



Employment and
Social Development Canada

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Canada

Investing in our future

National Progress Report on Early Learning and Child Care 2018–19



**Investing in our Future – National Progress Report on Early Learning
and Child Care 2018–19**

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PDF

Cat. No.: Em17-3E-PDF
ISSN: 2563-9536

ESDC

Cat. No.: SP-1210-05-21E

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MINISTER'S MESSAGE

High-quality, affordable child care is not a luxury—it's a necessity. All Canadian families should have access to affordable, inclusive and high-quality early learning and child care no matter where they live.

In order to help Canadian children get the best start in life and to further support families, our government announced investments of \$7.5 billion over 11 years, starting in 2017, to support and create more high-quality, affordable child care across the country.

That same year, federal, provincial and territorial ministers agreed to the [*Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework*](#). Through the bilateral agreements with provinces and territories, ambitious goals were set to improve Canada's early learning and child care systems. We also worked in collaboration with our Indigenous partners to develop and implement the [*Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework*](#) to improve early learning and child care for Indigenous children.

The bilateral agreements saw the creation of up to 40,000 new child care spaces across the country, and I am happy to report that we surpassed this target in just the first two years since the implementation of the agreements. Thanks to record federal investments and strong partnerships, fewer families had to make the difficult choice between working and staying home to care for their children.

The successful creation of these new spaces is making a difference in the lives of many Canadians, but we know there is more work to do. With investments of almost \$30 billion over the next five years proposed through Budget 2021, our goal is to build a Canada-wide child care system that will help to cut fees in half by the end of 2022 for parents with children in regulated child care, and reach \$10 per day on average by 2026. We will also continue to grow the number of child care spaces across the country and expand before- and after-school care to provide more flexibility for working parents.

The important accomplishments highlighted in this report give me the confidence that we are on the right path toward ensuring that all Canadian families and children have access to the high-quality early learning and child care they need to succeed.



Minister of Families, Children and Social Development
Ahmed Hussen

SECTION 1

Overview of Federal Early Learning and Child Care Initiatives

A recognized need

For too many Canadian families, the lack of affordable, high-quality child care presents difficult choices. Some parents may have to sacrifice savings or a down payment for a house to pay for child care. Others may leave their careers because child care is unavailable or unaffordable. That is why high-quality, affordable child care is more than a convenience—it is a necessity.

Access to affordable, high-quality child care remains limited and costly, particularly for low- and middle-income families. For regulated child care, parents in Canada pay an average of close to \$11,500 per child per year, and that fee can reach up to \$20,000 in some parts of the country. At the same time, while about 60% of children under the age of 6 participate in some form of formal or informal child care, availability of regulated child care remains relatively low in Canada outside of Quebec, with only about 1 in 4 children having access to licensed child care.

The Government of Canada invests in Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) to help children get the best start in life and have a fair chance to succeed. Budget 2016 and Budget 2017 provided federal investments totaling \$7.5 billion over 11 years. These investments support and create more high-quality, affordable child care across the country. They also promote the economic security of families and communities, especially those most in need.

A shared vision

The Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers Responsible for ELCC have agreed to a *Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework*. The Framework sets the foundation to work towards a shared long-term vision. This vision sees that all children can experience the enriching environment of quality ELCC. The guiding principles of the Framework are to increase quality, accessibility, affordability, flexibility and inclusivity in ELCC.

A distinction based *Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework* was co-developed with Indigenous partners. This Framework reflects the unique cultures and needs of First Nation, Inuit and Métis Nation children across Canada.

Bilateral agreements

In 2017, provinces and territories entered into three-year bilateral funding agreements with the federal government, totaling \$1.2 billion, to address ELCC needs. Spending under the agreements is aligned with the Framework's guiding principles, which focus on areas that will improve quality, accessibility, affordability, flexibility and inclusivity in ELCC, particularly for families that need it most. Recognizing that the ELCC requirements in each jurisdiction are unique, each agreement is accompanied by an action plan detailing how that jurisdiction will use federal funding to support the specific ELCC needs in that province or territory.

Innovation and data

The federal government is also investing \$95 million to close data gaps to better understand what child care looks like across Canada and to track progress. Additionally, it is investing \$100 million to foster innovative practices.

Support for francophone minority communities

As part of the *Action Plan for Official Languages 2018 to 2023*, the Government of Canada is investing \$20 million over five years in ELCC. This investment aims to improve access for francophone families in language minority settings. This investment provides support for:

- professional development opportunities and training for early childhood educators; and
- entrepreneurs seeking to open more daycares to provide additional child care services.

This report outlines the progress made in the second year of agreements based on each province and territory's Action Plan outlined in their respective agreement. More information on results is outlined in section 2 of this document.

For information about year one agreement results, see [National Progress Report on Early Learning and Child Care 2017–18](#).

Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework

Starting in 2017–18, the Government of Canada in partnership with the Assembly of First Nations, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, and the Métis National Council undertook a comprehensive series of engagement activities with Indigenous communities across the country.

In September 2018, the Government of Canada, First Nations, Inuit and the Métis leadership jointly released the co-developed *Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework*. This Framework envisions First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and families as happy and safe, imbued with a strong cultural identity. It sees children and families supported by a comprehensive and coordinated system of ELCC policies, programs and services. It envisions a system that is rooted in Indigenous knowledge, culture and languages, and supported by strong partnerships of holistic, accessible, inclusive and flexible programming. To support this system, the Government of Canada committed \$1.7 billion over 10 years to strengthen ELCC programs and services for Indigenous children and families, beginning in fiscal year 2018–19.

For more information, please see: [*Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework*](#).

Achievements

The announcement of the *Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework* was an historic accomplishment – enabling greater control, influence and self-determination by Indigenous peoples. It serves as a strong foundation to making ELCC systems more affordable, accessible, high quality, flexible and inclusive.

In fiscal year 2018–19, nearly \$100 million in new funding reached First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation communities through agreements with communities. These agreements resulted in:

- approximately 460 First Nations receiving new funding for a range of ELCC needs;
- increased funding to 73 existing services in Inuit communities; and
- new Métis-specific ELCC services.

The Government of Canada enhanced existing Indigenous ELCC programming through increased support to the Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities program. It also supported Indigenous-led best practices through the application-based Quality Improvement Projects to advance foundational elements of Indigenous ELCC.

A Partnership Model

The *Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework* acknowledges that First Nations, Inuit and the Métis are distinct peoples with rights to self-determination. This includes the right to control the design, delivery and administration of an Indigenous ELCC system. The Government of Canada, First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation adopted a partnership model to:

- enable greater self-determination and control of Indigenous ELCC priorities;
- implement the *Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework*; and
- establish ELCC priorities, policies and funding allocations.

In 2018–19, new partnership tables emerged to facilitate Indigenous-led decision-making and advance national priorities. Alongside national tables, regional partnership tables will support planning and priority setting. These tables will promote intersectional coordination to strengthen collaboration among players in the ELCC sphere. Broadly speaking, the work in partnership is making progress towards better ELCC in a spirit of Reconciliation.

Expert Panel on Early Learning and Child Care Data and Research

In 2018–19, the Government of Canada launched a process to establish the Expert Panel on ELCC Data and Research with a mandate to test and discuss ideas and to serve as a forum to facilitate in-depth discussion on issues related to ELCC information, data and research. The mandate would also support the development of an ELCC data and research strategy, which includes:

- identifying priority action areas
- identifying innovative approaches
- aligning the objectives of the work with other Government priorities

For more information, please see: [Expert Panel on Early Learning and Child Care Data and Research](#).

Innovation

The ELCC Innovation Program supports innovative practices that strengthen the changing nature of ELCC. This program benefits children under 6 years of age and their families.

Starting in 2018, the Government of Canada is investing \$100 million over 10 years to enable innovative practices in ELCC. The ELCC Innovation Program funds eligible organizations that support parents, families and communities in their efforts to ensure the best possible future for their children and families.

The objective of the program is to support ELCC programs and service delivery projects that explore, test and develop innovative approaches and aim to improve the quality, accessibility, affordability, inclusivity and flexibility of ELCC programs and services.

In 2018, ESDC invited organizations to submit an application describing project concepts that explore, test and develop innovative approaches (such as solutions, best practices, knowledge, tools and methodologies) to support ELCC services targeting children under 6 years of age and their families. ESDC funded 26 projects from the more than 300 concepts submitted.

Selected projects addressed ELCC challenges faced by children and families with unique child care needs for one or more of the following groups:

- Indigenous children and their families
- children and their families from official language minority communities
- newcomers families
- families that include children with disabilities and with varying abilities
- families in underserved communities
- low-income families
- families working non-standardized hours

The projects fostered cutting-edge ELCC practices for improving outcomes for children and their families.

Organizations developed new and innovative ways to improve ELCC service delivery; ensure children and families have access to high quality child care; improve inclusion in ELCC; foster partnerships; and further develop the skills of the ELCC workforce.

For additional information on selected projects, please see the included [annex](#).

SECTION 2

Year Two Results of the 2018–19 Bilateral Agreements on Early Learning and Child Care

National Overview

Provinces and territories report annually on progress made towards achieving their individual action plan goals, as outlined in their ELCC bilateral agreements. These goals correspond to the eight common indicators included in the guiding principles of the *Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework*.

The second year of the ELCC agreements saw tremendous progress towards achieving the overarching principles of the *Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework*. Provinces and territories supported the development of new spaces and increased funding for existing spaces through operational grants and child subsidy programs. We surpassed our goal set out in Budget 2017 one year ahead of schedule, with 40,116 more affordable spaces supported by federal funding in the first two years of the bilateral agreements.

Provinces and territories also invested in a number of initiatives designed to increase the quality of child care, such as increasing professional development opportunities to strengthen the qualifications of the workforce. Other initiatives supported the needs of children from official language minority communities, Indigenous communities, and the needs of children with varying abilities.

The following provincial and territorial summaries highlight some of the significant progress made in developing a regulated ELCC system that is:

- high quality;
- accessible;
- affordable;
- flexible; and
- inclusive of all children.

Highlights for 2018-19



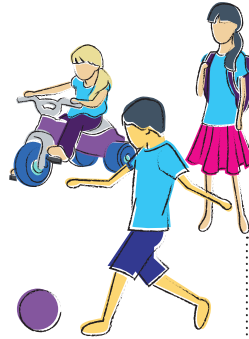
QUALITY

9,049 student trainees and ELCC staff across Canada participating in or having increased access to education or professional development opportunities



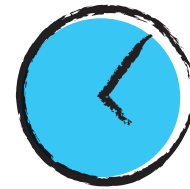
ACCESSIBLE AND AFFORDABLE

40,116 more affordable child care spaces available in 2017 to 2019 across Canada



INCLUSIVE

At least 16,390 children from diverse populations benefitting from inclusive child care programming (including Indigenous children, children with additional support needs, children from francophone minority communities and recent immigrants)



FLEXIBLE

2,686 flexible child care spaces created for children whose parents work non-traditional hours or in seasonal employment



An additional \$5.5 million was invested in bursaries for the ECE Education Support Fund in 2018-2019, which, when added to the initial \$10 million investment, resulted in 3,153 bursaries for current and future members of the ELCC workforce in 2018-2019



65% of licensed child care providers in the Province participate in the Enhanced Operating Grant Program, leading to 1,085 more affordable child care spaces for families



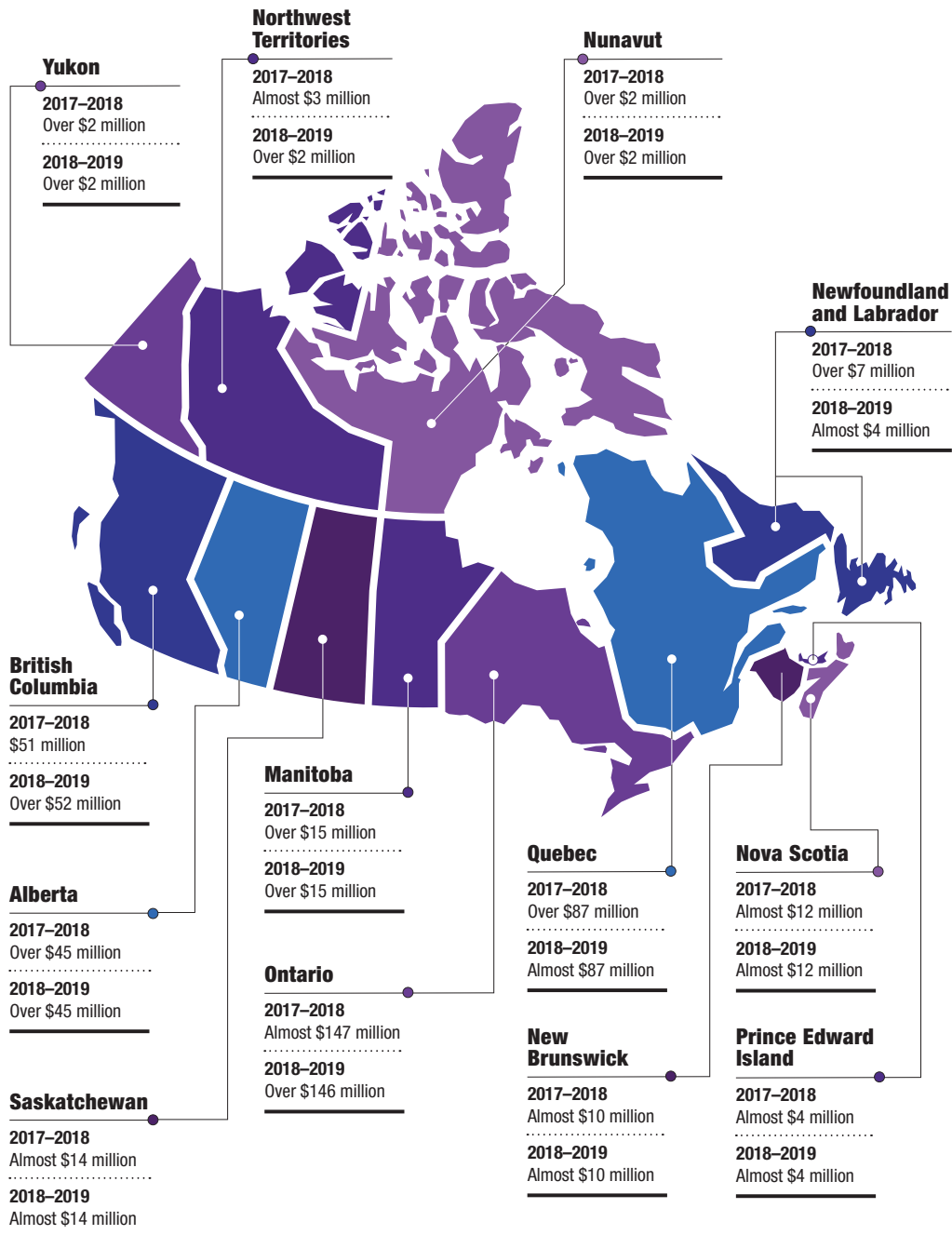
All 1,144 licensed spaces in the territory have the opportunity to benefit from programs supporting indigenous language and culturally appropriate ELCC



87 spaces offering alternate hours were developed over the first two years of the agreement. A total of 142 children have benefited from investments in increasing access to seasonal spaces or extended hours

Federal funding transfers to provinces and territories

In 2017–18 and 2018–19, the Government of Canada transferred \$400 million annually to provinces and territories to support ELCC.



Results by province and territory

The following section provides a snapshot of some of the programs and services supported through federal investments in 2018–19. More information on any of these programs, as well as any other programs and services, can be obtained from the province or territory.

British Columbia

Creating more affordable child care spaces

British Columbia (BC) continued to implement a number of programs designed to increase access to more affordable child care. In 2018–19, the province completed the first intake of the Community Child Care Space Creation Program. Under the program, local governments may apply for funding to create new licensed child care spaces for children ages 0 to 5 years. These spaces are in properties local governments either own or lease on a long term basis. This program was designed and delivered in partnership with the Union of BC Municipalities. BC approved seven applications in the first intake of the program during the fall of 2018. The program created 188 new licensed spaces upon completion of the projects. A second intake of the program took place in the fall of 2019. The results of this intake will be available in the 2019–20 report.

BC also launched a prototype program to convert existing licensed child care centres into Universal Child Care Prototype Sites. Under the program, the Prototype Sites receive enhanced operating funds. This enables families to pay a maximum of \$200 per month, per child, for regular full-time care. Families accessing care through the Prototype Sites are also eligible for support under BC's provincially funded, income-tested, Affordable Child Care Benefit. The Benefit further reduces or eliminates the fees for qualifying families. Through the prototype program, 53 facilities provided over 2,600 low- and no-cost spaces. This represents a significant increase over BC's initial target of converting 1,786 spaces through this program.

Access to professional development opportunities

In the summer of 2018, BC began flowing funding through the Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Education Support Fund. It provides funding to students pursuing ECE post-secondary education and to existing ELCC staff seeking to upgrade their credentials. Between the summer and winter semesters of 2018 to 2019, the program distributed a total of 3,157 bursaries.

BC also allocated funding towards a number of professional development activities for existing ELCC staff, including:

- funding for an Indigenous early years bursary program;
- the development of an online learning platform for programs relating to ethics;
- childhood sexual abuse prevention; and
- family child care training.

Increasing access for underserved communities

In 2018–19, the Aboriginal Head Start (AHS) Association of BC and the First Nations Health Authority continued to work with Indigenous communities across the province. They developed new sites for the AHS program. Indigenous groups develop and delivered AHS programs that provide culturally relevant early learning programs. In the second year of funding, 31 new AHS programs were under development across BC. These new programs are already supporting 181 indigenous children with plans to support over 648 indigenous children in the province by March 2020.

In addition to the AHS program, BC allocated federal funding to Aboriginal Supported Child Development (ASCD) and Supported Child Development (SCD) programs. Under these programs, the BC government provides funding to third-party organizations to provide:

- training;
- consultation services; and
- additional staff to help support children needing support.

The ASCD program supports the emotional and spiritual needs of Indigenous children in a way that is culturally relevant. Investments in both the ASCD and SCD programs resulted in an average of 531 additional children accessing services per month.

In the second year of the agreement, BC continued investing federal funding into the Young Parent Programs. These programs provide child care services for children of young parents who are completing their high school education. Through this program, the province supported 172 young parents by increasing the amount of Affordable Child Care Benefit available to them.

Next steps

BC will undertake a number of program evaluations in the fall and winter of 2019. This includes a third-party evaluation of the Prototype Sites and two AHS sites, and consultations with both the ASCD and SCD programs. In addition, the ECEs of BC will engage in evaluation activities that will look at the impact of the ECE Education Support Fund bursary program. These two evaluations are concluding and results will be available in the coming months.

Alberta

Increasing access and affordability

In 2018–19, Alberta continued the expansion of its three-year \$25/day pilot program. Participating centres implemented the *Flight: Alberta's Early Learning and Care Framework* and inclusive child care practices for children with diverse needs. Successful applicants received operational grants to offset the cost of providing affordable quality child care. By March 2019, there were 98 operational pilot sites, with 5,730 children enrolled.

Implementing inclusive child care

Centres taking part in the \$25/day pilot program developed program improvements, including flexible child care spaces, minority language acquisition, or supporting vulnerable families. Of the centres taking part in the pilot:

- all centres participated in the Action, Support and Participation (ASaP) program. The program promotes and supports inclusive environments for children through staff development and ongoing support;
- 273 staff members at 96 centres participated in *Flight* training;
- the program matched 96 centres with a pedagogical partner to support implementation of the *Flight* curriculum;
- 45 centres offered flexible arrangements such as non-standard or irregular hours, including weekend and emergency care;
- 9 centres provided services in French to francophone populations, and three centres provided bilingual services; and
- 5 centres implemented programming to support Indigenous cultural and linguistic diversity.

Next steps

In 2019–20, Alberta will use the federal funding to support the final year of the \$25/day pilot program. This measure will offer affordable child care options for Alberta families enrolled in a pilot centre. The funding will also support the implementation of the curriculum framework and inclusive child care practices for children with diverse needs. In place of the \$25/day pilot program, Alberta is increasing support for eligible lower- and middle-income families through its Child Care Subsidy Model for families with income below \$75,000.

Saskatchewan

Increasing access and inclusiveness in licensed child care

In the second year of the agreement, Saskatchewan continued to work on its commitment to create 1,295 centre spaces. The province increased the number of licensed ELCC spaces by 768, with 418 spaces available in child care centres and an additional 350 spaces added to the child home care sector. Of the new centre-based spaces, 45 were francophone spaces in Regina, Prince Albert, and Vonda.

Since the beginning of the agreement, the number of licensed spaces has grown by 1,015 centre-based spaces and 797 home-based spaces. The second year of the agreement also saw the development of seven new Early Years Family Resource Centres in communities across the province. These centres provide no-cost programming for families with children under the age of five, including parenting programs and early learning opportunities. These centres are expected to open in the third year of the agreement.

Saskatchewan also supported 14 children experiencing disability through its Children Communicating, Connecting and in the Community pilot program. The Pilot provides access to early educational intervention programming for children who are deaf and hard of hearing in Regina and Saskatoon.

The second year of the agreement also supported the Early Learning Intensive Support pilot. This pilot program provides children with intensive needs access to additional supports to enable them to attend existing pre-kindergarten programs in school divisions. The program served 110 children in 2018–19.

Increasing program quality

The province launched a number of new initiatives designed to increase the quality of licenced ELCC programming. Saskatchewan contracted the Saskatchewan Literacy Network to develop Province-wide training on language and early literacy development for children. This programs training to a diverse audience, including ELCC staff, community program workers, early childhood intervention programs, and families. It has facilitated training sessions in Saskatoon, Buffalo Narrows and Beauval.

In 2018–19, to support early literacy of culturally diverse populations in which English is not the primary language, 8,500 early literacy books and resources were acquired for the multilingual collection at the Provincial Library. Additionally, child care centres and child care homes were provided with a one-time literacy grant to purchase books and support early literacy development. A total of 349 centres and 233 child care homes received this funding.

In addition, Saskatchewan invested in a number of professional development initiatives, including Play and Exploration Workshops for family child care home providers. A total of 98 staff members from the licensed home care sector attended the sessions.

Federal funding also supported leadership training modules to enhance director skills in areas such as employee supervision, communication, and change management. In 2019, 85 centre directors participated.

Next steps

In 2018–19, Saskatchewan began development of resources to raise public awareness on the importance of the early years to child development. The province is also working with the United Way to develop a portal providing parents and caregivers with programming and services information for children.

Saskatchewan will also continue to work with experts in the field of risk-based assessment to develop a new system for monitoring quality. This system will focus on helping centres increase their compliance with licensing requirements.

Manitoba

Increasing the availability and affordability of spaces

In 2018–19, Manitoba invested federal funding in many capital projects to increase the number of licensed infant and preschool spaces. Under the program, Manitoba approved ten school-based projects that will create about 424 new spaces. Ten community projects that will create 356 new spaces were also under development through the ELCC Building Fund. This Fund is an enhanced capital-funding model administered by the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation. To date, two construction projects providing 22 spaces opened.

The province also used funds from the agreement to provide new operating subsidy to 94 spaces in 17 facilities. Combined with the newly subsidized places from 2017–18, a total of 715 spaces received additional funding in the first two years of the agreement. Manitoba also provided 11 additional centres with enhanced operating subsidies, representing 733 spaces, as part of the province's rural and northern child care strategy. Over two years (2017–18 and 2018–19), 1,526 rural and northern spaces accessed additional support during the first two years of the agreement.

Improving the quality of care through professional development

The Manitoba government continued to invest federal funding in online learning resources to support ECEs in their professional development. The Manitoba Child Care Association received funding to develop an online training program focusing on board governance and administration of non-profit centres. By the end of March 2019, 724 unique users representing 147 child care facilities in the province accessed the training. In the first year of the agreement, Manitoba provided funding to

Red River College to develop the Manitoba Access portal. This portal provides access to research, training, and resources from the science of early child development to all Manitobans, including child care providers. In 2018–19, 5,027 unique users accessed the portal.

In addition to the online initiatives, in 2018–19 Manitoba continued their pilot project using the Circle of Security model. The Circle of Security is an early intervention model that helps child care service providers create secure and inclusive environments. The model focuses on the quality of attachment between the caregiver and the child. In the second year of the agreement, Manitoba trained 75 facilitators in the approach. 36 trainees led an eight-week learning group at their own facility or another child care facility. In addition, 259 participants from 40 child care facilities and three home-based providers completed the eight-week learning session.

Ensuring diversity and inclusion

The pilot dual stream service and funding approach under the Inclusion Support Program (ISP) continued in 2018–19. There are two streams to this new program:

- 1.** for children experiencing diagnosed disabilities; and
- 2.** for children requiring behavioural or emotional support.

In 2018–19, 423 children with disabilities or autism spectrum disorder (ASD) received support under the disability stream of the pilot. In addition to the ISP pilot, the St. Amant Centre received funding for training to better support children with ASD through the Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA) programming. 107 staff members from nine licensed ELCC centres attended workshops and presentations on ABA.

Manitoba also launched a pilot program to help community service organizations who provide casual child care services hire ECEs. The organizations provide child care to children whose parents are undertaking training such as English as a second language or employment support programs. In the second year of the pilot, 12 organizations received funding to help.

Next steps

In addition to the pilot programs underway, work with licensed child care providers to increase service access in rural and northern communities will continue. A financial review of the Manitoba ELCC system will begin, with results expected in 2020–21.

Ontario

Increasing access to affordable ELCC

Ontario distributes the Canada-Ontario ELCC Agreement funding to local service system managers. These managers are responsible for the administration of ELCC programs in the province. These include:

- the planning and managing of child care services in their local area;
- the distribution of general operating, fee subsidies, special needs resourcing and wage enhancement.

Federal funding was primarily used to increase access to child care, to reduce child care fees by investing in child care subsidies, and/or community-based capital projects. As a result, 11,105 children were supported in 2018, the most recent year for which data is available.

Increasing professional development opportunities

In 2018–19, Ontario also invested provincial and federal funding to support students participating in the Early Childhood Educators Qualifications Upgrade Program. Under the program, workers from eligible child care and early years programs can apply for grants to obtain their ECE diploma. Ontario approved 1,570 grants using combination of provincial and federal funds.

The implementation of the regional Centres of Excellence for Early Years and Child Care continued in the second year of the agreement. The Provincial, Indigenous, and Francophone Centres of Excellence provide professional development activities and training across the province. As of March 2019, each Centre launched an online portal where educators in various roles in the early years sector can now access relevant resources. For example, research briefs, webinar recordings, professional learning documents, etc.

Continuing support for Ontario's early years program

As part of the Agreement, the province uses federal funding to support EarlyON Child and Family Centres. These centres typically have at least one Registered ECE on staff and offer free drop-in programs for children 0–6 and their families.¹ Services provided at the centres include:

- advice from professionals trained in early childhood development;
- information about other family services available in the community; and
- activities such as reading, games and sing-alongs.

¹ If an EarlyON and Family Centre is unable to recruit a Registered ECE, it can seek an exemption from the local service system manager. All exemptions must be reported to the Ministry. All centres will be required to have at least one Registered ECE on staff by January 1, 2023. However, staff with more than 10 years' experience in relevant programming can be used to meet the requirement through an exemption.

In 2017–18 Ontario allocated a one-time federal funding investment through the Agreement to support building 81 new EarlyOn Child and Family rooms in 45 locations. As of summer 2020, construction for these 81 new rooms was underway or completed.

Next steps

Ontario's priorities through the agreement include:

- increasing access, affordability and inclusivity to high quality child care with consideration for families more in need; and
- providing quality early learning opportunities.

Ontario will continue to work with service system managers to ensure that children and families are well supported by responsive, high-quality, accessible and increasingly integrated early years programs and services that contribute to healthy child development.

Quebec

Quebec is considered a leader in ELCC. Of all provinces and territories, Quebec has the highest proportion of children in child care. In fact, in 2019, 78.2% of children under the age of six had access to formal and informal child care services.

As of March 31, 2019, more than 304,923 licensed child care spaces were available and supported by educational child care services. In 2018–19, the annual budget for educational child care services was \$2.6 billion (up 5.9% compared to 2017–18). Quebec offers the most affordable child care services in Canada.

Quebec has created its child care system with the Centres de la petite enfance in 1997. While Quebec supports the general principles of the ELCC Framework, it does not adhere to the framework as it intends to preserve its sole responsibility in this area on its territory. However, Quebec expects to receive its share of the federal funding and will continue to invest significantly in programs and services for families and children. Quebec receives its contribution through the asymmetric Canada-Quebec ELCC Agreement in recognition of its leadership and well-established and fully funded child care system offering services to families across the province. Funding provided to Quebec can be used by the province to fund its priorities with respect to direct services to families.

Creation of child care places

To consolidate the network of educational child care services, 12,195 subsidized places were in the process of being created as of March 31, 2019, including:

- 1,685 places resulting from the 2018 targeted call for projects.
- 8,333 places from the 2013 call for projects including:
 - 21 places authorized under the *Plan Nord*;
 - 180 places for Indigenous communities; and
 - 14 places allocated to coordinating offices).
- 2,038 places from the 2011 call for projects, including:
 - 111 Indigenous places; and
 - 139 places: 60 child care spaces from a transfer of a coordinating office to two facilities; and 79 other places from a call for projects in 2008 or earlier (all Indigenous).

Act Early (“Agir Tôt”)

Early childhood intervention has a meaningful impact on children's academic success when they start school and continue their education. More specifically, investments will enable the following:

- enhance the integration support through exceptional measures for children with significant needs in subsidized child care services;
- increase allocations intended specifically for projects of the coordinating offices aimed at improving the quality of the education in home-based child care services. Quebec launched calls for projects every year for the past three years. In 2018–19, the province selected 122 projects;
- fund the development or redevelopment of outdoor playgrounds. The province launches a call for projects every year focussed on child care centres. In 2018–19, Quebec selected 78 projects;
- provide financial support to help organizations reach parents of children who do not attend educational services, particularly those from disadvantaged communities and immigrants. The organizations also provide these children with appropriate childhood education services;
- in 2019, create an advisory committee (*Agir pour que chaque tout-petit développe son plein potentiel*). The mandate is to document the situation and identify promising strategies to address the needs of vulnerable children;
- increase funding to family and community organizations offering local child care activities to enhance their capacity to support parents who have greater needs. This support allows parents to play a central role in the overall development and academic success of their children.

New Brunswick

Increasing access to more affordable care

New Brunswick (NB) focused their Action Plan on a number of areas designed to increase the quality of ELCC initiatives. One of these measures established is the New Brunswick Early Learning Centres designation. In addition to utilizing the two curriculum frameworks developed by the province and improving their ability to serve all children, including those with diverse needs, New Brunswick Early Learning Centres are also required to implement the province's Low-Fee Policy. By March 2019, 331 of 420 (79%) of eligible ELCC centres had the designation. This represents 6,736 Anglophone spaces and 4,149 Francophone spaces for a total of 10,885 more affordable spaces in child care centres across the province.

In 2018–19, NB also developed the Early Learning Homes designation for ELCC home operators. This licensing program provides parents with access to home care providers with access to financial supports. By March of 2019, NB designated 89 home child care providers under the new program, representing approximately 286 child care spaces.

In order to support licensed service providers in implementing the Low-Fee Policy, New Brunswick offers additional financial support for programming. This financial support is in the form of operational grants and parent subsidies. NB provided operational grants to all designated New Brunswick Early Learning Centres and Early Learning Homes based on the number of enrolled spaces. Parent subsidies are provided to eligible families with a gross annual income under \$80,000 on a sliding scale. Families with incomes under \$37,500 qualify for free services. As a result, families are not spending more than 20% of their annual income on childcare. As of March 2019, 1,026 Anglophone children and 413 Francophone children received subsidies for a total of 1,439 children, representing 13.2% of children enrolled in licensed programming.

Improving quality

During this second year of the agreement, New Brunswick reintroduced the Quality Improvement Grant (QIG) to support designated early learning and childcare facilities in improving the quality of both indoor and outdoor learning environments. The QIG requires New Brunswick Early Learning Centres to use 50% of the funding to enhance or create more natural outdoor play spaces or experiences. Approximately \$2.4 million was distributed to 476 facilities in 2018–19.

Supporting Early Childhood Educators

During the first two years of the bilateral agreements, NB undertook several other quality-based initiatives for both designated centre- and home the province continued to implement the *Introduction to Early Childhood Education* training. This online course designed to introduce untrained educators to topics such as the curriculum framework, child development, literacy, and inclusion. As of March 2019, 145 educators (55 Anglophone and 90 Francophone) completed the training. This represents approximately 15% of educators in the province. This, in addition to the professional development activities undertaken by both the Centre of Excellence (Anglophone) and Centre d'excellence (Francophone). These activities helped to increase the quality of care provided to children across the province.

Next steps

Going forward, the province will continue to improve the quality and availability of licensed child care. The province will support the New Brunswick Early Learning Centres to develop and implement inclusion policies for children with disabilities. The province will also continue to work with l'Association francophone des parents du Nouveau-Brunswick to develop resources:

- to support language acquisition; and
- cultural identity in early learning environments.

New Brunswick will continue to develop and deliver a number of professional learning opportunities for early childhood educators throughout the province. The Centres of Excellence in both the Anglophone and Francophone sectors will continue to enable educators to complete the available online modules. They will develop and deliver training opportunities to enable ECEs to enrol in professional development activities.

Prince Edward Island

Increasing the availability and affordability of licensed spaces

Prince Edward Island (PEI) continued to grow the number of licensed ELCC spaces by supporting the expansion of spaces in existing Early Years Centres. By the end of March 2019, PEI approved funding for 80 new spaces, contributing to a total of 165 new spaces over the first two years of the Agreement. PEI also provided Capital Grant Program funding to 11 licensed ELCC centres. This funding allowed centres to purchase equipment and make capital improvements to support new spaces. PEI also approved licenses for nine new ELCC centres, creating 244 new spaces under the agreement.

PEI invested \$700,000 in federal funding in the Enhanced ELCC Access subsidy stream, supporting 430 children by March 2019. Launched in January 2018, this stream aims to increase subsidy access for children from families:

- who are more vulnerable; and
- who previously did not meet requirements to qualify under the Child Care Subsidy Program.

PEI also invested in spaces for children whose parents are seasonal workers or who have occupations with non-standard work hours. PEI approved eight demonstration sites during the second year of the agreement, bringing the total number of active demonstration sites to 12. As of March 31, 2019, 47 children benefited from access to seasonal spaces and 95 children benefitted from extended hours programming.

2018–19 also saw the completion of PEI's efforts to improve the online ELCC registry. This tool helps parents find and register for licensed ELCC programs. PEI invested federal funding to improve access to programs and the quality of data through a one-time investment in the tool.

Providing support for professional development and education

PEI's Action Plan invested federal funding in the development of an Early Childhood Education Training Grant. Under the program, casual, part-time and temporary employees of licensed ELCC centres can apply for funding. This Grant helps pay for course fees and text books to help them receive certification. In the second year of the agreement, 140 ECEs applied for training grants.

PEI also invested federal funding to expand the Handle with Care program. This program provides culturally relevant, interactive training that provides parents and caregivers with tools to promote children's mental health. In the second year of the agreement, PEI held three facilitator-training workshops, providing training to 37 facilitators. In partnership with various organizations, including Francophone organizations, Early Learning Centres and First Nations, this program has been provided 34 times. A total of 308 participants attended the program in 2018–19.

Increasing quality and inclusion

PEI allocates funding towards helping children experiencing disability to participate in ELCC programming. PEI allocated the funding through the Early Years Autism (EYA) Service and the Special Needs Assistants (SNA) program. Through the EYA service, preschool children diagnosed with ASD are eligible for additional support to take part in regulated child care. In year two of the agreement, the program served 8 children through the new EYA Specialist positions created and staffed in 2017 to 2018. The SNA program is a similar program that focuses on children with diagnosed disabilities who require extra assistance to meet developmental goals. The investments under the SNA program enabled 49 preschool children receive extra supports at licensed ELCC centres.

PEI invested federal funding to support francization in communities across PEI. The organization CAP Enfants offered the program 'Dès la Naissance'. This program supported 24 families in speaking French at home to encourage their child's linguistic development in French.

In the second year of the agreement, PEI also invested in a number of initiatives to increase the overall quality of care. These initiatives include:

- **Resource Grant (Inclusion Support)** – 70 licensed centres received funding to purchase resources to strengthen inclusion;
- **Capital Improvement Grant** – 50 licensed centres received funding to support capital projects to reduce barriers for children experiencing disability;
- **Quality Enhancement Grant** – 17 eligible centres received funding to improve the quality of programming;
- **Physical Environment Grant** – 8 new centres received funding for investments in capital projects and equipment to improve the quality of indoor and outdoor spaces;
- **Program Improvement Grant** – 8 new centres received funding to support investments in equipment, material, resources and staff development; and
- **Art Smart Plus Project** – a music education program developed through local partners, including First Nations, newcomers and local musicians. In 2018–19, 300 educators completed educator training in the use of the program, with a plan to roll out the program in fall 2019.

Next steps

PEI will continue their work to support families in need, including newcomer families. More information about these initiatives and outcomes will be available in the 2019–20 report.

Nova Scotia

Making child care more accessible and affordable

In 2018–19, Nova Scotia used funding under the agreement to support a number of initiatives to increase the number of licensed spaces. The first of these initiatives is the Strategic Growth Initiative (SGI). The SGI provided funding for 17 projects to expand or open child care sites. Funding received through the program will result in a combined total of 582 new child care spaces upon completion of the projects. Over 60% (356) of these spaces will be located in rural and underserved communities. The Space Conversion Grant provides one-time funding for child care centres to adapt existing spaces to support infants and toddlers. In 2018–19, 51 Nova Scotia approved grants to convert approximately 570 spaces. Funding supported the growth of licensed home child care by encouraging unregulated home care providers to join family home child care (FHCC) agencies. In 2018–19, 14 FHCC agencies added 43 homes, resulting in 301 licensed spaces.

Along with increasing access to licensed child care spaces, Nova Scotia invested \$5 million in the Child Care Subsidy Program. This program helps decrease child care fees for qualifying families with a net income of less than \$70,080. Combined with provincial investments of \$21 million, Nova Scotia's Child Care Subsidy Program helped more than 4,400 families access more affordable care in 2018–19.

Supporting increased quality through professional development

In the second year of the agreement, Nova Scotia implemented several professional development programs for ECEs and management in licensed centres. In June 2018, the province expanded the Early Childhood Education Leadership Training Program to deliver an online certificate program for directors and administrators. In June 2018, Nova Scotia also launched an online learning network for senior management and board members. The network's objective is to support capacity building in the regulated child care sector. In February 2019, Nova Scotia expanded this network to include an e-Learning course on the early learning curriculum framework training in both official languages. To date, more than 1000 participants have completed the training between the online and in-person sessions.

Nova Scotia also invested federal funding in recruitment programs to increase the ECE workforce, including the following initiatives:

- 82 experienced ECEs without formal credentials pursued a levelled classification based on their work experience through the Recognition of Prior Learning Program;
- 16 Mi'kmaq educators in First Nations communities throughout the province participated in the First Nations ECE workplace learning pilot. This pilot program utilizes a modified curriculum reflecting Mi'kmaq culture, history and language;
- 32 individuals completed their first year of ECE studies; and
- 58 individuals enrolled in their second year of programming through grants provided under the Cultural Bursary Program. This program provides grants of up to \$5,500 per year for tuition, books, and fees. It targets African Nova Scotian, Acadian, Francophone, Indigenous and newcomers to enroll in a two-year ECE diploma program.

Increasing inclusion

Nova Scotia's key initiative to promote inclusion for children with diverse and complex needs is the Pyramid Model pilot. The Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children is a framework. This framework is designed to support social and emotional learning in child care settings. By March 2019, eight Pyramid Model Coaches began work in 22 pilot sites.

Nova Scotia also invested federal funding in a number of programs to create a more inclusive ELCC sector. In year two of the Agreement, Nova Scotia approved 106 applications under the Program Enhancement Grant (PEG). The PEG provides licensed service providers with one-time funding. The PEG permits to make minor repairs and renovations, or to purchase or replace

equipment and materials to support inclusive, quality programming. Nova Scotia also invested federal funding to hire three additional staff members in Early Childhood Development Intervention Services. This investment has enabled the program to increase the number of children supported through the program from 2017 to 2018's baseline of 265 families to 398.

Next steps

Nova Scotia will continue to work towards increasing access for all families through programs funded during the first two years of the agreement.

Newfoundland and Labrador

Increasing the availability and affordability of childcare

Under their Action Plan, Newfoundland and Labrador focused their funding on two priority areas:

- improving access and affordability via increasing capacity and enhancing operating grants; and
- improving quality through a capital renovation grant program and increased supports for ECEs.

During the first two years of the agreement, the province achieved many of the overall targets it set out in their three year Action Plan.

Under the first priority area, Newfoundland and Labrador invests federal funding in the Operating Grant program. Under this program, eligible child care centres receive grants that are conditional on providers:

- setting caps for parent fees;
- serving healthy snacks and lunches; and
- setting minimum wages for ECEs working in the centre.

Families of children in attendance at ELCC centres in receipt of this funding receive access to more affordable care. They are also eligible for child care subsidy, which is particularly beneficial to families more in need. By March 31, 2019, 65% of licensed child care centres were participating in the Operating Grant Program compared to 53% of centres the year before. This resulted in an increase of 1,085 more affordable child care spaces in 2018–19.

The province also allocates funding from their bilateral agreement towards 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 agreement, CCCI funding permitted the completion and licensing of three projects. These projects led to 111 new spaces in three new child care centres for vulnerable communities.

Improving program quality

Under the second priority area, Newfoundland and Labrador developed a one-year Capital Renovation Grant Program. This program helps existing child care centres and family child care homes become compliant with the regulations under the new *Child Care Act* introduced in 2017. In 2018–19, the government of Newfoundland and Labrador 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 four 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 during the first two years of the agreement. Enhancements were made to three existing programs:

1. The ECE Trainee Bursary program provides financial support to eligible child care sector workers who are interested in upgrading their qualifications. In 2018–19, 57 ECE Trainee Bursaries were awarded.
2. The ECE On-Campus Field Placement Bursary provides financial support to ECEs who are working on upgrading their qualifications. It allows ECEs to take time away from work to participate in the mandatory field placement requirement to complete their certificate or diploma program. In the second year of the agreement, the province awarded 29 ECE Field Placement Bursaries.
3. The ECE Graduate Bursary Program provides full-time ECE Diploma graduates a \$7,500 bursary. In exchange, recipients commit to three years of service 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. In 2018–19, the province awarded this bursary to 31 ECE graduates.

Next steps

The province scheduled a number of new programs under development 2018–19 to start during the third year of the agreement. These programs include:

- a quality enhancement grant for child care services participating in the Operating Grant program;
- expansion of the Operating Grant Program to include a family child care component;
- a family child care component of the Child Care Capacity Program;
- an increase in the net family income eligibility threshold for full Child Care Subsidy from \$32,000 to \$35,000; and
- a number of CCCI projects were underway in 2018–19. These projects include new spaces for the St. John's Native Friendship Centre and new spaces for the Francophone Parents Association.

Nunavut

Increasing access to more affordable care

Nunavut faces many challenges in providing quality ELCC to its residents. Nunavut has the smallest population spread out over the largest geographical area of any province or territory in Canada. Communities are not easily accessible for much of the year due to their remoteness. Many of the supplies required by ELCC centres, including learning resources and nutrition, are flown in to communities, greatly increasing the cost of child care.

To keep child care fees more affordable, the government of Nunavut invested federal funding in their Operations and Maintenance Top-Up program. This funding helps to maintain or reduce the cost of child care parental fees in licensed child care programs in the territory. To be eligible for the program, centres committed to maintaining or lowering parent fees. Of the 55 licensed facilities in the territory, 49 accessed the funding in 2018–19. Although the program did not result in lower fees, the funding ensured that centres did not increase fees for 1,039 child care spaces from 2017 to 2019.

In the second year of the agreement, Nunavut also invested federal funding in the creation of new child care spaces. As of March 31, 2019, there was a total of 1,144 licensed child care spaces in Nunavut. This represents an increase of 55 spaces compared to March 31, 2018. These new spaces include:

- 14 full-time spots for infants;
- 41 full time preschool spaces;
- 20 after school spaces; and
- a decrease of 20 part time preschool spaces.

Providing professional development opportunities

In the second year of the agreement, the government of Nunavut held professional training events for staff in ELCC centres. Due to the remoteness of communities, in-person training can be cost prohibitive due to increased travel expenses. To enable staff to take both professional development and financial literacy training, the territory organized back-to-back sessions in August 2018. A total of 59 participants from 35 licensed facilities took part in the professional development session. Of this group, 23 managers and directors from 29 licensed facilities participated in the financial literacy session.

Nunavut organized regional training sessions on administration in March 2019. These sessions were for the Kivalliq Region in Rankin Inlet and the Kitikmoet region in Cambridge Bay. Eleven participants attended the session in Rankin Inlet, representing nine out of 13 facilities in Kivalliq region, while 12 participants attended the Cambridge Bay session, representing six of the eight service providers in Kitikmoet region.

Developing culturally relevant programming

Nunavut is the only jurisdiction in Canada whose population is predominately Indigenous. Federal funding improves access to culturally relevant programming and materials for service providers across the territory. One area of investment is the Early Childhood (Inuit) Language and Culture Funding program. Under this program, licensed ELCC providers can access funding:

- to promote fluency in the Inuit language; and
- to provide programming to increase knowledge of the Inuit culture.

In 2018–19, the program funded 18 licenced facilities, benefiting 381 children. The program used federal funding to develop resources and tools such as:

- puppets;
- syllabic blocks and magnets;
- activity books; and
- CDs of songs in Inuktitut.

These resources provide access to programs that support Indigenous language and culturally appropriate programming. All 55 licensed ELCC centres in the territory, representing 1,144 licensed child care spaces, benefitted from this program.

Next steps

In 2018–19, the territory identified and prioritized funding for a number of communities under the program stream “Child Care Space Creation in Underserved Communities”. Nunavut was not able to create new spaces as part of this commitment. The Department of Education will continue to work with these small and remote communities that have no facilities offering child care services.

Northwest Territories

Increasing the affordability of licensed child care

Service providers in the Northwest Territories face a number of challenges in developing affordable child care. Higher costs associated with utilities, food, and shipping materials to northern areas exacerbate issues around providing affordable, quality programming for children.

Using federal funds, Northwest Territories provides enhanced operational subsidy rates to licensed ELCC programs. This helps to pay for staffing, rent, and utilities. In 2018–19, 35 licensed centre-based programs received funding under this program.

In year two of the agreement, Northwest Territories invested federal funds in grants provided to eleven licensed ELCC programs. Funding supported the creation of 98 new licensed spaces in 2018–19. The program used the grants to offset costs associated with:

- creating new spaces; and
- converting existing spaces to another age bracket (for example, from preschool to infant).

A number of out-of-school programs also received funding. This funding aided to expand current programming to include four and five year old children. Details on the number of children benefiting from the program should be available in the 2019–20 annual report.

Encouraging professional development and training opportunities

Northwest Territories has focused a portion of the federal investment on activities that will increase the quality of programming. To support this goal, the government of the Northwest Territories funded a number of professional development activities during the second year of the agreement. In August 2018, Northwest Territories held the *Learning Together: Right from the Start symposium in Yellowknife*. This symposium brought together ECEs, teachers, college students and partners from the department of Health and Social Services. The participants attended various culturally-relevant workshops and training sessions over three days. In total, 76 ECEs from licensed ELCC programs throughout the territory participated in the event.

In addition to the symposium, Northwest Territories held several other training initiatives throughout 2018–19 in various locations in the territory. The training sessions addressed various topics including physical literacy, inclusion, and mental health. In total, 154 staff members and students from ELCC programs participated in professional development and training opportunities.

Through federal funding, Northwest Territories also supported learners taking part in ECE programs through Aurora College in the second year of the agreement. Northwest Territories used the funding to support the first year of the new in-person diploma program in Yellowknife. They also used it to support Aurora's part-time distance ELCC certificate program and a dual-credit course for secondary students. By March 31, 2019, Aurora College's ECE diploma program had 22 students enrolled in Yellowknife. Northwest Territories invested funding to increase the number of scholarships available to students undertaking their ECE diploma from ten to 26. Scholarships are available to students in both the Yellowknife and Inuvik ECE diploma program.

Quality improvement and cultural resources

The government of the Northwest Territories is also investing in increasing the quality of child care centres and creating culturally relevant ELCC resources. Some key highlights of their investments in 2018–19 include:

- 133 licensed ELCC programs were provided with funding through the Provider Enhancement Grant, to support:
 - the purchase or replacement of equipment or learning materials; or
 - quality play-based environments
- 35 licensed centre-based programs were provided with funding to support programming reflective of Indigenous culture and languages through the Cultural Resource Grant; and
- 35 licensed centres were provided with funding to purchase or upgrade computer equipment to support professional development activities through the Technology Grant.

Next steps

The government of the Northwest Territories continued their engagement activities with communities that lack licensed ELCC spaces in the second year of the agreement. Work is underway with communities across the Northwest Territories to:

- raise awareness of the importance of early childhood development; and
- identify service gaps and opportunities to increase access to ELCC.

Outcomes from this initiative should be available in the 2019–20 report.

Yukon

Increasing affordability and availability of care for vulnerable populations

The remoteness of Yukon communities leads to increased costs for the food, learning resources, and other materials required to provide quality ELCC programming. Yukon continued funding increases to the Direct Operating Grant (DOG) to support 62 licensed child care programs. The DOG helped to minimize increases to parent fees. The DOG provides funding to licensed child care programs to aid with operational costs, hot meals programs and staff wages. Through the bilateral agreement, Yukon invested federal funding to increase the DOG grant by 14.5%. Yukon provided an additional 20% funding increase to all rural child care programs to help with the extra costs of operating. Approximately 1,450 children benefitted from the DOG program in 2018–19.

During the second year of the agreement, the Yukon government created the Teen Parent Grant. This grant helps parents under the age of 24 to access licensed child care while they complete their high school education. In 2018–19, six parents received grants to enable them to use licensed child care. The Grandparent Grant helps to make licensed child care more affordable for grandparents who are the primary caregivers for their grandchildren. Funding provided to licensed child care programs helped 17 grandparents cover the full cost of child care fees for 25 children.

Improving access to professional development and training

The government of the Yukon also invested federal funding in development and training designed to increase the quality of programming in the territory. Through the ELCC agreement, the territory supported individuals interested in becoming ECEs by providing bursaries. Three full-time and 61 part-time students received support through the education bursary program to undertake ECE studies in 2018–19. Yukon University (formerly Yukon College) received additional supports to offer increased assistance to ECEs to complete training in their communities. This funding provided ECEs in rural communities with in-community ELCC course support from Yukon University Instructors. 22 students in the communities of Old Crow, Haines Junction, Carmacks, Mayo, Carcross, Pelly Crossing and Watson Lake benefited from these courses. The course completion rate for the fall term was 85% and was 90% for the spring 2019 term.

The Yukon also invested in a number of professional development, support and training initiatives designed to support ECEs across the territory. Through the agreement, the Yukon used funding to help licensed child care programs design developmentally appropriate learning environments. As part of the support, mentors consulted on group dynamics and helped service providers learn how to work with children with behavioural challenges. In addition to this program, 7 centres in Whitehorse received training in how to use the “Ages and Stages Questionnaire”. This tool helped to determine the potential for developmental delays for children under five. The Yukon Child Care Association received funding, in April 2018, to hold a two-day professional development conference in Whitehorse. A total of 117 participants attended the conference, representing approximately 47% of the total ECE workforce in the territory.

Improving quality and increasing inclusion

In addition to the training initiatives to support inclusion, the Yukon government used federal funding to supplement the Supported Child Care Program. This program provides funding for extra supports to help children with special needs reach their full potential. In 2018–19, the program supported 34 additional children.

The Yukon used federal funding under the agreement to support programs to increase the safety and quality of programming. The Enrichment Program provided funding to licensed centres for culturally- and/or developmentally-appropriate toys and equipment for programs. All 62 licensed programs received Enrichment Program funding to purchase supplies such as materials for traditional drum making and multicultural play materials.

The Enhancement Program provided additional supports during the second year of the agreement. Nine additional programs accessed health and safety funding to meet regulatory requirements. Under this program, all licenced programs established acceptable radon levels.

Next steps

Work continued on the development of Yukon's curriculum framework during the second year of the agreement. This curriculum will reflect the needs of the diverse linguistic and cultural population of the territory, including First Nations and Francophone communities. The Yukon completed feasibility planning for additional ELCC services for Francophones in June 2019.

All Yukon First Nations governments undertook a similar review in 2018–19 to determine ELCC needs of each community. Reports on the findings may guide future investments for ELCC programs offered by each of the First Nations government.

Yukon is piloting an initiative to provide child care spaces for parents or guardians taking part in intensive substance abuse treatment programs. Under the program, licensed spaces are available at no cost to parents or guardians while partaking in treatment and programming. Yukon will review the initiative in 2019–20 to increase accessibility.

The outcomes of these and other programs will be available in the 2019–20 Annual Report.

IN SUMMARY

To help Canadian children get the best start in life and better support Canadian families, the Government of Canada announced investments of \$7.5 billion over 11 years, starting in 2017–18, these investments will support and create more high-quality, affordable child care across the country.

This report demonstrates progress made at a national level over the first two years of this commitment.

In 2018–19, the federal investments in ELCC made through the bilateral agreements with provinces and territories resulted in:

- 40,116 more affordable child care spaces across Canada.
- 9,049 student trainees and ELCC staff across Canada participating in or having increased access to education or professional development opportunities.
- 16,390 children from diverse populations benefitting from inclusive child care programming including:
 - Indigenous children;
 - children with additional support needs;
 - children from francophone minority communities; and
 - recent immigrants.
- 2,686 flexible child care spaces created for children whose parents work non-traditional hours or for those with seasonal employment.

The first two years of the agreements resulted in significant achievements. Provinces and territories will continue to pursue their goals set out in their Action Plans over the third year of their agreement. The report on the results of the third year of the bilateral agreements will be available in 2021.

ANNEX

Examples of projects funded in 2018 through the ELCC Innovation Program and the Government of Canada Action Plan for Official Languages

University of Guelph

The University of Guelph's research on parents' non-standard work and non-standard work schedules highlights important questions for policy makers and for Canadian society, more broadly such as the growth of non-standard and precarious work in Canada. It examined the relationship between non-standard work and ELCC which has profound effects on social justice, particularly for women, Indigenous people and reconciliation, and marginalized Canadians. The project provides recommendations that focus on the child care needs of parents who work non-standard hours.

For more information, please see:

[Canadian Families Working Non-Standard Hours Struggle with Child Care, Report Finds](#)

Learning Enrichment Foundation

The Learning Enrichment Foundation (LEF) is working to improve the quality of ELCC. The LEF generated knowledge about effective strategies for supporting lower skilled individuals employed in entry-level, precarious occupations to complete postsecondary training programs to facilitate their career progression and meet a need for skilled workers in the sector. The ECE Diploma PLAR Pilot program was designed to fill a gap in the market for training and upgrading of ECE qualifications. The pilot program combines high quality teaching and curriculum with a number of unique features that make it accessible, enhanced, and accelerated such as a condensed schedule, virtual reach, workplace paid practicum, and the recognition of prior learning.

For more information, please see:

[Learning Enrichment Foundation \(LEF\)](#)

YMCA in Hamilton Burlington and Brantford

The YMCA of Hamilton, Burlington and Brantford developed the Weemarkable™ app to enhance communication and extend the relationship between YMCA educators and families beyond their child's classroom. This innovative and first-of-its kind digital app provides a safe and secure environment for sharing information and communicating digitally with families about the healthy development of their child. Families using the Weemarkable™ have convenient access to features and benefits directly on their mobile device including photos of their child, educator observations, weekly menus, direct messaging, and emergency notifications. Research has demonstrated that use of the Weemarkable™ app improved parent and caregiver's overall child care program satisfaction.

For more information, please see:

[Weemarkable](#)

Calgary Immigrant Women's Association

The Calgary Immigrant Women's Association developed and applied an innovative method to provide early learning and childcare for low-income immigrant parents and their children in Calgary. The program increased the quality of the development of immigrant children receiving ELCC from their parents. The project identified needs and challenges, explored, tested and developed an innovative approach that involved the development of knowledge, tools, methodologies, solutions and best practices for immigrant children ages 19 to 36 months. The project delivery involved the use of all first languages of project participants with English so that the children can speak, hear, see and learn in both languages simultaneously. Results demonstrated that all participating immigrant mothers improved their knowledge and were able to support the learning and development of their children by gaining knowledge of their child's developmental milestones, increasing age appropriate activities skills, learning how to access community services. They also demonstrated higher engagement in activities at home to support early learning of their children in the Canadian and respective cultural context. All participating immigrant children demonstrated a significant increase in age appropriate English language, social, emotional and cognitive skills and, improved fine and gross motor skills, and first language literacy skills.

The North Shore Micmac District Council of New Brunswick (NSMDC)

The NSMDC collaborated with seven MicMac communities and researchers with the goal of better understanding the needs and enhancing programs and services for children zero to six years old and their families in seven First Nations communities in New Brunswick. This project worked toward having higher quality programs and services to lead to physical, emotional, mental and spiritual well-being of children. The project was developed and completed in two phases:

- An extensive desk review and economic modelling of the programs and services and community mapping of the gaps and overlaps. As well as a comparison to non-Indigenous communities in New Brunswick.
- The second phase ran concurrently with the Aboriginal Supported Child Development Coordinator working directly with the communities. The objective was to enhance the delivery of ECE programs and services, adaptation of the Assessment for Quality Improvement (AQI) framework to include Indigenous principles and community context in order to build capacity and improve teacher-guided learning for the youngest members of the communities.

University of British Columbia

The University of British Columbia developed [OutsidePlay.ca](#). The tool was designed to educate ECEs and administrators about the importance of outdoor play and risk taking in play, to manage safety and liability fears, and to guide development of a plan for changing service delivery. This tool is available as a self-guided journey, and as a workshop in English and French. The project prioritizes ELCCs serving diverse populations, including Indigenous, lower income and newcomer families. The tool can be accessed online across the country and the version that the user sees is customised according to their available bandwidth, such that a region of the country with limited internet capability would access a lower fidelity version. Dr. Mariana Brussoni led this project and presented the project results at a Webinar hosted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in November 2020. The team is currently evaluating the effectiveness of the tool in promoting change.

For more information, please see:

[Brussoni Lab – Early Childhood Outside \(ECO\)](#)

B2ten Active for Life

B2ten's Active For Life completed a proof-of-concept study across 39 childcare centres in Alberta and British Columbia that measured the impact of daily Physical Literacy (PL) programming through active play to children aged one to six years. Educators in the intervention group received professional development, intervention resources, and mentorship to improve delivery of PL programming, and parent engagement support. Educators in the control group provided their usual standard of care. When compared to the control group, the children in the intervention group improved their fundamental movement skills, language and communication skills. They were also better able to adapt to change, solve problems, self-regulate and calm themselves, and focus and pay attention. Educators reported increased motivation, confidence, and competence in providing PL programming, were more engaged in play with children, and improved relationships amongst children and staff.

For more information, please see:

- [Active for Life](#)
- [Study: physical literacy in child care](#)
- [Active for Life: Early Childhood Education](#)
- [Active for Life: Early years educators toolkit](#)

Ryerson University

Ryerson University coordinated seven community evaluation projects of early childhood programs in Ontario and British Columbia. (Niwasa Kendaaswin Teg, Native Child and Family Services of Toronto, Family Place, Palmerston Child Care and Learning Centre, Keepers of the Circle Learning Centre, Comox Valley Child Development Association, and the Gerrard Resource Centre.) The projects developed strategies to increase the inclusion of children with diverse abilities. The communities are representative of rural, remote and urban locations, and serve families with a wide range of cultural viewpoints. Seven organizations collaborated on this project. Each project produced a community-specific report and, although many of the seven communities faced more than one barrier to inclusion, the reports were grouped into three themes: understanding the child; connecting families; and designing responsive programs. All of the reports demonstrate how local communities that are engaged in understanding children and their families, play a central role in defining what it means to be included. The range of approaches offers concrete examples of culturally responsive and informed practice.

For more information, please see:

[Inclusive Early Childhood Service System \(IECSS\) in Action!](#)

Vancouver Symphony Orchestra

The Vancouver Symphony Orchestra (VSO) School of Music (SoM) Society developed a bilingual learning toolkit with digital resources using the input from collaborating ECEs. The project involved bringing music classes to diverse settings free of charge to reach vulnerable individuals and communities. The sessions were specifically designed to be fully inclusive and activities were developed to draw children and families of all backgrounds and abilities together. This approach is enriched with actions, cues, sounds, props, and visual aids. It offers children and parents with different avenues of engagement, and enabling all to engage equally, despite social, cultural or linguistic divisions.

For more information, please see:

[VSO School of Music – Transforming early childhood education through music](#)

Langara College

Langara College enhanced early learning childcare curriculum by indigenizing their early childhood education (ECE) history course and a professional development module for YMCA ECE educators. Both curricula support ECE's work with Indigenous children and non-Indigenous children (0–6 years of age) and their families. The curricula embed aspects of Indigenous ways of knowing, the history and culture of the Musqueam First Nation, Indigenous history in Canada, and the TRC Calls to Action. Impact on the students was evident: “ECED 1115 felt like an answered prayer. I hope to take the knowledge passed on from this class into my future practice” (ECE student). An innovative process model, collaborating with an intergenerational committee from the local Indigenous community, “made us all feel so included...” and the committee “often expressed their happiness that this information would be given to the ECE students so that the children they will work with will benefit” (Former Chief Gail Sparrow).

Immigrant Services Calgary

Immigrant Services Calgary developed and implemented an early learning curriculum offered to families with children between the ages of three and five and have been in Canada for less than five years. The project focused on fostering bicultural competencies in families from diverse backgrounds to promote optimal early childhood development in preparation for entering the Canadian school system. The project focused on early learning through the cultural traditions of parents and caregivers, who were partners in the classroom and helped to shape the curriculum. The project supported the development of caregivers, increasing confidence in balancing the early learning norms and expectations of their cultural backgrounds and Canadian culture. The project also provided a learning space for ELCC practicum students, where they could develop best practices for working with diverse families in early learning environments.

For more information, please see:

[Immigrant Services Calgary - Early learning across cultures](#)

The Commission nationale des parents francophones

The Commission nationale des parents francophones in partnership with the Association des collègues et universités de la francophonie canadienne (ACUFC) and Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité Canada deployed innovative tools and training to enable ELCC service providers to increase the number of French spaces and access to more quality child care in Francophone minority communities. The partnership deployed a management software and training kit to help child care service providers in Francophone official language minority communities (OLMCs) manage registrations, financial transactions and administrative tasks. More than 150 service providers received training on the Calculator, which enables participants to use their own provincial or territorial data to view various potential scenarios.

For more information on these tools, please see:

[Econocoop](#)

The Association des collègues et universités de la francophonie canadienne (ACUFC)

This project focuses on the needs of children and their families in Francophone official language minority communities (OLMC) identified through the Government of Canada *Action Plan for Official Languages—2018–2023: Investing in Our Future*. The project “Training and capacity building for child care workers” aims to set up partnerships promoting adequate training for early childhood educators and to increase their numbers in Francophone OLMCs. The ACUFC is accomplishing these goals in collaboration with its four key partners, the Commission nationale des parents francophone, the Fédération nationale des conseils scolaires francophones, the Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité Canada, and the Société Santé en français. As part of the first phase, an environmental scan was completed. The findings of the environmental scan enabled the ACUFC to identify training priorities in Francophone OLMCs, and to inform Phase two of the multi-year project. An open and transparent call for proposals allowed the ACUFC and its partners to redistribute funding to other eligible organizations. 24 sub-projects have been funded, and selected organisations implemented projects directly impacting the ELCC sector in Canada's OLMCs. These pan-Canadian, provincial or territorial training initiatives involved more than 100 partnerships. The second call for proposals is planned for fall 2021.

To consult the environmental scan, État des lieux de la formation en petite enfance : faire le point pour aller plus loin and its four technical reports or for more information, please see:

[Association des collègues et universités de la francophonie canadienne \(ACUFC\) – Petite enfance](#) (available in French only)