

Early learning and child care strategy and action plan ^[1]

A commitment and vision for action

Author: Government of Northwest Territories

Source: Government of Northwest Territories

Format: government document

Publication Date: 3 Mar 2022

AVAILABILITY

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Excerpted from introduction

Parents and caregivers have the greatest influence and impact on a child's wellbeing, learning and development. Raising a child requires support and access to community-based services at various points in a child's early years. Early learning and child care opportunities can complement learning that occurs in the home or on the land and is an important example of community-based support for families with young children.

The early years, from birth to school entry, set the foundation for development, growth, and learning. Child development is an interconnected and holistic process of the mind, heart, body, and spirit. Early learning and development is influenced by connections with the people, places, culture, languages, values, and beliefs that exist within families and communities, including the early learning environment.

Enhancing the quality, accessibility, affordability, and inclusivity of early learning and child care is an ongoing and continuous focus for ECE. The 2013 Right from the Start: A Framework for Early Childhood Development in the NWT and subsequent action plans marked an increased focus and investment within the early learning and child care sector in the NWT. This work included the territorial implementation of Junior Kindergarten (JK) in 2017, which was a significant step toward enhancing access to quality and affordable early learning programming. JK and Kindergarten (K) provide all families with four and five-year-old children, with an option to access free, play-based early learning programming within their community school.

Since 2017, ongoing federal funding for early learning and child care has augmented territorial investment aimed at improving quality and access to licensed programs in the NWT. This has included funding to support the development of new child care spaces, enhanced funding for existing licensed programs, professional learning for early childhood educators, and postsecondary early learning and child care education programs in the NWT.

This Strategy has been developed to build upon current strengths within the sector and to advance universal child care by increasing availability and affordability of early learning and child care for families in NWT communities. As a 10-year approach, it is based on key elements that are known to contribute to quality early learning and child care programming in the NWT, and includes a vision, values, broad goals and commitments that describe what will be accomplished to support the early learning and child care sector up to the year 2030.

Region: Northwest Territories ^[4]

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