

YMCA-NL to act as not-for-profit operator of pre-kindergarten pilot locations; Minister Osborne available to media ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

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EXCERPTS

Today, the Provincial and Federal Governments announced that YMCA of Newfoundland and Labrador (YMCA-NL) has been selected by the province as the not-for-profit organization that will operate all of the initial locations in the Pre-Kindergarten early learning pilot program set to open in 2022-23.

The Honourable Tom Osborne, Minister of Education and Jason Brown, CEO of YMCA-NL will be available to media at 11:00 a.m. today to answer questions about next steps for the pilot program. This availability will take place at the Ches Penney Family YMCA, located 35 Ridge Road in St. John's.

YMCA-NL was chosen as a result of the Request for Proposals process released in May 2022 when the pilot locations were announced. Preference was given to organizations that demonstrated the ability to run multiple locations. More than 30 locations were identified for the pilot program, and YMCA-NL has indicated interest and ability in running all of them.

Registration for the Pre-Kindergarten pilot program will be facilitated by YMCA-NL. Details and registration process information will be communicated by YMCA as sites are ready to open, and registration for select locations is anticipated to start in late summer 2022.

The first locations will open in either fall 2022 or winter 2023 to any child who starts Kindergarten in September 2023. Pre-Kindergarten spaces will be available to any child in this age range subject to availability, whether they have existing child care or not. The addition of new Pre-Kindergarten spaces will in turn create openings in existing child care services.

The Pre-Kindergarten program will run full-time, including during the summer months. As a regulated full-day early learning program under the Operating Grant Program, families will pay \$15 per day for the remainder of 2022, with a reduction to \$10 per day starting in January 2023.

The pilot locations are the first in the Pre-Kindergarten early learning program created through the Federal-Provincial Early Learning Action Plan, set for full implementation by 2025-26. The pilot project will create approximately 600 new regulated early learning and child care spaces in communities throughout the province, with further spaces added each year toward the goal of 3,100 new regulated spaces by 2025-26.

The Federal-Provincial Early Learning Action Plan is increasing access to regulated child care through the creation of approximately 6,000 spaces by 2025-26, as well as improving affordability, inclusivity and the quality of early learning and child care programming in Newfoundland and Labrador. This plan is made possible by federal investments in the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care system, including \$306 million for the 2021-22 to 2025-26 Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement, a one-time investment of nearly \$6.5 million in 2021-22 to support the early childhood workforce, as well as over \$34 million for the 2021-22 to 2025-26 Early Learning and Child Care Extension Agreement.

Quotes

“We are thrilled that YMCA of Newfoundland and Labrador has stepped forward to run all of the Pre-Kindergarten pilot locations launching in 2022-23. YMCA-NL is a not-for-profit organization with a successful track record of delivering high quality early learning and child care programming in this province, as well as the expertise to run multiple operations throughout the province. They will be a valuable partner in supporting a key commitment of the Federal-Provincial Early Learning Action Plan.”

Honourable Tom Osborne

Minister of Education

“Creating new spaces is essential to ensuring access to child care for families. These new licensed child care spaces will allow more children and families in Newfoundland and Labrador across the province to access high-quality, affordable, flexible and inclusive early learning and child care.”

Honourable Karina Gould

Canada’s Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Government of Canada

“The YMCA has been a part of life in Newfoundland and Labrador since 1854, and we were among the first operators of regulated child care in the province. YMCA-NL, in collaboration with our colleagues at YMCA of Exploits Valley and YMCA of Western Newfoundland, operates province-wide. We are delighted to be named operator for Pre-Kindergarten pilot sites and we look forward to serving even more families in the years to come.”

Jason Brown

CEO, YMCA of Newfoundland and Labrador

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