



# **Our approach to creating child care spaces in communities across Nova Scotia**

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**Early Learning and Child Care**

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# Creating More Spaces | The Goal

The Province is committed to creating more licensed early learning and child care spaces in Nova Scotia. We want more families to have access to high quality, affordable and inclusive child care in their community.

## The Commitment



**9,500 new child care spaces\*** by March 31, 2026



**Spaces will be created in a variety of child care settings, including:**

- In licensed centres and family homes
- In the Nova Scotia Before and After (School) Program

## The Strategy



We're taking a **multi-pronged approach to creating child care spaces**



We're carefully **planning and prioritizing, listening to communities and working with others.** Read on to learn how we're...

- Maximizing space in **current child care centres**
- Establishing **partnerships** so we can leverage existing infrastructure and unlock new opportunities to create more spaces
- Listening to specific **community needs, so we can adjust our approach as needed**

\*To learn more about our commitment, refer to the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child (ELCC) Agreement

## Our Approach| Planning and Prioritizing

To create more **reliable** access to childcare when and where families **need it most**, our immediate focus is on...

- Regions with the most significant need (assessed by coverage rate) for child care spaces
- Communities with diverse populations, and communities with vulnerable children and families
- Specific communities or demographics that require flexible child care, including extended child care hours or weekend care

# Our Approach | 3 Streams

When combined, these streams offer a balanced, flexible, and sustainable way to create more child care spaces across the Province.



## STREAM 1

### Maximizing Existing Operational Space

We are accelerating space creation by working with existing service providers using existing funding and operating processes. Examples include optimizing classroom layouts to create space for child care, optimizing existing layouts of centres via minor to major renovations and increasing the presence of family home child care.



## STREAM 2

### Leveraging Strategic Partnerships & Public Infrastructure

We are working to create new partnerships with a range of public sector organizations to help us build new child care facilities and expand existing ones. By repurposing underutilized space, partnering on new infrastructure builds, expanding not-for-profit child care with the employer community and leveraging external resources, we will create more spaces.



## STREAM 3

### Tailored Solutions to Meet Unique Community Needs

We will be launching infrastructure programs to create more not-for-profit spaces in regions with low coverage, and with diverse and vulnerable communities. Shifting from a 'one-size-fits-all' model, we will work with communities to develop child care solutions that meet their unique needs.

STREAM 1:

# Maximizing Existing Operational Space

This stream is focused on increasing space availability with *current* partners and creating more awareness about licensed family home child care.


From optimizing classroom layouts, to offering more funding, to recruiting more people to open their hearts and homes to local children, there are many avenues to pursue.

## Family Home Child Care (FHCC) Expansion

PROGRESS

We are launching a recruitment campaign and targeted investment to encourage new FHCC providers to open their hearts and homes to children, especially in rural communities.

STATUS


 Work Underway

## Wrap Around Program Expansion

PROGRESS

We are increasing access to full-day, affordable care in the Before and After School Program, (priority given to 4 and 5 year olds).

STATUS


 Work Underway

## Infrastructure Support Programs

PROGRESS

We have many renovation projects underway to create more spaces in child care centres. This is made possible through public funding to cover renovation costs, both minor and major, with more projects to come.

STATUS


 Work Underway

## Maximizing Existing Provider Space

PROGRESS

We are working with centres to creatively review existing facilities and maximize existing footprints.

STATUS

 Work Underway



**APPROACH 2:**

# Leveraging Strategic Partnerships & Public Infrastructure


We are working with public partners to optimize public investments, leverage resources, develop policies, explore child care co-location, and share existing knowledge to help us create more spaces as quickly as possible.

## Public Partnerships

PROGRESS

We are actively partnering with government departments, Regional Centres for Education/Conseil scolaire acadien provincial, post-secondary institutions, public sector organizations and publicly funded entities to increase child care spaces.

STATUS

 Work Underway

## Business Partnerships

PROGRESS

We will explore opportunities to strategically expand not-for-profit child care spaces by partnering with employers. This collaboration could allow for partnerships in new childcare facilities and benefit workplaces with on-site employee childcare.

STATUS

 In Planning



**APPROACH 3:**

## Tailored Solutions to Meet Unique Community Needs

We are actively identifying diverse and vulnerable communities that have historically been unable to access child care.

Additionally, we are piloting flexible care models to ensure spaces meet the real needs of families Nova Scotian families that work non-traditional hours.

### Working with Diverse and Vulnerable Children and Families

PROGRESS

We will work with Indigenous, African Nova Scotian, newcomer communities, official language minorities and parents of children with disabilities to develop partnerships and co-design child care solutions for more inclusive access to new child care spaces.

STATUS



In Planning

### Exploring Flexible Care Models

PROGRESS

We are mindful that a 'one size fits all' model of child care space creation is limiting for those who work non-traditional hours. We are actively working to develop child care solutions that address these unique needs. We are currently exploring extended-hours, weekend, overnight, and on-demand/flexible care to support diverse scheduling needs.

STATUS



Work Underway



## Staying Connected| Additional Information



Want to stay up-to-date on our child care space creation progress?

Want to learn about the child care options near you?

Click [here for our Child Care Directory](#) webpage and [click here for additional information for families](#), found on our website!

