



National
Progress
Report on
**Early
Learning
and Child
Care**

2019 to 2020



National Progress Report on Early Learning and Child Care 2019 to 2020

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MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Regardless of where they live, all families in Canada should have access to affordable, high-quality, flexible, and inclusive early learning and child care (ELCC).

The Government of Canada believes in supporting families to help their children get the best possible start in life. I strongly believe that all children in Canada should have a real and fair chance to succeed in life, which is why access to high quality, affordable ELCC is a necessity.

In 2017, the Government of Canada committed \$7.5 billion over 11 years to increase access to new and more affordable ELCC spaces across the country. The Government of Canada believes that child care is critical for families and for the economy. It is important to provide better support for families in Canada while also creating a solid economic foundation for families across the country well into the future. It gives children a good start in life and gives parents, especially mothers, the support they need to finish their education, participate in training, and maintain good jobs to provide for their families.

Since ELCC is primarily provincial and territorial jurisdiction, the Government of Canada provides funding support to each province and territory through bilateral agreements that reflect their unique ELCC needs. Through these agreements, the Government of Canada has committed \$1.2 billion over the past three years for ELCC programs.

With the first set of bilateral agreements now concluded, I am pleased to announce the creation of over 10,000 new and more affordable spaces between 2019 and 2020.

When combined with the results from the two previous years, approximately 50,000 new and more affordable spaces have been created over the course of the agreements, surpassing the federal target of 50,000. This is making a difference in the lives of so many Canadians, but we're not done yet. There's still more work to be done.

The important accomplishments over the last year highlighted in this report give me the confidence that we are on the right path toward ensuring that all families and children in Canada have access to high-quality, affordable, flexible, and inclusive ELCC.

Minister of Families, Children and Social Development,

Jenna Suds

National Overview

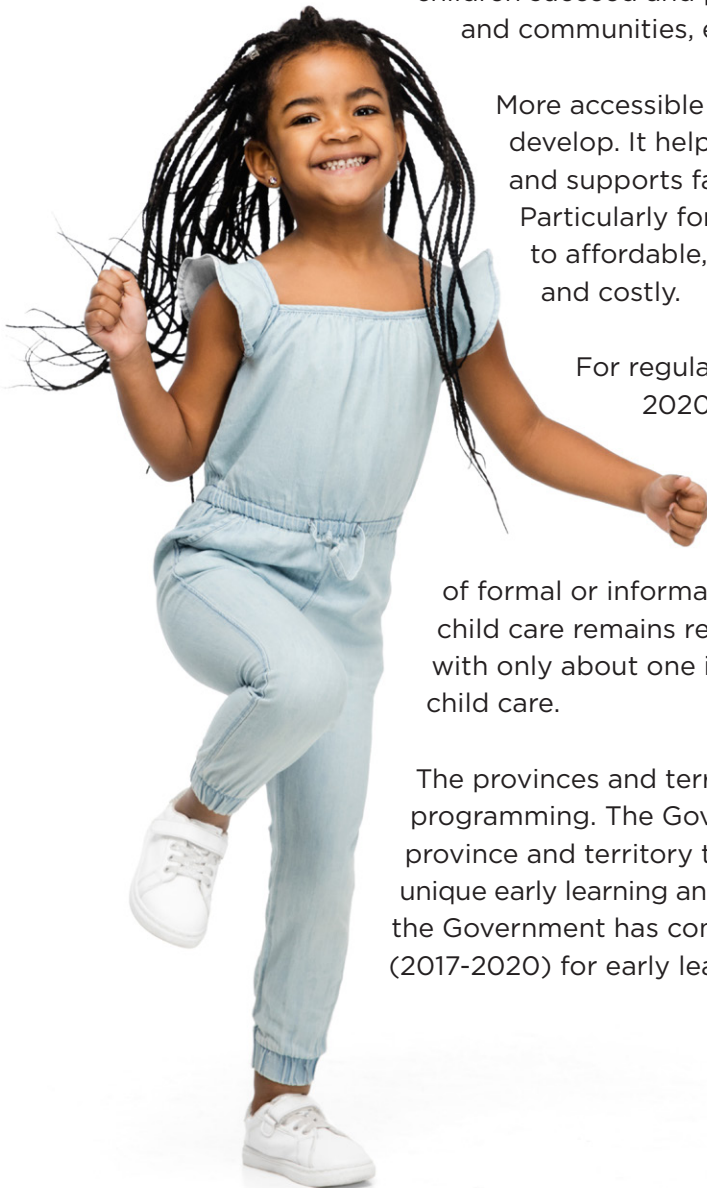
A recognized need

The Government of Canada believes in supporting families to help their children get the best start in life. For families in Canada, high quality, affordable, flexible, and inclusive child care is not a luxury, it is a necessity. Investments in ELCC help children succeed and promote the economic security of families and communities, especially for those most in need.

More accessible and less costly child care will help children develop. It helps parents who wish to work or return to work, and supports families by making child care more affordable. Particularly for low- and middle-income families, access to affordable, high quality child care remains limited and costly.

For regulated child care, parents in Canada in 2019 to 2020, pay an average of nearly \$11,500 per child, per year. Child care fees can reach up to \$20,000 in some parts of the country. Approximately 60% of children under the age of six participate in some form of formal or informal child care. The availability of regulated child care remains relatively low in Canada outside of Quebec, with only about one in four children having access to licensed child care.

The provinces and territories deliver early learning and child care programming. The Government of Canada provides funding to each province and territory through bilateral agreements that reflect their unique early learning and child care needs. Through these agreements, the Government has committed \$1.2 billion over the past three years (2017-2020) for early learning and child care programs.



A shared vision

In 2017, the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers Most Responsible for ELCC 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 quality ELCC enriching their development. The guiding principles of the Framework are to increase quality, access, affordability, flexibility and inclusivity in ELCC.

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. The Framework's guiding principles are aligned with the agreements to focus spending in priority areas. The priority areas are improving quality, access, affordability, flexibility, and inclusivity.

Recognizing that the ELCC requirements in each jurisdiction are unique, each agreement (except Quebec's) 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. As Quebec has already invested significantly in this area, Quebec has an Asymmetrical Agreement.

Year 3 results

Results by province and territory

The following section provides a snapshot of some of the programs and services supported through federal investments in 2019 to 2020. More information on programs and services can be accessed from the province or territory directly.

British Columbia

British Columbia (BC) has used the funding in the Canada-BC ELCC Agreement to advance several initiatives that focus on enhancing access, increasing affordability, and supporting the quality of licensed child care programs through training and professional development of early childhood educators (ECE).

Creating child care spaces

In 2019 to 2020, as part of the Early Care and Learning Partnership Initiative, the province completed the second intake of the Community Child Care Space Creation Program. Under the program, local governments apply for funding to create licensed child care spaces. The spaces are located in government-owned properties for children ages 0 to 5 years. This program was designed and delivered in partnership with the Union of BC Municipalities. In 2019 to 2020, twelve local governments applied and 9 were approved, creating 181 new spaces. Of these new spaces, 116 were for children aged 0 to 3 years, while 65 were



for children aged 3 to 5 years. All projects approved in 2019 to 2020 indicated an intention to serve at least one underserved priority population:

- Francophone families (2 projects)
- Lower income families (6 projects)
- Children with extra support needs (8 projects)
- Indigenous children and families (7 projects)
- Children with young parents (5 projects)
- Children with single parents (5 projects)
- Immigrant and Refugee families (5 projects)
- Families from minority cultures or language groups (4 projects)

Expanding affordable child care

BC has continued to support the Universal Child Care Prototype Site Initiative, now referred to as the \$10 a Day Child Care BC initiative. The Initiative started in 2018 and converted 52 existing child care centres into Universal Child Care Prototype Sites. These sites receive enhanced operating funds and participating families pay a maximum of \$200 per month per child, for regular, full-time care. The province's initial target of converting 1,786 spaces through this initiative was exceeded, with approximately 2,475 spaces converted.

The \$200-per-month child care fee can be combined with the Province's Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB) so that some families paid less than \$200 a month. In 2019 to 2020, 1,168 children received a space at no cost for at least one month. In 2019 to 2020, over 2,800 children attended a Prototype Site, including both full and part-time enrolments.

The selection of the prototype sites reflected the diversity of BC's geography, populations, and parent needs. Additionally, there was specific consideration given to providers that serve Indigenous families, single-parent families, families in underserved communities, parents working non-standard hours. Families with children with special needs also benefited with an average of 114 families receiving Supported Child Development services. While 34 Indigenous families of children in Prototype Sites received Aboriginal Supported Child Development (ASCD) services.

Professional development opportunities

ECEs are essential to the quality care in licensed facilities. A universal child care system cannot be built in BC without a qualified and well-supported workforce. The need for qualified ECEs continues to increase with the increase of child care spaces throughout British Columbia.

In summer 2018, BC began providing funding through the ECE Education Support Fund to students pursuing their ECE post-secondary education and to existing ECE staff seeking to upgrade their credentials. In 2019 to 2020, the program distributed approximately 4,337 bursaries, 104 of which were awarded to students who self-identified as Indigenous. The ECE Education Support Fund aims to ensure that a representative, proportional number of bursaries are provided to Indigenous students. The New Relationship Trust Foundation also provided 159 financial awards to support 122 post-secondary Indigenous students in BC through the Indigenous Early Years Scholarships and Bursaries program. Of these bursaries, 89 went to Indigenous ECE students.

BC also directed funding to the Early Childhood Educators of BC, the BC Family Child Care Association, and the Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre. The funding provided professional development activities to ECEs on topics related to ethical practice in early childhood education, childhood sexual abuse prevention, family child care and responsible adult training, child care administration and management.

Professional development initiatives also included content related to cultural competencies. This was to ensure that professionals completing these professional development programs have the competencies and cultural awareness to properly care for and support Indigenous children and families. For example, funding was directed to the Aboriginal Head Start (AHS) Association of BC to develop and expand their program evaluation and planning tool, which is designed to enhance Indigenous early childhood program delivery and provide educators with the opportunity to self-reflect and improve their practice.

Increasing access for underserved communities

In 2019 to 2020 the AHS Association of BC and the First Nations Health Authority continued to work with Indigenous communities throughout the province. Together they delivered culturally appropriate and safe full-day child care programming to Indigenous children and families. They developed new sites for the AHS program and in 2019 to 2020, 26 of the 31 new AHS programs were operational. Among these, 549 of the 643 spaces were operational, with 314 of these spaces located on-reserve and 235 located off-reserve. Delays in opening remaining sites were due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

BC continues to provide funding to the Supported Child Development (SCD) and ASCD programs. As of March 31, 2020, the annualized investment of \$10 million under the ELCC Agreement had enabled SCD and ASCD programs to support an average of 1,192 additional children per month to access inclusive, licensed child care. BC also provided funding to CanAssist, to develop, produce, and deliver assistive technologies or processes that support independent toileting in child care programs.

Further, in Young Parent Programs (2019 to 2020), families of 165 children were approved to receive funding. This offered full- and/or part-time child care services for children of parents under the age of 25 who are working toward completion of their high school education.





Alberta

In 2019 to 2020, Alberta continued the expansion of its three-year, \$25-a-day pilot program. Participating centres continued to implement 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 2020, there were 6,089 children benefiting from reduced costs for licensed child care spaces.

Highlights from the programs taking part in the pilot:

- 50 centres offered flexible child care as of March 2020. There were 3,006 licensed spaces available for arrangements, such as non-standard or irregular hours including weekend and emergency care;
- 20% of children enrolled in a licensed child care space received a subsidy as of March 2020;
- as of March 2020, there were approximately 375 staff that completed the flight training — all operational centers had staff who have been trained in the early learning and child care curriculum framework;
- the program matched 98 operational centers with a pedagogical partner to support implementation of the *Flight* curriculum;
- 5 ELCC Centers offered care to children using resources and innovative tools to support children's Indigenous cultural and linguistic diversity; and
- funding was provided to nine Francophone ELCC centers and an additional three ELCC centers provided some programming in French.

In 2019 to 2020, Alberta continued to use federal funding to support the final year of the \$25-a-day pilot program. This measure continued to offer affordable child care options for the province's families. Alberta also increased support for eligible lower-and middle-income families through its Child Care Subsidy model for families with annual income below \$75,000.

Saskatchewan

Access and inclusion

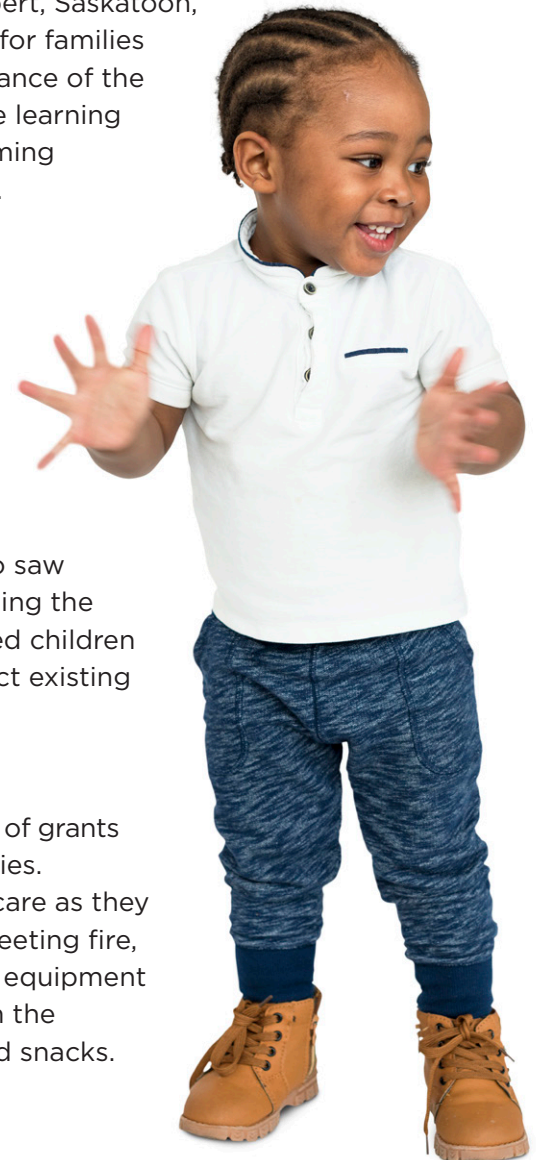
Over the three years of its agreement, Saskatchewan exceeded its target of an increase of 950 licensed child care centre spaces by adding a total of 1,295 centre spaces. The province also continued working towards its target of an increase of 1,500 licensed group or family care home spaces by adding an additional 365 in 2019 to 2020.

The third year of the agreement saw the beginning of operations for seven new Early Child Years Family Resource Centres: the Battlefords, Meadow Lake, Moose Jaw, Nipawin, Prince Albert, Saskatoon, and the North. These centres provide support for families and help raise public awareness on the importance of the early years to child development. They provide learning opportunities, literacy supports, and programming for families with children under the age of five.

The Children Communicating, Connecting and in Community pilot program helped support 23 pre-school aged children experiencing disability. This program supports early educational intervention programming for children who are deaf or hard of hearing in Regina and Saskatoon.

The Early Learning Intensive Support pilot also saw an expansion of 76 spaces in early 2020, bringing the provincial total to 242 spaces. This pilot allowed children with extensive needs to be able to attend select existing school division pre-kindergarten programs by implementing additional supports.

In 2019 to 2020 Saskatchewan funded a variety of grants that were provided to licensed child care facilities. The grants helped to increase access to child care as they updated their spaces, ensured centres were meeting fire, health, and safety requirements, and provided equipment for centres and nutritional grants to assist with the provision of well-balanced nutritious meals and snacks.



Quality

The province has committed to modernizing its current approach to licensing child care. The province, with experts in the field of risk-based assessment, will create a more systematic way to measure innovation and quality for child care in Saskatchewan. The Differential Monitoring model is expected to be implemented in spring 2021.

In 2019 to 2020, Saskatchewan trained 124 child care directors to support of providing important skills for the management of licensed child care facilities. The training helped further develop the skills child care directors need to effectively manage their staff and facilities. Furthermore, 897 individuals from the Early Years sector attended Aboriginal awareness workshops. Training was also provided to 94 participants on physical ability, social skills, problem solving and speech for non-clinical screening of children.

Saskatchewan also launched two public awareness campaigns in 2019 to 2020. One awareness campaign, *Play.Learn.Grow.Together!* reached out to new parents with tips and information on how to help them learn at home and raise awareness on the importance of early years to child development.

The province aimed to have 50% or 115 child care home providers participate in training. The training aimed to enhance the quality of child care programming. The actual results were that 173 child care home providers attended training. The province also aimed to have 60% or 188 child care directors participate in training. A total of 209 child care directors participated in training.

Accessible and flexible

The province had a target of increasing licensed child care centre spaces by 950 over the next three years and they surpassed their target by increasing spaces to 1,295. They also sought to increase licensed group or family care home spaces by 1,500 and have added 1,032 spaces.

Inclusive

The province aimed to increase preschool-aged spaces for children experiencing disability by 220, but successfully increased it to 344 spaces. The province also aimed to increase licensed child care spaces that support minority communities by 65 spaces over three years. The province was successful exceeding the target in increasing it to 75 spaces.





Manitoba

In 2019 to 2020, 10 capital projects were completed with 294 new child care spaces. The remaining 10 capital projects were still under development, having experienced construction delays due to COVID-19. They are targeted for opening in 2020 to 2021.

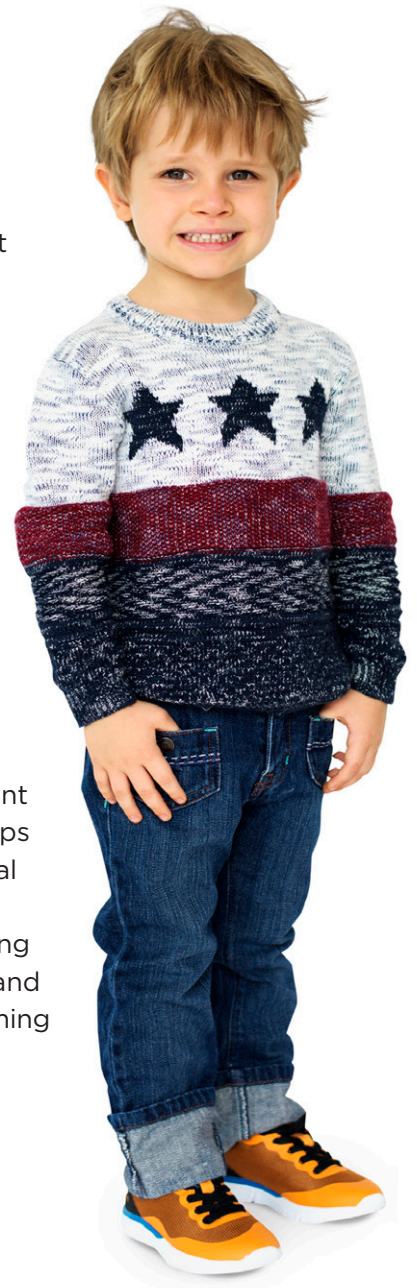
Manitoba provided operating subsidies for licensed child care spaces through expansion projects not requiring capital investments. In 2019 to 2020, an operating subsidy was provided for 29 additional licensed child care spaces.

Quality

Manitoba provided funding to Red River College to support online free access to the Science of Early Child Development (SECD) a living textbook updated continually with modules on the most recent research and information on early child development. In 2019 to 2020, 5,277 unique users accessed the portal. All licensed centres and home-based child care providers are encouraged to use the resource to strengthen their knowledge base and engage in best practices. The Competency Based Assessment (CBA) Program also used SECD as a training resource. SECD was accessed by the 43 participants CBA Program, as well as the 21 participants in its Home-based Mentorship Program.

Inclusion

In 2019 to 2020, Manitoba continued the block operating grant program launched in 2017-18. The Block Operating Grant helps alleviate financial challenges associated with high operational costs experienced by licensed early learning and child care centres in rural and Northern Manitoba. The additional funding allows these facilities to hire and retain more qualified staff and offer more flexible, high quality, inclusive child care programming to better serve these higher-need communities. Enhanced funding was provided to 13 additional ELCC centres for 750 spaces in rural and Northern Manitoba.



In 2019 to 2020, 423 children with disabilities received support under the Inclusion Support Program, funded by the federal government. The funding supports the inclusion of children with disabilities in child care programming by providing equipment, room modifications, specialized training, and enhanced staffing as necessary.

In 2019 to 2020, 158 child care centre staff from 19 child care centres were trained through workshops and presentations delivered under Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA) programming. ABA, is a therapeutic approach used with children with autism to teach social behaviours to increase acceptance and inclusion with peers creating a secure learning environment.

Manitoba provided grants to 12 community organizations to provide casual child care services for parents were receiving supportive programming, such as English as an additional language classes, literacy and job skill courses, parenting courses and counselling.

Manitoba provided grant funding to 14 self-identified Indigenous licensed early learning and child care facilities. The grant funding supported Indigenous programming and curriculum, serving 530 children.

Manitoba also provided grant funding to the Fédération des Parents du Manitoba (FPM). The funding supported resources and professional development opportunities for the Francophone early learning and child care community.



Ontario

Increasing access to affordable ELCC

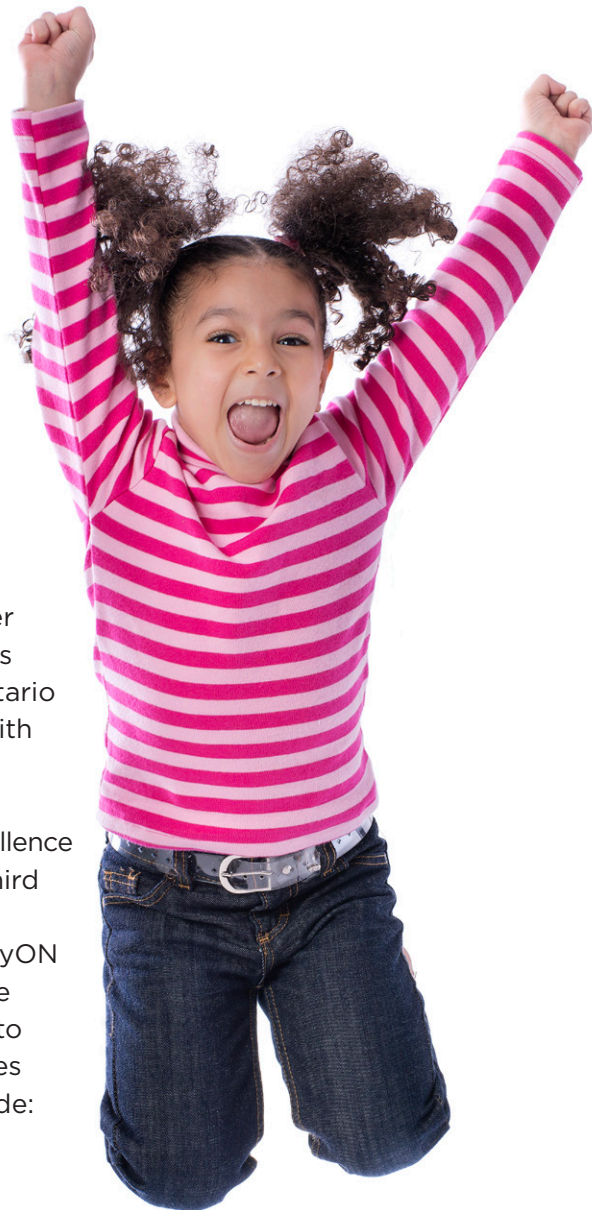
Ontario has continued to increase access to early years and child care. Federal funding was primarily used to increase access to child care, reduce fees by investing in child care subsidies and/or community-based capital projects. As of March 31, 2020:

- there were 16,206 licensed child care spaces added to child care centres across the province; bringing the total licensed child care spaces to 462,802. A total of 131 licensed home care agencies were in operation with 8,296 approved homes affiliated with these agencies;
- on average, there has been an annual net increase of 76 licensed child care centres opened per year, over the past 10 years.

Quality

Ontario has invested federal funding to support students participating in the Early Childhood Educators Qualifications Upgrade Program. Under the program, eligible workers can apply for grants to obtain their ECE diploma. In 2019 to 2020, Ontario saw an increase of 30% from the previous year with 2,038 applications approved.

The implementation of the regional Centres of Excellence for Early Years and Child Care continued in the third year of the agreement. As part of the agreement, the province uses federal funding to support EarlyON Child and Family Centres. These centres offer free drop-in programs for caregivers and children up to the age of six years old and are open to all families in Ontario. Services provided at the centres include:



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

As of March 31, 2020, there were approximately 1,296 EarlyON Child and Family Centre locations across Ontario with 475 main locations and 821 mobile/satellite locations. Approximately 396 centres offer non-standard hours, 116 offer French language programming and 65 offer Indigenous programming.

Inclusive

Ontario continues to offer licensed child care with services in French, or both French and English. In 2019 to 2020, of the 5,565 licensed child care centres, 308 (6%) offered programs in French and 101 (2%) offered bilingual programs.

As of March 31, 2020, the province has funded 96 First Nations to support child care and/or child and family programs on reserve, of which:

- 31 received funding for child care only
- 21 received funding for child and family programs only
- 44 received funding for a combination of child care and child and family programs

Ontario has also implemented the usage of the Early Development Instrument (EDI) across its school board system. This is a questionnaire that teachers complete about the skills and abilities of each of their senior kindergarten students to measure their developmental health and well-being across five domains. The five domains are physical health and well-being; social competence; emotional maturity; language and cognitive development; communication skills; and general knowledge. The EDI is used as a key indicator to monitor the state of young children in Ontario and can be compared over time to get a sense of how children are developing as well as identifying vulnerable children.



Quebec

Act early and work together

The Quebec government's commitment is to act early and work together for young children to meet their specific needs before they begin kindergarten. The goal is to foster the development of children's full potential and their educational success. In 2019 to 2020, as part of this approach, the Ministry of Families:

- helped enhance the educational quality of educational child care services
- supported the development of the network of educational child care services to increase accessibility
- implemented strategies to reach vulnerable children who are not attending educational services

Plan to accelerate access to child care spaces

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

- in response to the call for projects for the creation of 2,500 new subsidized spaces launched in March 2019, 2,728 places were ultimately awarded, 228 places more than initially planned
- fast-tracking projects to create almost 11,000 subsidized centre spaces awarded in calls for projects in 2011, 2013 and 2018, with the aim of making them available as quickly as possible



- allocating currently unallocated spaces among providers at home-based child care centres by home child care coordinating offices (CO). To make unallocated spaces available, the COs were asked to implement measures to recognize more home-based child care providers (DPs)

Additional financial support to community organizations family and community drop-in child care centres

The Ministry of Families supports the overall mission (operation) of 262 Family and Community Drop-in Child Care Centres and 8 national groups through its support program for family-focused community action. The total annual budget of the Programme OCF (Oakville Community Foundation) is \$19.8 million. Through its financial support program for community drop-in child care centres (*Programme HGC*), the Ministry supports 242 organizations offering community drop-in child care activities (171 OCFs and 71 other community-based organizations).

The annual funding envelope allocated to the *Programme HGC* is \$4 million. Moreover, to make up for salary increases, \$3.4 million in financial assistance over five years starting in 2018-2019 granted to OCFs and community-based organizations offering community drop-in child care activities.

New Brunswick

Increasing access to more affordable care

In 2019 to 2020, New Brunswick focused on several areas designed to increase the quality of ELCC initiatives. The province established eight objectives under this action plan including:

- establish New Brunswick early learning centres
- establish parent advisory boards
- develop online resources for parents
- establish centres of excellence in preschool education
- implement professional learning and development opportunities for ECEs
- implement an inclusion policy
- develop guidelines for language acquisition and cultural identity learning environments
- introduce requirements for annual quality improvement plans for all early learning and child care facilities

One of the measures established to increase access to more affordable, high-quality care was the New Brunswick Early Learning Centre and the New Brunswick Early Learning Home designation. New Brunswick Early Learning Centres and Early Learning Homes commit to work in collaboration with the New Brunswick government to offer equitable and affordable access to higher quality early learning and child care services. This accompanied by on-going operational funding for preschool services and improved parent subsidies. By March 2020, 393 of 434 eligible ELCC centres (91%) and 106 of 145 eligible early learning homes (73%) were designated. This represents 8,222 Anglophone spaces and 4,919 Francophone spaces for a total of 13,141 more affordable spaces in child care centres across the province.



There have been 3,407 children receiving an approved subsidy for child care in New Brunswick Early Learning Centres and New Brunswick Early Learning Homes, 110 of which received subsidies in Early Learning Homes. As of March 31, 2019, 1,935 children were receiving free child care and 1,472 more children were receiving subsidized child care. The New Brunswick Early Learning Centre Parent Subsidy resulted in free daycare for preschool aged children for families with a gross annual income of under \$37,500 attending a New Brunswick Early Learning Centre, regardless of the location and fee charged by the operator. The subsidy also allowed for no family in New Brunswick to pay more than 20% of their gross annual family income to cover child care costs while a child is attending a New Brunswick Early Learning Centre.

There were 114 (3%) children that benefited from the 20% rule. By the end of March 2019, the maximum subsidy for families earning \$37,501 and more was \$36.90-a-day for infant spaces and \$31.20-a-day for preschool spaces.

Improving quality

In 2019 to 2020, New Brunswick focused on professional learning and development. All educators without postsecondary training in early childhood education who worked in designated provincial Early Learning Centres serving children up to age 5 completed a 90-hour course called Introduction to Early Childhood Education. A total of 450 educators completed this course in 2019 to 2020 (243 Anglophone and 207 Francophone).

Centres of Excellence were established in seven districts, which support professional learning opportunities that demonstrate early childhood pedagogy that models and supports innovative and leading practices in early learning and child care were developed and implemented. Learning and Growing Together, a three-day institute focused on supporting pedagogical leadership through reflective practice, also took place. The Centres continue to strengthen partnerships with post-secondary institutions, such as the New Brunswick Community Colleges and the University of New Brunswick.

Prince Edward Island

Increasing the availability and affordability of licensed spaces

Growth continued in 2019 to 2020 as renovations, improvements and funded expansions were completed. PEI (Prince Edward Island) focused on three areas:

1. the designation of new Early Years Centres (EYC)
2. allocation of additional designated EYC spaces to existing centres
3. approval of new licenses for ELCC centres to support the action plan

The child care spaces available have far exceeded the minimum target of 10% set at the beginning of the agreement. PEI added 809 new spaces from 2017 to 2020 (an increase of 25%), of which 206 spaces were added this year. Funding was also allocated under the Canada-PEI Bilateral Agreement to assist licensed Early Years Centres in creating spaces, to invest in equipment and to make capital improvements.

Inclusion

The Canada-PEI Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care allocated \$700,000 annually towards increasing subsidy access for children who are more vulnerable. This investment supports families in need, particularly lower income, lone parent, and families with children of varying abilities. This project was able to support 110 children for 2019 to 2020.

As of March 2020, there were eleven active alternative-hour demonstration sites. Three provided seats for seasonally employed families and nine provided extended hours. A total of 143 children from 126 families benefited from accessing child care during extended hours or seasonal programming in 2019 to 2020.

Under the PEI action plan, investments were made to the Early Years Autism Service and the Special Needs Assistants Program. From 2017 to 2020, an additional 162 children with unique abilities were supported.

Training

PEI also invested federal funding to expand the Handle with Care program. This program provides culturally relevant, interactive training that supports parents and caregivers with tools to promote children's mental health. In the third year of the agreement, PEI continued to build on the successes of the previous years, which included the expansion of programs offered, the training of new program facilitators, and the development of supporting materials. In 2019 to 2020, an additional 54 facilitators were trained; there were a total of 139 program participants and 978 children influenced with 21 programs held.

The PEI Action Plan also allocated funding towards supporting early childhood educator post-secondary training. An education grant was created, and the grant was made available to casual, part-time, and temporary employees of Early Learning and Child Care Centres to pay for course fees and required textbooks. A total of 63 applications were approved for training grants, contributing towards 63 new sector certifications.

During this year, PEI experienced growth of newcomer families to the province. The PEI Action Plan earmarked investments over three years to address the unique needs of newcomer children. The PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada led diversity and inclusion themed workshops for directors and educators from EYCs (Early Years Centres) in early 2020. The workshops had participants focus on creating inclusive practices and centres, and how best to support newcomer children and their families. By March 31, 2020, 27 licensed ELCC Centres participated in multi-cultural education for staff, affecting 1350 children. The resources and programs designed to serve newcomer families directly impacted 717 spaces in ELCC Centres.

The Canada-PEI agreement has continued to deliver strong results, meeting and exceeding targets for Early Childhood programs and initiatives in 2019 to 2020.





Nova Scotia

In 2019 to 2020, Nova Scotia continued using ELCC funding to support action focused on the following priority areas:

1. Making Child Care More Accessible and Affordable
2. Supporting Quality Through Workforce Development
3. Embedding Inclusion in Early Learning and Child Care Environments

Making child care more accessible and affordable

From 2018 to 2020, approximately \$10.6 million of the ELCC funds were used to enhance access in Nova Scotia through the Strategic Growth Initiative. In 2019 to 2020, the Strategic Growth Initiative included approximately \$940,000 for the Infant Incentive Grant and \$420,000 to continue supporting new child care centre spaces as well as family home day care providers previously funded by the Initiative. The Strategic Growth Initiative was a multi-faceted plan that focused on growing child care in collaboration with communities, expanding infant care and increasing child care options for families. During the two-year Strategic Growth period, 268 infant spaces were created or converted. Nova Scotia created the Infant Incentive Grant to encourage regulated child care providers to offer infant spaces during the 2-year period of the Strategic Growth Initiative. The Grant provides \$4-a-day per infant space to regulated child care providers and \$2 per day per infant space to family day care home providers.

Enhancements to the Nova Scotia Child Care Subsidy Program have also been a priority. The subsidy program assists families with child care costs in regulated child care facilities and approved family home day care agencies. Through increasing per diem rates and extending the subsidy program to part-day early learning programs, many families and children have benefited, and will continue to benefit from the program. The eligibility criteria for families to receive maximum subsidy rates were adjusted, allowing 3,724 children receive the maximum child care subsidy, as of March 2020.



Supporting quality through workforce development

In Nova Scotia, licensed child care facilities and employers are required by regulation under the Nova Scotia *Day Care Act* to demonstrate that two-thirds of their staff have ECE training. To support this, initiatives to assess and recognize work experience and international credentials, and fund professional training and development were implemented. Out of 2,728 total employees, 2,120 (78%) have an ECE diploma, post-secondary training, or a degree, while 608 do not have formal ECE training. In 2019 to 2020, 94 days of training were offered to directors and pedagogical leaders as well as ECEs working in regulated child care and pre-primary programs. Learning modules were available in French and English. A total of 1,652 care staff participated in professional development related to Early Learning Curriculum Framework.

Embedding inclusion in ELCC environments

In 2019 to 2020, 74 spaces were created for the French-speaking community. Additionally, 10 projects were approved (8 moving forward) to help support rural communities, while 274 centers have received funding support for better inclusion of all children. Nova Scotia Early Childhood Development Intervention Services (ECDIS) supports children who have, or are at risk for, developmental delays. ECDIS was enhanced with the addition of three more Developmental Interventionists, allowing them to extend their reach to further support under-served communities.

Newfoundland and Labrador

In 2019 to 2020, Newfoundland and Labrador focused on early learning and child care in two priority areas:

1. Improved Access and Affordability
2. Enhanced Quality

Access and affordability

The province continued to invest federal funding in the Operating Grant program (OGP). The OGP provides child care centres with grants based on the condition that they cap parental fees, serve healthy food, and set minimum wages for ECEs working at the centre. By March 2020, 66% of child care centres were participating in this program, and 2,327 spaces were receiving bilateral funding, an increase of 916 spaces since March 2017.

In July 2019, the province increased the net family income threshold for the Child Care Services Subsidy program, from \$32,000 to \$35,000. Families who make less than \$35,000 became eligible for a complete subsidy, eliminating all costs for regulated child care. As of March 2020, there were 1,882 children benefiting from the subsidy program.

The Child Care Capacity Initiative was also available for funding to not-for-profit community groups who develop child care spaces in under serviced areas. The Capacity program saw one additional child care centre licensed since 2019. In March 2020, there were six projects in one of the phases of the Capacity program. The province has acknowledged that the program has proven to be a longer process than originally imagined. To streamline the process, work has begun to revise policies and procedures that govern the program.



Enhancing quality

The province focused on supporting the development of its ELCC workforce by making enhancements to three existing programs: (1) Trainee Bursary (2) On-Campus Field Placement Bursary (3) ECE Graduate Bursary.

In total from 2017 to 2020:

- 114 ECE Trainee Bursaries – 439 courses funded with an average of four courses per applicant.
- 55 ECE Field Placement Bursaries – The successful completion of a mandatory field placement at a college campus.
- ECE Graduate Bursary: Previously awarded \$5000 for 2-year return in service, now increased to \$7500 in 2020 to ECE Diploma graduates who commit to a 3-year return in service. From 2017 to 2020, 65 graduate bursaries have been awarded for successful completion of the 2-year diploma program with recipients agreeing to a three-year return in service.

The province has also completed the policy development phase of two programs:

1. Child Care Quality Enhancement Program
2. Family Care Operating and Capacity Grants

These are expected to roll out in fiscal year 2020 to 2021.

Nunavut

There are many challenges in providing quality ELCC to Nunavut's residents. Nunavut's population lives in 25 communities spread across three time zones, which span approximately 21% of Canada's total land area. The territory has the smallest population of any province or territory in Canada, with 39,486 residents reported in 2020. According to Statistics Canada, 84.7% of the population identified as Inuit.

Under the Canada Nunavut ELCC Agreement, Nunavut directed funding in four areas for investment:

- operations & maintenance top-up funding
- child care space creation in underserved communities
- territory-wide training session and financial literacy training
- educational programming resources and training

The Operations and Maintenance Top-Up Fund was accessed by 50 out of 58 licensed child care facilities. Which means that 1,055 spaces benefited from this program in terms of maintaining or reducing costs in Nunavut. To access this new program, the facility must maintain or lower their child care fees. Though fees did not decrease, the facilities maintained the rates identified before the Agreement was signed.

There was a total of 1,237 licensed child care spaces available as of March 31, 2020. This was an increase from 1,144 licensed child care spaces available in March 2019. These spaces included full-time preschool, full-time infant spaces, part-time preschool, and after-school spaces. As of March 2020, there were seven Aboriginal Head Start programs, thirty-three daycares, eight preschools, three family day homes, and seven after-school programs operating in Nunavut.



Quality

In 2019 to 2020, Nunavut hosted one territorial and three regional professional development and financial literacy training sessions. Altogether, 71 participants from 48 licensed facilities attended professional development and financial literacy training sessions for child care facility staff.

Inclusive

As of March 2020, new resources were developed including Nunavut themed activity books, which work towards increasing cultural and language-based programming within ELCC centres. These resources are available in all official languages of Nunavut (Inuktitut, English, and French), and were distributed to all 58 ELCC centres. All licensed child care centres in Nunavut have had the opportunity to benefit from various programs that support Indigenous language and culturally appropriate ELCC. A total of 13 child-focused programs benefited from the Early Childhood Inuit Language and Culture funding.

Northwest Territories

The Northwest Territories set out to support investments in early learning and child care in two main areas: high quality and access. The territory aimed to provide further investment to support those operating or opening licensed early learning and child care programs including those within communities that were currently without any licensed early learning and child care programs.

Quality

In 2019 to 2020, the total number of staff from licensed early learning and child care programs that received professional development and training offered by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment on a variety of early learning and child care areas was 88. Moreover, a total of 198 participants, including 71 ECEs from licensed early learning and child care programs throughout the NWT and 11 future ECEs enrolled in the Aurora College ELCC Diploma program, attended the Learning Together: Right from the Start Symposium Conference.

In 2019 to 2020, a total of \$10,835 was spent for the development of cultural resources for licensed early childhood programs. The resources will be distributed to licensed early learning and child care programs in the 2020 to 2021 fiscal year. This work included the translation of two books, titled “I want to learn” and “Full of Feelings” in nine Indigenous languages of the NWT. A song with lyrics that match the Wiilideh language text in the book was also developed.

In 2019 to 2020, 24 early childhood scholarships were provided to NWT residents enrolled in a post-secondary early learning and child care program. Aurora College was funded to deliver a two year full-time, face-to-face ELCC Diploma Program in Yellowknife, a part-time distance education ELCC Certificate program, and a Dual Credit course for secondary school students. At the end of the 2019 to 2020 school year, 17 students were enrolled in Aurora College’s Diploma program in Yellowknife and 17 students graduated in June 2020 with a Diploma in Early Learning and Child Care.



In 2019 to 2020, 24 licensed centre-based early learning and child care programs received health and safety funding to complete necessary repairs and maintenance to comply with health and safety standards.

The Provider Enhancement Grant was also made available. It was designed for licensed early learning and child care programs as a one-time payment towards replacing or purchasing equipment, such as high chairs, car seats, playground equipment, furniture and other learning materials that support quality play-based environments. However eligible programs from 2019 to 2020 will be provided with funding from this grant in 2020 to 2021.

Access

As of March 2020, 19 licensed early learning and child care programs received funding. The funding resulted in a total of 258 new licensed child care spaces in 2019 to 2020.

Enhanced funding also supported 32 centre-based programs and 762 out of school spaces that offer out-of-school (before and/or afterschool centre) programming for four- and five-year-old children. Similarly, increased funding was also provided to centre-based programs that offer pre-school spaces to support operational and maintenance costs, including staffing, rent, and utilities. A total of 37 centres, representing 598 preschool spaces, benefited from this funding. The funding helps provide stability to licensed centre-based early learning and child care programs in 2019 to 2020.

To foster more community connections and collaboration and to assist with identifying early learning and child care needs in the 11 communities that did not have licensed programming for children zero to three years old, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment hosted a community connections half-day workshop at the 2019 *Learning Together: Right from the Start Symposium*. A total of 6 community representatives attended the connections session.

Yukon

Communities in the Yukon are remote, which leads to an increased cost for food, learning resources and other materials required to provide quality ELCC programming. Yukon continues to focus on direct operating grant funding increases to support the 66 licensed child care programs, benefiting more than 1,680 children in the territory in 2019 to 2020. The intention of the funding was to make parent fees for licensed child care programs more affordable. Parents' monthly fees decreased on average by \$25 across programs in the Yukon in 2019 to 2020.

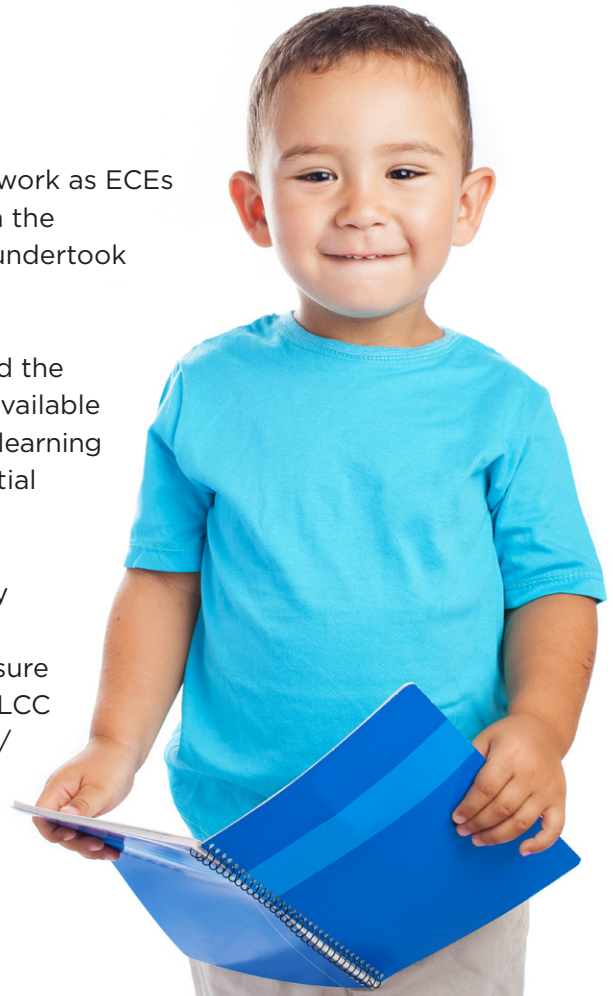
Additionally, the territory continued the Teen Parent Grant, which helps parents under the age of 24 access licensed child care while they complete their high school education. In 2019 to 2020, seven parents received grants which helped eight children access licensed child care. The Grandparent Grant also helps make licensed child care more affordable for grandparents who are the primary caregiver for their grandchildren. Funding provided through this grant to licensed child care programs helped 35 children attend licensed child care programs.

Quality

In order to recruit and retain qualified staff to work as ECEs the Child Care Services Unit with support from the Communications and Social Marketing group undertook an advertising initiative to recruit ECEs.

During 2019 to 2020, seven programs accessed the Enhancement Fund Initiative. The initiative is available to licensed child care programs to ensure their learning environments are safe and healthy with the initial emphasis on radon testing and remediation.

Work continued on a public tender for an Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) curriculum framework. The intent of the tender was to ensure that any curriculum framework reflected the ELCC needs of Yukon's linguistic, cultural, and urban/rural communities, including Yukon's 14 First Nations and its francophone population.



The curriculum draft framework was delivered in January 2020 and the Department of Education will determine an implementation plan following the approval of the draft.

The Education bursary program developed to increase quality in licensed child care programs was well utilized. During the 2019 to 2020 reporting period with \$50,016 expended on one full-time and 95 part-time bursaries.

Yukon College Trainers in Rural Communities was another initiative to support ECEs in rural communities by funding in-community ELCC course support from Yukon College instructors. The initiative was created to increase the number of rural ECEs that successfully complete ELCC coursework. Funding in this category totaled \$120,000.

The funds for 2019 to 2020 supplemented the costs of Yukon College in-community instructors providing ELCC course training to students in the communities of: Ross River, Mayo, Carcross, Haines Junction, Pelly Crossing, Carmacks, Dawson City, Burwash Landing and Watson Lake. Course completion rates were 76% for the fall 2019 term, and 78% for the spring 2020 term.

Inclusive

Yukon has also invested in programs to provide additional supports for children with various complex needs, including the Supported Child Care Program, that supported 34 children in 2019 to 2020 meet their developmental potential. Funding was also allocated to the Child Development Centre, which provided mentors to 29 support licensed child care programs and 317 children in designing developmentally appropriate learning environments and providing consultation on group dynamics to assist in working with children with behavioral challenges.

Yukon also directed funding to the Handle with Care Program. The program includes its expansion to rural areas, to promote mental and emotional well-being in children in 8 communities and directly benefiting 741 children. Funding was also provided to four full-time innovative Intensive Treatment Child Care spaces to help children whose caregivers are accessing treatment for substance use access child care.

Summary

The Government of Canada believes in supporting families to help children get the best start in life. That is why we have committed \$7.5 billion over 11 years to support and create more high-quality, affordable child care across the country. More accessible and less costly child care will help children develop. It helps parents who wish to work or return to work, and supports families by reducing the burden of child care costs. Since early learning and child care programming is delivered through the provinces and territories, the Government of Canada provides funding support to each province and territory through bilateral agreements that reflect their unique early learning and child care needs.

In 2019 to 2020, federal investments in ELCC made through bilateral agreements with provinces and territories resulted in:

- from 2017 to 2020, and as of March 2020, approximately 50,000 new and affordable child care spaces across Canada
- from 2017 to 2020 more than 14,000 bursaries, scholarships, or grants awarded to pursue post-secondary Early Learning Childhood Education (ECE) Credentials, with nearly 15,000 educators participating in professional development opportunities and/or in-service training supported by ELCC funding
- the creation of approximately 3,300 licensed spaces providing more flexible child care spaces for children whose parents work non-traditional hours

This final year of the three-year agreements was instrumental in setting the foundation with the PTs for continued success as the federal government continues investing in early learning and child care. Provinces and territories continue to strive towards their goals as set out in their action plans.