

# Families in Canada to benefit from innovative early learning and child care practices <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

Access online <sup>[2]</sup>

## EXCERPTS

The early learning and child care sector is evolving in increasingly complex and challenging environments. Identifying innovative practices and solutions that better meet the needs of children and families is necessary to improving early learning and child care practices for the benefit of families in Canada.

Today, the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Karina Gould, was at Collège Boréal in Sudbury to announce funding for a total of 16 projects that aim to improve the quality, accessibility, affordability, inclusivity and flexibility of early learning and child care programs and services across Canada.

The announced funding includes \$506,339 to the Carrefour francophone de Sudbury for their Action Research and Model Transfer: Forest Preschool project, which aims to provide children aged 5 and under in early childhood centres with an ecology-focused learning experience.

The 16 projects, funded through the Early Learning and Child Care Innovation Program, are receiving a total of \$27.4 million in federal funding over three years, and will be completed by March 31, 2025. The call for proposals focused on projects that foster cutting-edge practices to support the changing nature of early learning and child care, placing a priority on projects that address the needs of families grappling with the impacts of the pandemic.

Additional consideration was given to projects promoting cultural diversity and inclusion and to projects primarily targeting children and families with unique child care needs. This includes Indigenous families, lower-income families, families with children with varying abilities, newcomer families, single-parent families, Black and other racialized families, families from official language minority communities, families working non-standard hours and families in underserved communities. Projects that support the next generation of early learning and child care leaders, such as researchers, practitioners and service providers, were also considered.

The Government of Canada is aiming to support the improvement of early learning and child care service delivery for all Canadian families and their children. These projects will help develop a better understanding of the changing nature of early learning and child care, including innovative tools, models and approaches that have the potential to be replicated, scaled and adapted in other communities and regions across Canada.

Later in the day, the Minister will participate in a roundtable with parents at Discovery Early Learning and Childcare, who are seeing their child care fee reduced because of the Canada-wide early learning and child care system. Now, more than ever, increased access to high-quality, affordable, flexible and inclusive child care is crucial to building a system that meets the needs of children and makes life more affordable for Canadian families.

## Quotes

"Early learning and child care systems must meet the needs of increasingly complex and challenging environments. Innovative practices can help develop solutions that better meet the complex needs of children and families, support an increased integration of services, and improve the quality of early learning and child care across the country."

– Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Karina Gould

## Quick Facts

- These projects aim to advance the goals of the Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework through research and innovation.
- The Early Learning and Child Care Innovation Program supports the exploration, testing and development of innovative approaches to support children and families' access to high-quality, affordable, flexible and inclusive early learning and child care programs and services across the country.
- The call for proposals for these early learning and child care innovation projects ran from October 20, 2020, to January 7, 2021.

- The scope of the projects are either local, regional or national, and they target the needs of children under 6 years of age and their families.
- In recognition of Quebec's leadership role in early learning and child care, the Government of Canada is working toward an agreement with the province to ensure that early learning and child care innovation funding is available for Quebec-based projects.
- Budgets 2016 and 2017 provided funding of \$7.5 billion over 11 years for early learning and child care. Of this amount, \$100 million is being dedicated to the Early Learning and Child Care Innovation Program.
- The Government of Canada made a transformative investment of more than \$27 billion over five years as part of Budget 2021 to build a Canada-wide early learning and child care system with provinces and territories. Combined with other investments, including in Indigenous early learning and child care, up to \$30 billion over five years will be provided in support of early learning and child care.
- Investments in early learning and child care will benefit everyone across Canada. Studies show that for every dollar invested in early childhood education, the broader economy receives between \$1.50 and \$2.80 in return

## Associated Links

Early Learning and Child Care Innovation Program <sup>[3]</sup>

Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework <sup>[4]</sup>

## Backgrounder

The following is a list of the approved early learning and child care innovation projects across Canada.

### National projects:

- Connecting Canada: Impacting ELCC Environments Through Sustainable Leadership Development, led by Getting Ready for Inclusion Today (The GRIT Program) Society of Edmonton (\$2,594,903). This project will support 12 early learning and child care service providers in various provinces and territories in adapting its established Access, Support and Participation (ASaP) program to create inclusive programs and services for children with diverse learning needs across Canada.
- Enable, Engage and Empower (E3): Increasing Spaces, Quality, Capacity and the ELCC Workforce, led by the Canadian Child Care Federation (\$1,007,440). This project will aim to increase the quality of child care services, specifically in family child care settings, by developing an online national multilingual training program and by supporting child care providers through a newly established community of practice, with a focus on Black Canadians, visible minorities, newcomers, and rural and remote providers.
- Implementation of Éconocoop and Support for Child Care Services, led by La Commission nationale des parents francophones (\$2,813,872). This project will explore, develop and test new approaches to improve the quality and accessibility of child care for Francophone and Anglophone minority and majority communities during the post-pandemic recovery of the child care sector.
- PROMoting Early Childhood Outside (PRO-ECO): An Intervention to Foster Outdoor Play in ELCCs, led by the University of British Columbia (\$1,294,439). In partnership with 10 early learning and child care sites in Greater Vancouver, the University of British Columbia will conduct research on the effectiveness of the outdoor play intervention. This project aims to create a locally guided and sustainable method for enhancing outdoor play environments that will be scalable to other early learning and child care sites across Canada.
- Quality Inclusion in the Time of COVID: Safety, Learning and Play for Children with Disabilities, led by SpecialLink: The National Child Care Mainstream Network Society (\$432,701). Building on the baseline established from its recently completed project funded by the Early Learning and Child Care Innovation Program, this project will address the inclusion of children with disabilities in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, to improve early learning and child care programs and services for children with disabilities.
- Safe-space for an Early Learning Foundation (SELF) Project, led by the Mothers Matter Centre (\$2,374,455). This project will develop and test an innovative pilot aiming to provide high-quality early learning services to vulnerable and isolated children living with their mothers in second-stage transitional shelters in Saskatchewan, Ontario, Newfoundland and Labrador, and British Columbia, by training staff and adapting some of its programs to meet the post-pandemic client needs.

### Provincial projects:

- Bold Dreams, Bright Futures - Digital Literacy Skills Development for Children Living with Blindness, led by the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (\$1,976,377). This project aims to address the technology gap for blind or partially sighted children to enable them to begin school as tech savvy as their sighted peers across Canada, ensuring that they are fully immersed in all learning and classroom routines, whether in-person or virtual, from the moment they start school.
- Building Capacity and Resilience Through Physical Literacy and Active Play, led by Active For Life (AFL), a division of B2ten (\$428,303). This project will provide early childhood educators with the tools and resources they need to build resilience in children by providing active play opportunities for children in diverse communities across Canada, including racialized communities, Indigenous peoples, newcomers and those living in rural, remote and northern communities. Active play aims to reduce anxiety and stress and to build resilience in children.
- Hybrid Training and Personalized Support for Inclusive Early Childhood Educators, led by the District scolaire francophone Sud (\$2,983,420). In collaboration with other Francophone school districts in New Brunswick, this project will develop a new model for supporting inclusive practices to improve the quality of early learning and child care services through hybrid training and personalized support for educators.
- Teaching for Tomorrow - YMCA Post-pandemic Training in Labrador and Rural Newfoundland, led by the YMCA of Northwest

Avalon Inc. (\$3,000,000). This project will work toward the recruitment and retention of early childhood educators in rural and underserved communities, including Indigenous communities across Newfoundland and Labrador. In collaboration with the College of the North Atlantic, the YMCA of Newfoundland and Labrador will deliver a certification program to provide early childhood educators with the skills and knowledge to operate YMCA child care services across the province.

- PEI Pyramid to Retention: A Mentoring Culture, led by the Early Childhood Development Association of Prince Edward Island (\$1,153,541). This project aims to meet the social and emotional development needs of all children aged 5 and under within the province's early learning and child care sector. It will provide early childhood educators with mentorship, training, resources and tools they need to deliver high-quality programs that will support young children's well-being and their social and emotional development, while contributing to workforce retention.
- Together We Drive Quality, led by the Network for Healthy Early Human Development Yukon (\$1,235,928). This project will use innovative technology to engage the public and early childhood educators in licensed programs to improve early learning and child care program quality as well as to improve the well-being of early childhood educators and families across Yukon.

#### Local projects:

- Miyo Kiskinhamatowin ashi Sitokatowin: Awasisak Program Teaching and Supporting Our Children, led by the Métis Nation–Saskatchewan (\$2,999,961). This project will address parents' knowledge, language and Métis and First Nation cultural awareness to improve early development and school readiness for their children, in the Pinehouse Lake community.
- Pirurvik Preschool: Early Childhood Education Development in Nunavut, led by the Pirurvik Preschool Society (\$2,306,796). In partnership with Arviat Aqqiumavvik/Shared Care Society, Cape Dorset Preschool Program, Cape Dorset Saipaaqivik Daycare, Rankin Inlet Pulaarvik Kublu Friendship Centre, Rankin Inlet Kataujaq Daycare, Baker Lake Daycare and Chesterfield Inlet Siqiniq Daycare, this project will deliver early childhood education programs and services by providing online and in-person culturally appropriate and community-adapted programming based on Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit principles and Montessori materials for children in five communities throughout Nunavut.
- Action Research and Model Transfer: Forest Preschool, led by the Carrefour francophone de Sudbury (\$506,339). This project aims to provide children aged 5 and under in early childhood centres with an ecology-focused learning experience through playing outdoors and in the forest to raise their awareness of the importance of nature and the environment. In collaboration with the Centre d'innovation sociale pour l'enfant et la famille du Collège Boréal, the project will then endeavour to test an innovative learning model and transfer it to other early childhood centres in the Sudbury area and other Francophone communities across Canada.
- University of Winnipeg Student Association (UWSA) Daycare, led by the University of Winnipeg Foundation (\$331,287). This project will focus on exploring, testing and developing a safe outdoor play area for optimal Indigenous culturally appropriate learning and programming for children and their families, while delivering Indigenous professional development training for staff, in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

**Region:** Canada <sup>[5]</sup>

**Tags:** federal funding <sup>[6]</sup>

practice <sup>[7]</sup>

outdoor <sup>[8]</sup>

**Source URL (modified on 12 Oct 2022):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/22/10/families-canada-benefit-innovative-early-learning-and-child-care-practices>

#### Links

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