

Transforming the Early Learning and Child Care System

Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC)

January 2024

Overview



Our Plan



Background



Key Focus Areas



Resources

Our Plan

The Government of Nova Scotia is transforming early learning and child care.

Our work has four focus areas:

- Access
- Affordability
- Inclusion
- Quality

Background

In 2021, Nova Scotia signed the five-year Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (CWELCCA) in partnership with the federal government.

By March 31, 2026, child care fees will be \$10 per day on average, there will be 9,500 new child care spaces, families with unique needs will see improvements, and those working in child care will be better compensated with greater access to career opportunities.

Our work is already making things better for families. Since July of 2021, we have accomplished many goals, including:

- **Reducing child care fees** in licensed child care by an average of 50 per cent
- Opening more than **3,000 new spaces** in licensed and provincially funded child care centres and family homes, and in the Nova Scotia Before-and-After School program
- **Piloting flexible child care hours**
- **Increasing wages** for early childhood educators working in licensed child care
- **Announcing a high-quality pension and group benefits package** for employees working in licensed child care

Transforming Early Learning and Child Care: Our Focus Areas

Child care that is affordable



AFFORDABILITY

Child care that is available when and where it's needed



ACCESS

Child care where everyone is included



INCLUSION

Child care delivered by well educated and compensated professionals

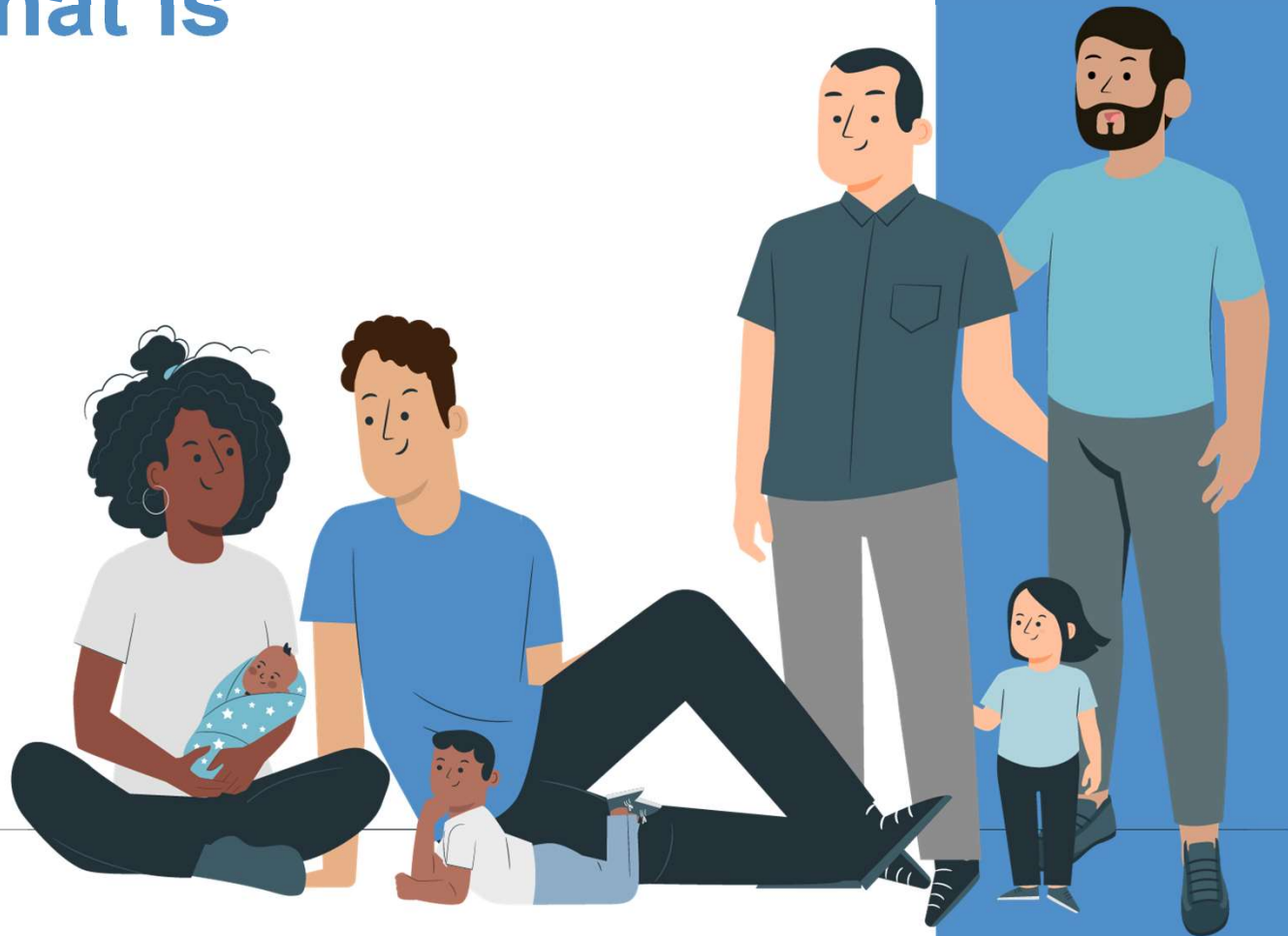


QUALITY

Child care that is affordable

We're reducing child care fees and providing sustainable funding for service providers.

By March of 2026, families with children enrolled in provincially licensed and funded early learning and child care programs will pay \$10 per day, on average.



Child care that is affordable



Progress to date

- We've reduced fees by an average of 50% for licensed child care, which, when combined with the Child Care Subsidy Program for lower income families, means more than 3,000 families now pay \$0 a day for care
- We're making sure those delivering child care have sustainable funding by:
 - Investing more to help child care providers with rising operational costs like food, heating and maintenance
 - Investing more to help child care providers with the rising costs of caring for infants



Child care that is affordable



What to expect next

- Parents will pay \$10 per day for licensed care, on average, by March 2026
- Ongoing, sustainable investments in the people and places that provide licensed child care
- Changes to help more lower income families access the financial supports they need



Where to learn more

- [Information for Families | Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement \(childcarenovascotia.ca\)](https://childcarenovascotia.ca)



Child care that is available when and where it's needed

By collaborating with our partners, we will *strategically* create more child care spaces across Nova Scotia. This includes spaces in provincially licensed and funded centres and family homes, and school-aged spaces in Nova Scotia's Before and After Program.

By March of 2026, Nova Scotia will have added a total of 9,500* more child care spaces.



*Total since signing the Canada-Wide ELCC Agreement in July 2021.

Child
care that is
available
when and
where it's
needed



Progress to date

- Between July 2021 and December 2023, we've created 1097 more spaces in child care centres, 904 more spaces in family homes, and 1860 more spaces in Nova Scotia's Before and After Program (NSBAP), for a total of 3861 new spaces
- We're piloting flexible child care hours for families that need extended care hours
- We're created programs to connect child care providers with the funding they need to complete renovations, with the goal of creating *more* child care spaces in existing centres and family homes



Child care that is available when and where it's needed



What to expect next

- A total of *9,500 new child care spaces by 2026, through partnership and sustainable provincial investment
- A campaign to educate Nova Scotians about licensed Family Home Child Care and encourage caring community members to open their hearts and homes to local children
- Additional investment in family home child care to help new providers equip their homes to welcome children
- Continued expansion of the Nova Scotia Before and After (School) Program

*Total since signing the Canada-Wide ELCC Agreement in July 2021.



Where to learn more

- [How we're creating more child care spaces in Nova Scotia](#)
- Follow our space creation progress: <https://childcarenovascotia.ca/families>



Child care where everyone is included

We're committed to engaging families, partners and child care providers in the development of an early learning and child care inclusion strategy and plan to address the unique needs of children, families and communities.



Child care where everyone is included



Progress to date

- We've increased wages for those working hard every day to deliver inclusive child care
- We're providing more funding to increase services for families with children who are at risk for, or have been diagnosed with, a developmental delay
- We've partnered with the Nova Scotia Community College to launch two new ECE Diploma Programs because we want to ensure child care is delivered by individuals who are reflective of Nova Scotian communities, including:
 - The Mi'kmaw ECE Diploma Program
 - The Africentric ECE Diploma Program



Child care where everyone is included



What to expect next

- Changes in the way we fund licensed child care centres so they're better-equipped to deliver inclusive programs
- Sustainable funding to support early intervention for young children at risk for, or diagnosed with, developmental delays
- Further expansion of the *Pyramid Model* in centres across the Province; this model supports the social-emotional development of children
- Development of a strategy to ensure services and programs are inclusive for all



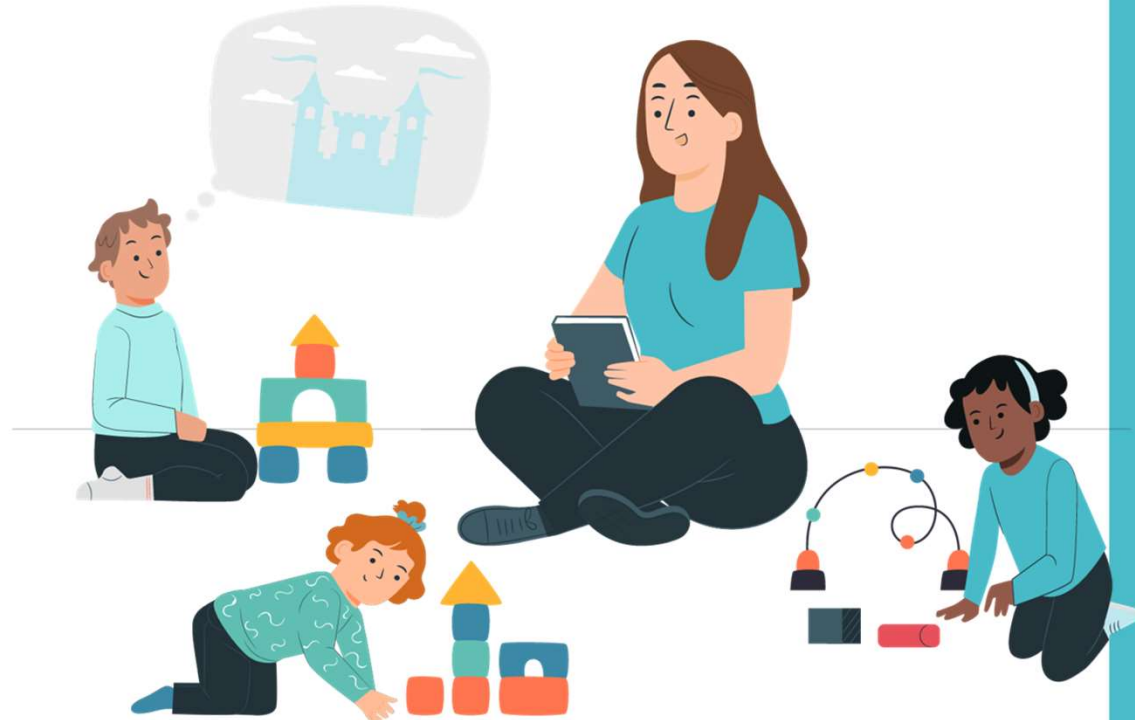
Where to learn more

- [Nova Scotia Early Childhood Development Intervention Services \(NSECDIS\)](#)
- [Inclusive Education | Education and Early Childhood Development \(ednet.ns.ca\)](#)



Child care delivered by well educated and compensated professionals

We're focused on ensuring children receive high quality early learning programming delivered by well compensated and qualified professionals.



Child care delivered by well educated and compensated professionals



Progress to date

- All ECEs working in licensed child care centres and agencies are now paid on a provincially funded wage scale and will soon have access to defined benefit pension plans and group benefits plans
- We've begun the redesign of the *Quality Matters Program* to ensure there's continuous quality improvement in licensed child care
- We've launched new ECE Training Programs, including:
 - A Mi'kmaw ECE Diploma Program
 - An Africentric ECE Diploma Program
 - Accelerated Work and Learn Diploma Programs in French and English
 - A Pathways Program for Newcomers that want to work in child care
 - An Advanced Practitioner Program pilot for experienced ECEs
 - A Bursary program (full and part-time) to support students with educational costs



Child care
delivered by
well educated
and
compensated
professionals



What to expect next

- Continued efforts to increase the number of classified ECEs working in the sector to at least 70% by 2025-2026
- Pilot launch of the new 'Quality Matters' quality improvement program, including enhanced quality measures



Where to learn more

- <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/earlyyears/pd/>
- <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/ece/training>



Where can I learn more?



Newsletter: [Latest News | Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement \(childcarenovascotia.ca\)](#)



Website: [Canada-wide Child Care Agreement for Nova Scotia | Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement \(childcarenovascotia.ca\)](#)



Other resources:

- CWELCCA: [Canada – Nova Scotia Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement - Canada.ca](#)
- **CWELCCA Action Plan: (link when available)**
- ELCCA Action Plan: [Nova Scotia's Action Plan for fiscal year 2022 to 2023 - Canada.ca](#)