions aligned with the New Brunswick ELCC Curriculum Framework, (e.g., pedagogical documentation, and play environments). School District Communities of Excellence were established in the four Anglophone districts involving ECEs and post-secondary ECE faculty. ECEs participated in Communities of Practice led by the School District Communities of Excellence in support of professional learning. The Centre of Excellence (Francophone) established guidelines for professional development, offered professional development opportunities, resources for parents, and resources for educators aligned with the Curriculum. More than 2700 ECEs have participated in sessions offered by the Centres of Excellence.

During the 2017 to 2020 period, the province implemented the *Introduction to Early Childhood Education* training in both official languages, aligning the training with each curriculum framework. The successful completion of this 90-hour online course is mandatory for individuals employed in designated centres or homes who do not hold ECE credentials. This course introduces untrained educators to topics such as the curriculum framework, child development, literacy, and inclusion. By March 2020, 450 educators have completed this course, representing 45% of untrained educators in the province.

The ELCC Quality Improvement Grant was a two-year initiative 2017 to 2019. It provided funding for designated centres and homes to improve quality, with at least 50% to be for improved outdoor play spaces. In total, approximately \$5.3 million was distributed to 476 facilities.

The Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition (ITERS-R) and the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition (ECERS-R) were used as baseline tools for quality assessment in 411 designated centres. Assessment results are then used to develop Quality Improvement Plans.

As of October 2020, the following improvements in the rating scales were noted.



**TABLE 1** Results Achieved

Objectives	Outputs	Indicators	Targets	Actual Results
Increasing the quality of ELCC services by strengthening and sustaining a highly competent and engaged workforce	Quality programming for children	Percentage of centres with designation with improved learning environment ratings	90% of Early Learning Centres will have improved their rating on the learning environment rating scales by at least 25% (Anglophone)	244 of Early Learning Centres (Anglophone) were evaluated with an average of 5.20 on the 7-point scale  63% of Early Learning Centres (Anglophone) improved their rating at least 25%
Increasing the quality of ELCC services by strengthening and sustaining a highly competent and engaged workforce	Quality programming for children	Percentage of centres with designation with improved learning environment ratings	90% of Early Learning Centres will have improved their rating on the learning environment rating scales by at least 25%	139 of Early Learning Centres (Francophone) were evaluated with an average of 4.55 on the 7-point scale  51% of Early Learning Centres (Francophone) improved their rating at least 25%

In partnership with the Association Francophone des parents du Nouveau-Brunswick, guidelines for supporting ELCCs to integrate French language acquisition and cultural identity into their learning environment. Practices in respect of the language development and the Francophone cultural identity for preschool-aged children living in minority communities were also integrated.

## Access and affordability

New Brunswick combined \$100,000 from its ELCC bilateral funding with provincial investments to create an ELCC provincial child care registry, an interactive web site that allows parents to search for all licensed ELCC facilities in their geographic area as well as access the Parent Subsidy application online. As of March 2020, over 8000 parents had joined and were using the registry.

In the 2017 to 2020 period, a total of 1,875 new spaces were created in centre and home-based programs.

The Early Learning Centre Parent Subsidy for designated centres/homes provides that no family in a designated New Brunswick Early Learning Centre or Home will spend more than 20% of their gross annual family income on child care. Additionally, there is no fee for families with a gross annual income under \$37,500. By 2020 there were 3,407 children receiving subsidy in designated centres and homes; of these, 1,935 children were receiving free child care.



## **Prince Edward Island**

### Provincial priorities

- Promote quality through training and resources
- Increase access and affordability of spaces, especially to under-served populations and communities
- Increase and enhance inclusion support

### Promote quality through training and resources

In Prince Edward Island (PEI), more than half of all licensed centres are now designated as Early Years Centres (EYC). Based on adherence to a more rigorous set of quality standards than required by licensing. These centres allow “set fees” for parents, with wages paid according to a provincial wage grid that recognizes level of ECE certification. From 2017 to 2020, five new centres achieved designation status, with 424 newly funded spaces becoming more affordable for families.

The Early Childhood Education Training Grant was established to support employees in licensed centres. By participating in approved post-secondary ECE courses leading to a higher level of certification. Over the 2017 to 2020 period, 442 individuals were supported with course fees and books; training is ongoing.

Handle with Care is a program focused on children’s mental health; it is designed to reduce inequities and build on individuals’ strengths, traditions, and knowledge. Over the 2017 to 2020 period, 81 programs were held with 660 participants; 116 facilitators were also trained, as well as 4 Master Trainers.

### Increase access and affordability of spaces

A series of capital funding initiatives supported new spaces either through centre expansion or licensing new centres. During 2017 to 2020, a total of 809 new (net) spaces were created.

From 2017 to 2020, \$500,000 annually was allocated for the first two years, and \$200,000 for the last year was allocated to respond to the needs of families who work non-standard hours and/or in seasonal employment. Fourteen centres were approved as demonstration sites with 143 children (126 families) benefiting from extended hours or seasonal programming.

The “Enhanced ELCC Access” stream of PEI’s child care subsidy program supports access for children from families who are more vulnerable and who previously did not meet employment related eligibility requirements. They invested \$700,000 annually for two years, where the funding directly supported families more in need, e.g., lower income families; lone parent families; and families with children of varying abilities.

### Increase and enhance inclusion support

PEI has invested \$510,000 annually in both Autism Services and Special Needs Grants to licensed ELCC facilities. The investment increased the amount of special needs grants available in licensed ELCC centres and allowed the addition of two Early Years Autism Specialists. The Early Years Autism Services operates at a higher capacity as a result of the additional resources allocated through the Agreement. However, demand for service in the province continues to rise.

“Des la naissance” is a home visiting program for infants and preschool children of Acadian and Francophone families. It aims to support children not regularly exposed to the French language to develop language skills. Over the three-year period, 51 different families were registered for the program.

PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada led diversity and inclusion themed workshops for directors and educators from EYCs in early 2020. Participants focused on creating inclusive practices and how to best support newcomer children and their families.





## **Nova Scotia**

### Provincial Priorities

- Making child care more accessible and affordable for Nova Scotian families
- Supporting quality through workforce development
- Embedding inclusion in ELCC environments

### Making child care more accessible and affordable for Nova Scotian families

From 2017 to 2020, the target of new and more affordable 500 spaces was met and exceeded. Growth was prioritized in under-served communities, including Acadian and Francophone, African Nova Scotian, Indigenous, and newcomer communities. Approximately 60% of new spaces were created in rural and vulnerable communities.

Since 2017, 146 new family home child care (FHCC) providers joined FHCC agencies, a 64% increase. These homes provided 65 new infant spaces. In the space conversion program, 61 applications were approved to convert 759 spaces from unlicensed to licensed. They accommodate 192 infants, 476 toddlers, and 167 pre-primary before-and after-school care spaces.

To offset the higher cost for providing infant child care, 990 infant spaces at regulated child care centers and 128 infant spaces at FHCC providers received additional funding. By 2020, 3,724 children received the maximum child care subsidy, which is 79% of those receiving the subsidy. By adjusting the cut off to the child care subsidy from \$25,000 to \$35,000 1,105 families benefited. By 2020, 675 additional children qualified for increased funding to the child care subsidy program as a result of changes to the sliding scale. In total, changes to the subsidy program meant that Nova Scotian families saved approximately \$5 million dollars annually.

## Supporting quality through workforce development

Since 2017, 520 directors and pedagogical leaders received leadership training/development:

- Between 2017 and 2020, 184 child care centre staff were supported in working toward a diploma in early childhood education. That included 13 First Nations learners in the ECE workplace learning model pilot and 171 students received ECE training part-time while working. An additional 26 seats were funded through the Africentric ECE program, bringing the above total to 210.
- The Recognition of Prior Learning initiative resulted in 41 ECEs being awarded Classification Level 2.
- From 2017 to 2020, 1,652 child care staff (78% of all centre staff) participated in Professional Development sessions related to the Early Learning Curriculum Framework.
  - A total of 135 individuals from diverse populations received bursaries, including Acadian Francophone, African Nova Scotian, Indigenous, and newcomers.

## Embedding inclusion in ELCC environments

In total, 274 centres (79% of eligible child care centres) applied for and received the Inclusion Support Grant. All eligible child care centres (100%) received a one-time grant to create play spaces and use new tools to adopt more inclusive practices. There was a 75% increase in the number of children from diverse populations receiving early intervention supports (464 children).

The Pyramid Model framework ensures children benefit from evidence-based practices supporting positive behavioral intervention promoting positive emotional and social development. Eight Pyramid Model coaches were recruited and trained. Pyramid Model training was provided in mental health (188 ECEs), Infant Toddler development (239 ECEs), Preschool (264 ECEs) and Pre-Primary (65 ECEs). Some ECEs may have attended more than one session.





## Newfoundland and Labrador

### Provincial Priorities

- Improved access and affordability
- Quality

### Improved access and affordability

To improve affordability, the province invested federal funding in the Operating Grant program. Under this program, eligible child care centres receive enhanced operating grants conditional on:

- Agreement to set established caps on parent fees
- Serving healthy snacks and lunches
- Setting minimum wages for ECEs working in the centre

Families with children in attendance at ELCC centres in receipt of this funding receive access to more affordable care. They are also eligible for child care subsidies, which is particularly beneficial to families in need. By March 31, 2020, 66% of licensed child care centres were participating in the Operating Grant Program. This resulted in an increase of 916 more affordable child care spaces in 2017 to 2020. The province reported a higher increase of affordable child care spaces from 2017 to 2019, however unfortunately some centres closed in 2019 to 2020 resulting in a loss of spaces.

The province also allocated funding from their bilateral agreement toward the Child Care Capacity Initiative (CCCI). This program provides developmental, capital, and start-up funding to not-for-profit community groups who want to develop child care spaces in underserved areas. This includes linguistic minority communities, Indigenous communities, and areas with demonstrable



gaps in early learning resources. In the second year of the agreement, CCCI funding permitted the completion and licensing of 5 projects. These projects led to 150 new spaces in 4 new child care centres, of which 1 is serving the Indigenous community in St. John's, and 1 is serving a rural population in Port aux Basques.

## Quality

In 2018 to 2019, the province launched a one-year Capital Renovation Grant as part of their Quality Enhancement Program. Under this program, 64 child care providers, including 60 centres and 4 family child care homes, received funding. This funding helped to improve the quality of indoor and outdoor space at their facilities.

The province also supported the development of its ELCC workforce. Enhancements were made to 3 existing programs:

- The ECE Trainee Bursary program provided financial support to eligible child care sector workers who are interested in upgrading their qualifications. By 2020, 114 ECE Trainee Bursaries were awarded.
- The ECE On-Campus Field Placement Bursary provided financial support to ECEs who are working on upgrading their qualifications. It allowed ECEs to take time away from work to participate in the mandatory field placement requirement to complete their certificate or diploma program. By 2020, the province awarded 55 ECE Field Placement Bursaries.
- The ECE Graduate Bursary Program provided full-time ECE Diploma graduates a \$7,500 bursary. In exchange, recipients committed to 3 years of employment in regulated child care. The province designed this program to work as an incentive to encourage students to complete the program and stay in the province to work. By 2020, the province had awarded this bursary to 65 ECE graduates.



## **Nunavut**

### Territorial priorities

- To support the healthy development of children by ensuring that ELCC programs are of high quality
- To support the training and professional development of the ELCC workforce
- To support the delivery of ELCC programming in every community
- To acknowledge and recognize the importance of ELCC and of ELCC educators
- To promote and resource ELCC to enable and support greater use of Inuktitut

The key ELCC pillars were developed through broad consultation with Inuit organizations, municipalities, district education authorities, child care facility staff and boards, and Government of Nunavut departments. The sessions were held in Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet, and Cambridge Bay. To realize the pillars identified above, Nunavut's consultation also identified the following two priorities for investment and launched four key funding programs.

### Support and maintain access to affordable ELCC programs and services

Nunavut has the smallest population of any province or territory in Canada. People live in 25 communities spread across a geographic area encompassing three time zones and 1,877,778.53 square kilometers, approximately 21% of Canada's total land area. Recognizing the high cost of goods and everyday materials, Nunavut has invested in Operating and Maintenance Funding for all licensed facilities. This assists with the reduction or maintenance of fees for parents. Approximately 85% of all licensed child care facilities have participated in this funding program, maintaining costs for slightly more than 1,000 children over the 2017 to 2020 period.

The Child Care Space Creation program for underserved communities, from 2017 to 2020 created a total of 148 new spaces that were opened in 6 new facilities.

## Promote high-quality, inclusive ELCC programs and services through greater training and professional development and the development of learning and teaching resources in all of Nunavut's Official Languages

The Department of Education provided both territorial and regional ELCC training and professional development sessions. These have been held in Iqaluit as well as regions such as Rankin Inlet and Cambridge Bay. In addition to ELCC programming, training also included cultural and linguistic programming, financial literacy, and management. Approximately 100 ECEs participated each year in these training opportunities.

The Department of Education to contract with a Nunavut educational publisher to assist in the development of language and culture-based program resources. These resources are being made available in all four official languages of Nunavut. Resources developed include northern puppets, syllabic blocks and magnets, Nunavut themed activity books, Inuktitut song CDs, Inuktitut pre-phonics programming and more. These resources are linguistically and culturally appropriate and have been shared with all 58 licensed ELCC programs. By March 31, 2020, a total of 1,237 children in licensed child care centres in Nunavut had the opportunity to benefit from various programs that support Indigenous language and culturally appropriate ELCC.





## **Northwest Territories**

### Territorial Priorities

- Support for the delivery of high-quality ELCC experiences
- Support culturally relevant professional development and training for all staff working within licensed early childhood programs
- Increase the number of qualified early childhood development professionals working in licensed programs
- Support access to ELCC opportunities within all communities in the Northwest Territories (NWT)

### Delivery of high quality ELCC experiences

NWT has placed emphasis on professional learning and post-secondary opportunities for those who are involved with licensed ELCC programs and services. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment has hosted several professional development sessions in the past few years, in regions throughout the territory. A three-day symposium (Learning Together, Right from the Start Symposium) with 145 participants was held in August 2018 and 2019 with a focus on topics such as physical literacy, outdoor education, transitions, and mental health and well-being. From 2018 to 2020, 132 individuals participated in various other professional learning opportunities offered by the Department.

### Culturally relevant professional development and training

NWT invested \$10,835 in the development and distribution of cultural resources for licensed ELCC programs throughout the NWT. Resources included translation of books into nine Indigenous languages spoken across NWT and offering a cultural resource grant to licensed centres to purchase culture-based materials and/or services offered by knowledge holders and Elders.

## Increase the number of qualified early childhood educators in licensed programs

Early Childhood Scholarships have been available in the NWT since 2014. With federal funding, the number of scholarships has increased from 10 to 30 each year. These scholarships support those in an accredited post-secondary institution in early childhood education at the diploma level or higher. Aurora College has recently expanded its ELCC certificate and diploma program to increase the number of students who can access it throughout the territory. In 2020, 17 students graduated from Aurora College with an ELCC Diploma.



## Support access to ELCC

Licensed ELCC programs throughout the NWT are community-driven and operated by Indigenous Governments, non-profit organizations, and individual operators. The Government of the NWT's role is to license and inspect ELCC programs, as well as provide professional learning opportunities and operational funding to help offset costs.

Community Connections funding supported outreach to communities. The outreach assisted with identifying gaps and opportunities for ELCC options. It also raised awareness and knowledge of the importance of early childhood development. In 2020, approximately 66% of children in the NWT had access to ELCC programs. This included licensed programs and Junior Kindergarten/Kindergarten offered through public education since 2017 to 2018.

ELCC funding supported the creation of new licensed centre-based programs and family day homes. The funding assistance with the purchase of supplies, materials and other costs incurred when setting up a new licensed program. As of 2020, this funding resulted in 356 new spaces, which included 19 new infant and preschool spaces.



## **Yukon**

### Territorial Priorities

- Improving quality through training
- Improving affordability and access
- Innovation
- Inclusive child care

### Improving quality through training

Funding was provided to the Yukon Child Care Association to host professional development for ECEs across the territory. Participation from ECEs was high, with approximately 73% of all ECEs participating. The development of a Yukon Early Learning Curriculum Framework began in 2018. Developed in partnership with an Advisory Committee, the final draft was submitted in 2020. Consultation with the Department of Education on the framework and its implementation is ongoing.

The Yukon College Trainers in Rural Communities Initiative supports ECEs in rural communities by funding in-community ELCC course support from Yukon College instructors. The initiative will increase the number of rural ECEs that successfully complete ELCC coursework. The funds supplemented the costs of Yukon College in-community instructors providing ELCC course training to students in the rural communities of: Ross River, Mayo, Carcross, Haines Junction, Pelly Crossing, Carmacks, Dawson City, Burwash Landing and Watson Lake. With approximately 35 students participating in each semester, course completion rates were 76% for the fall 2019 term, and 78% for the spring 2020 term.

### Improving affordability and access

The Direct Operating Grant (DOG) provides funding to all Yukon licensed child care programs to assist with operational costs. Beginning in 2017, all licensed child care programs received a 14.5% increase in funding. For rural child care programs an additional 20% to reflect the extra costs of operating programs in rural Yukon. In total, 66 licensed child care programs received increases to their DOG as a result of the Agreement

funding. This benefited more than 1,680 children in Yukon. The DOG funding increase was intended to assist with making parent fees for licensed child care programs more affordable. Over 2017 to 2020, monthly costs for parents decreased by an average of \$25.

## Innovation

Three innovative subsidy streams were introduced to support grandparents who are raising their grandchildren, teen parents who are finishing high school, and parents who are receiving treatment for addictions. On an annual basis, almost 50 children benefit from these programs.

## Inclusive child care

Funding was provided for additional supports to licensed child care programs to ensure that children with special needs meet their developmental potential. These funds supplemented the pre-existing supported child care program. An additional 34 children were supported.

Supportive programming was funded through the Child Development Centre. Support was provided to 29 licensed child care programs directly benefiting 317 children.





## SUMMARY

The Three-Year Summary Report of the Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Bilateral Agreements 2017 to 2020 highlights the Government of Canada's commitment to increase access to high quality, affordable, flexible, and inclusive ELCC programs. Through effective collaboration with the P/Ts, nearly 50,000 new and more affordable child care spaces were created between 2017 and 2020.

Over the past three years, significant advancements were made towards increasing access to affordable, high-quality, flexible, and inclusive early learning and child care for families in Canada. Further, P/Ts have invested in the development of the ECE workforce, which is critical to ensuring high-quality ELCC services that help provide children with the best possible start in life. PTs have also worked to increase flexibility in the provision of child care services, providing families with more options to find the child care services that meet their needs. While considerable progress has been made, there is still more work to be done to ensure all families in Canada have access to high-quality, affordable, flexible, and inclusive ELCC.

