

A top-down view of a group of children and adults gathered around a table, engaged in a craft activity. They are working on a large sheet of paper that features various drawings, including houses, trees, and abstract patterns. Several colorful cookie cutters (red, blue, green, yellow) are scattered across the paper. Some children are using rolling pins to flatten dough, while others are using cookie cutters. The scene is brightly lit and shows a collaborative learning environment.

Early Learning and Child Care Sector Call

June 18, 2025



We would like to begin by recognizing that the land upon which we work, live, and gather is the traditional territory and ancestral homeland of the Mi'kmaq Nation. Our relationship is based on a series of sacred and historic Peace and Friendship Treaties. We pay our respect to the Mi'kmaw People, and recognize in Nova Scotia, we are All Treaty People.

We acknowledge the existence of people of African descent in Nova Scotia for over 400 years. May we honour and offer gratitude to the ancestors who came before us to this land and their commitment to not let this history be lost.

Call Functionality

-  **Ask a Question?** Use the Q&A feature anytime - just click the Q&A icon.
-  **Mic & Camera:** These are off by default. Mics will be turned on during the Q&A.
-  **Want to Speak?** Use the Raise Hand feature during Q&A.
-  **Missed a Question?** We'll follow up with a Q&A document after the call if needed.
-  **Captions:** Turn on captions: Go to top bar → More → Language and Speech → Turn on live captions.
-  **Recording Notice:** This session is recorded and transcribed. An FAQ will be shared later.
-  **Note: Do not use AI tools during this session.**

Communication Standards

When asking questions, please:

- Introduce yourself and indicate your role in the sector
- Be kind
- Be professional
- Be respectful of differences



Agenda

- **Updates:**
 - Engagement (Lead: Erika)
 - Space Creation Initiatives & Progress (Lead: Krystal)
 - Quality, Innovation & Professional Learning (Lead: Hoa)
- **Operational Funding Model (Lead: Leslie)**
- **Digital Services (Lead: Josh)**
- **Other Updates: Federal Agreements 2026-2031**
- **Q&A**

Engagement



Engagement

Minister's Engagement Table



- Meets quarterly - typically Saturdays, typically in-person. The 11th MET meeting was held **Wednesday, June 11th (evening)**, virtually
- Topics included OFM, Digital services and the ELCC website redesign
- Meeting summaries are posted quarterly – you can view the summaries here <https://childcarenovascotia.ca/engagement-table>

Workforce Survey



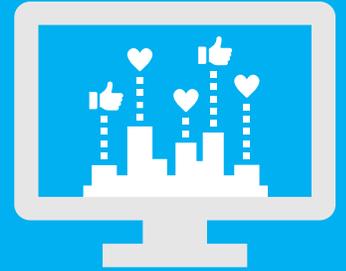
- This month **directors/operators** will be invited to participate in a survey about staffing needs in the child care sector – **keep an eye on your inbox for an email from ECDServices!**
- Data collected will help us understand staffing needs across different regions of the province including recruitment challenges, retention, and attrition
- Participation is voluntary, and anonymous
- Your input will be extremely helpful to inform future workforce strategies
- The survey will be open until **Thursday, July 31st, 2025**



Engagement

ELCC Website Redesign – Step 1 – Sprint

- **Who participated?** 14 staff representing all ELCC branch teams (licensing, consulting, space expansion, classification, subsidy, grants, quality and professional learning, family home child care, NS BAP, solutions and support) and our key internal partner – Cyber Security and Digital Solutions.
- **What did we want to achieve?** A solution that dynamically supported families, educators, operators, the public and EECD staff with finding relevant, and timely information in an easily accessible way, in English and French.
- **What happened?** Teams built 3 integrated scalable prototypes, informed by first-voice feedback from the sector (providers, ECEs, MET members, and ELCC staff).





Welcome to Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Nova Scotia

In Nova Scotia, the vision for early learning is for all children to be joyfully engaged in spaces intentionally designed for early learning that support them to flourish as capable, confident and curious individuals.



For Families

For Educators

For Operators

Was this page helpful?

Yes

No

Go back to top





Operators

“ Leaders and administrators have a responsibility to create the conditions that support relationship-based, inclusive, and reflective practices. This includes ensuring adequate time, resources, and collaborative spaces for educators to engage in curriculum decision-making. ”



Current ELCC Program



Aspiring ELCC Program



Information and Resources for Current Operators



LICENSED CHILD CARE



FAMILY HOME



NS BAP

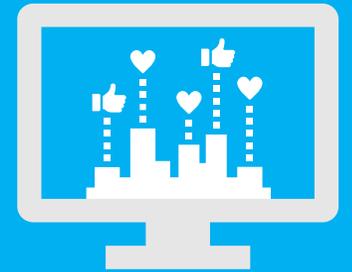
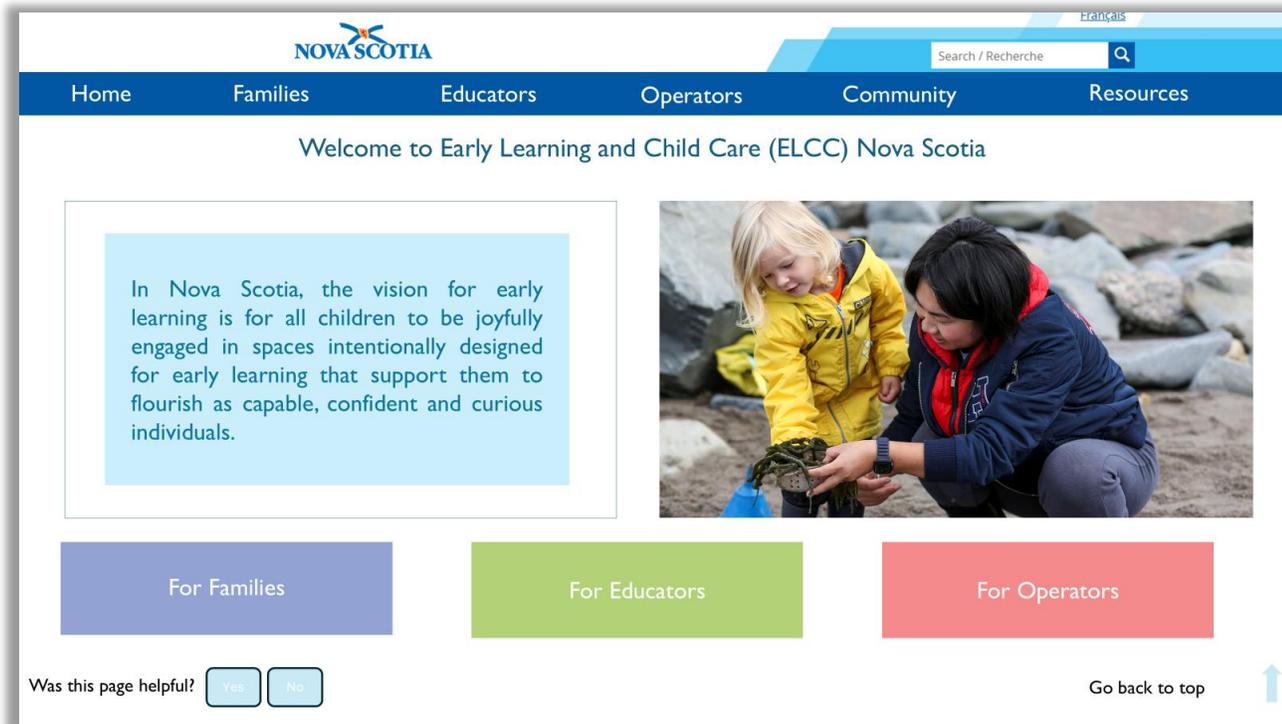


Engagement

ELCC Website Redesign – What’s Next?



- Continue to test the prototypes and gather feedback. If you would like to be involved, or know someone who would, you can fill out the volunteer registration form. **We will be sharing the link soon!**



Space Creation Initiatives & Progress



Heads Up!

Before-and-After School Planning for 2025-2026

- There are currently **3,096 NS BAP spaces** across **86 schools** in NS. Work is underway to re-establish contracts with all existing providers to re-open programs for 25/26.
- EECD has a target of adding an additional **1,000 spaces in 25/26.**
- An internal review identified **53 schools without NS BAP** where PP-6 enrolment numbers indicate it could be viable. An **additional 42 schools have an existing** before-and-after school provider where additional demand exists, meaning **expanded services** could be viable.
- **4,083 responses were received** from families in the 95 schools who participated in the needs assessment.
- A Sector Call with more information was held with NS BAP program providers on June 17th.

Based on survey of 95 schools - # of Children by RCE not in a program and have a need*

AVRCE	506
CBVRCE	574
CCRCE	757
HRCE	175*
SRCE	127
SSRCE	147
TCRCE	25
Provincial total	2311

Child Care Space Expansion: Progress & Commitments

6,921 spaces created, on track to reach 9,500 by March 2026

Program Type	Spaces Opened												
	2021-2023 ⁽¹⁾	2023-2024				2024-25				2025-26			
	July 13, 2021 - March 31, 2023	Q1 Apr 1 - Jun 30	Q2 Jul 1 - Sep 30	Q3 Oct 1 - Dec 31	Q4 Jan 1 - Mar 31	Q1 Apr 1 - Jun 30	Q2 Jul 1 - Sep 30	Q3 Oct 1 - Dec 31	Q4 Jan 1 - Mar 31	Q1 Apr 1 - Jun 30	Q2 Jul 1 - Sep 30	Q3 Oct 1 - Dec 31	Q4 Jan 1 - Mar 31
Licensed child care centres	377	310	302	108	200	348	253	147	169	16 Major Projects announced 9 EOI projects pending completion 4 Minor applications underway			
Licensed family homes	546	100	150	108	198	120	294	132	114	Target 150 spaces a quarter			
NS Before-and-After Program (NSBAP)	768	0	804	288	264	41	627	57	96	Target 1,000 spaces			
Total	1691	410	1256	504	662	509	1174	336	379	Target 2,600			
Cumulative Total	1691	2101	3357	3861	4523	5032	6206	6542	6921	9,500			

Ongoing Space Creation Initiatives:

- Minor Infrastructure Program
- Family Home Start Up Grant

Go to www.childcarenovascotia.ca for more information about program eligibility!

Provincial Capital Investment (2026-2031)

School Capital Plan & Commitment to New Child Care Services

- The **5-Year School Capital Plan**, released in February, included a commitment to expanding child care access in every new school project, whenever feasible
- **18 new child care centres (up to 1,400 spaces)** have been committed, and planning is underway
- This represents a **Provincial Investment of Approx. \$90–\$120 M**



Quality, Innovation & Professional Learning



Quality, Innovation & Professional Learning

Workforce Updates



Grads
2024-25

- 283 Diploma (Sep 1, 2024 – Aug 31, 2025)
- 40 Degree (Child and Youth Studies, MSVU)
- 212 Upskilling: 126 Diploma, 24 RPL, 62 Level 1
- 43 Administrative Leadership: 20 MSVU, 23 NSCC)

Coming
Soon

- 30 seats: Virtual Diploma for hard-to-recruit areas (NSCC, Work and Learn, Oct 2025)
- 30 seats: Mi'kmaw Diploma (NSCC, Sep 2025)
- 30 seats: Diploma for FHCC (Jane Norman College, Sep 2025)
- 20 seats: French Diploma (Université Ste-Anne, Sep 2025)
- 75 seats: Accelerated with PLAR (NSCC & NSCECE, winter/spring 2026)

Funding
Support

- 374 Bursaries awarded in 2024-25
- 164 Continuing Education recipients

Visit: <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/ece/training>



Quality, Innovation & Professional Learning

Professional Learning Updates



NSELCF

- Revised NSELCF launched – copies coming in summer
- 5 NSELCF modules revised; 3 more modules coming
- Positive Behaviour Guidance PD coming fall 2025
- Orientation Training (revised to reflect NSELCF) – launch in early November 2025 on new internal platform
- Professional Learning Opportunities:
<https://www.ednet.ns.ca/ece/early-years-professional-learning>

Food & Nutrition Manual

- Revised Food and Nutrition Standards info session:
<https://www.ednet.ns.ca/earlyyears/providers/FoodandNutritionalSupport.shtml>
- Menu Planning workshops – summer 2025, PHN
- Responsive Feeding workshops – fall 2025, MSVU
- Memo with PL dates to be shared by end of June

Play-based Learning

- Learning Through Active Play (Active for Life): registration open for fall/winter sessions Contact: Melissa Dulong at Melissa.Vail@nsc.ca
- Principles to Practices Resource: Share your practice stories – next issue focuses on building literacy and numeracy through nature-based play
Email: ELCCprofessional.learning@novascotia.ca with your stories!



Operational Funding Model



Nova Scotia's

Early Learning and Child Care System

This growing system serves over **33,000 children** aged 0-12, offering early learning and before- and after-school care. Services are a foundational driver of **economic growth**, enabling **greater workforce participation** across the province while also supporting improved developmental, educational, and social **outcomes for children**.



Child Care Centres



Family Home Child Care



Pre-Primary Program



Before & After School Programs



Services are funded through a mix of **federal and provincial investments**, as well as, daily fees paid by families

Current State

Inequitable, Inefficient, & Unsustainable Funding Model



The Path Forward

A Strong, Standardized, & Sustainable Funding Model



Families

Unpredictable fees, inconsistent funding, and infant care shortages limit affordability and options



Children

Inequitable funding causes gaps in care quality and learning



Service Providers

Inequitable funding distribution and admin burden create instability

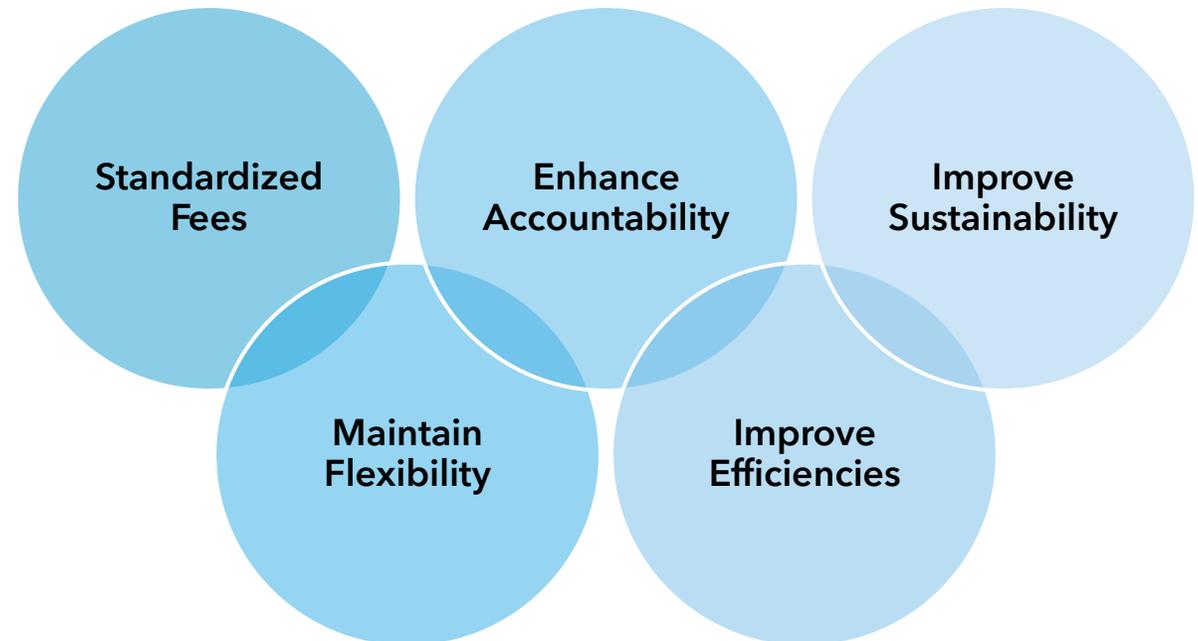


Government

Lack of efficient use of limited resources leads to min. accountability

A new funding model will **modernize how child care centres and family homes are funded**, streamlining and targeting funding to ensure providers have the financial stability to operate across the province

The approach will **maximize the use of limited public resources** and is the critical component needed to achieve \$10 a day, on average, child care fees for children under age 6



The Operational Funding Model Project

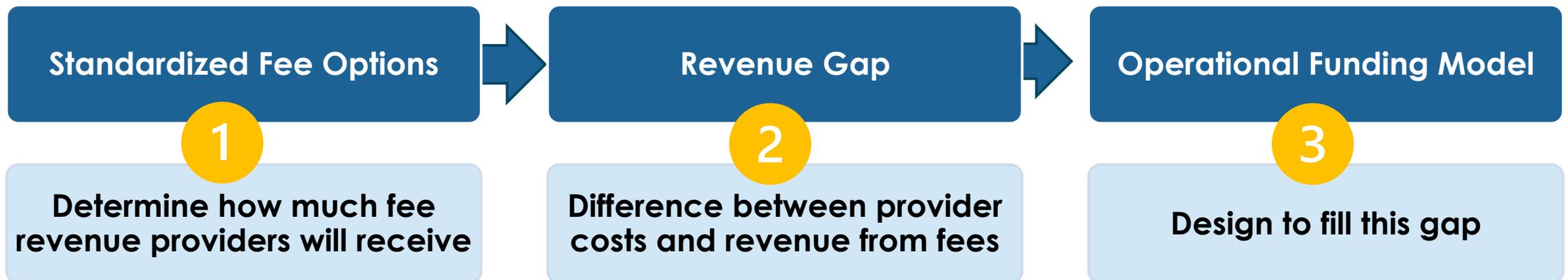


Standardized Fees & Impact on Funding Model

The lower the fee, the higher the revenue gap



Modelling various options for standardized parent fees helps estimate how much funding is required from government grants to close the gap



Digital Services

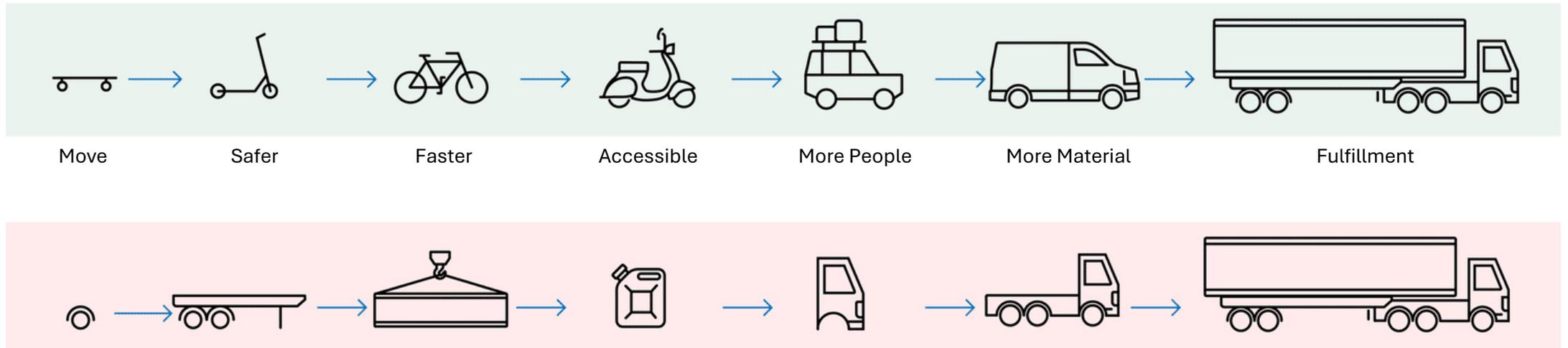
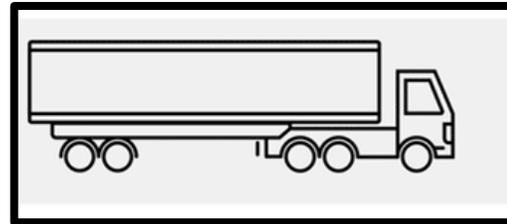


Digital Modernization

Multi-Phased and Agile Delivery Approach

Minimum Viable Service (MVS) Example

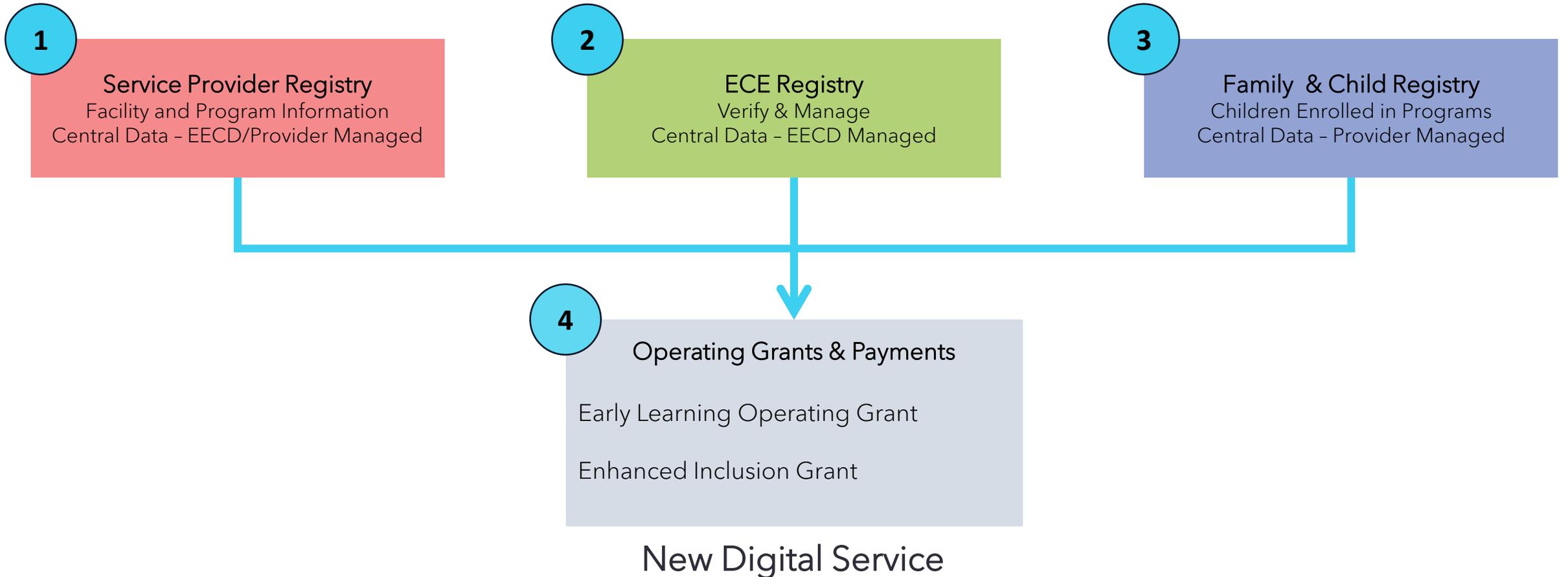
OBJECTIVE:



Digital Modernization

Phase 1 New Services (Beginning Fall 2025)

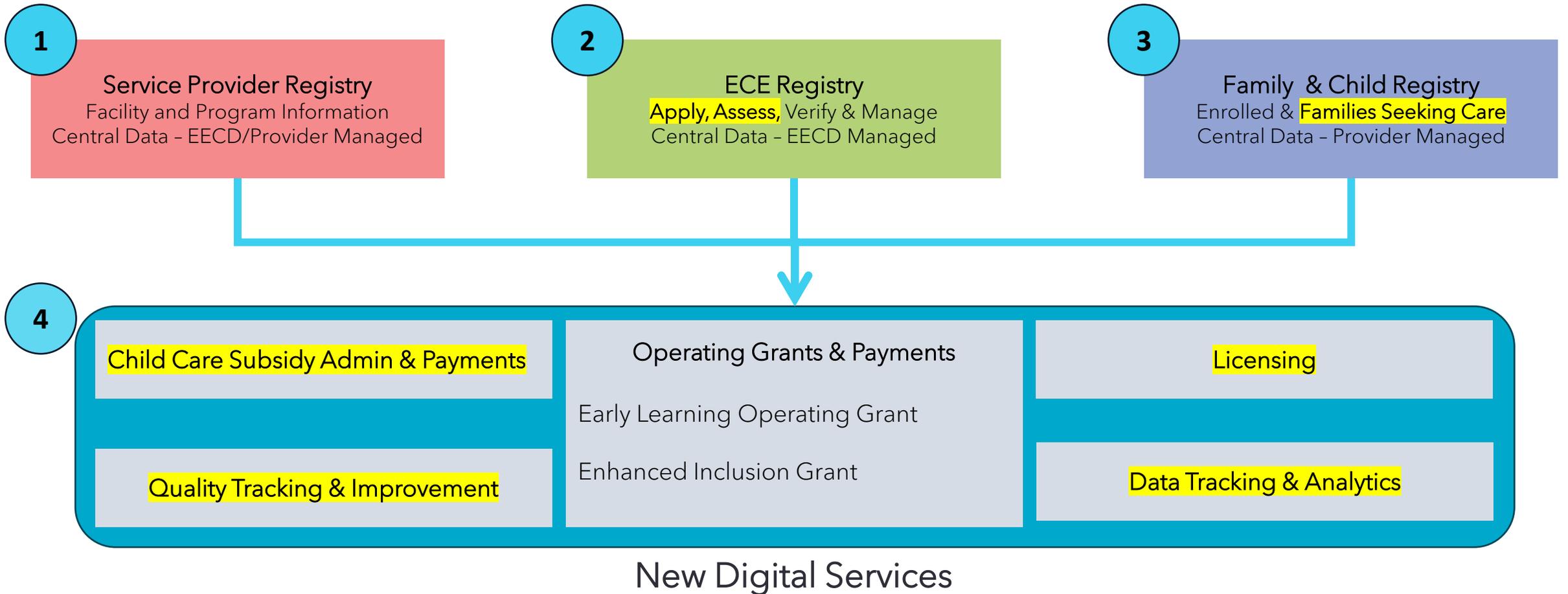
Digital Registries & System Access Portal



Digital Modernization

Phase 2+ New Services (Future)

Digital Registries & System Access Portal



Next Steps

- Finalize the product scope for the first phase of the digital system
- Engage with Service Providers for user testing and validation (Fall 2025)



Other Updates



Federal Agreements 2026-2031

Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (CWELCC)

- Approx. \$180M annually (\$1B over 5 years)
- Funding must support children under the age of 6 in ELCC programs
- Funding is intended to maintain current initiatives (wages, benefits, etc.) and operational funding for existing spaces

Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (ELCCA)

- \$17.8M annually
- Funding is intended primarily to support workforce initiatives and the child care subsidy program



Action Plan

- Discussions with federal colleagues began in early June and will continue through fall 2025
- The operational funding model and its cost estimates will be the core input into the plan
- Key discussion items will be the inclusion of private service providers for future space expansion, the need for additional funding to support school-age child care, and system growth
- Plan development will be informed by the public consultation results, working groups, engagement table, and ongoing feedback from families and the sector

Q&A



Reminders

1. A **copy** of the sector call **deck** and an **FAQ document** will be posted here <https://childcarenovascotia.ca/operators>
2. An **updated annual report template** will be shared with you in the coming week – our Operational Funding Model is based on data you provide.
3. A link to the **workforce survey** will be emailed to directors/operators this month – the survey will be open **until July 31st**.
4. The link to volunteer to test our redesigned website and share feedback will be shared soon (currently with translation!)
5. The next sector call will be **Wednesday, September 24th from 1:00 – 2:00 pm and 6:00 – 7:00 pm**. You will receive an email in early September with the link to register.



THANK
YOU!

Reach out to us at
ECDServices@novascotia.ca