

Federal, provincial and territorial ministers meet to advance shared priorities in early learning and child care, including the development of a multilateral workforce strategy ^[1]

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Excerpts

Federal, provincial and territorial ministers most responsible for early learning and child care gathered* today in Iqaluit to discuss and advance shared priorities in early learning and child care. The meeting was co-chaired by the Honourable Karina Gould, Canada's Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, and the Honourable Natalie Jameson, Prince Edward Island's Minister of Education and Early Years and Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

A thriving early learning and child care workforce is critical to ensuring high-quality and inclusive early learning and child care. The ministers discussed that to strengthen the system, the early learning and child care workforce needs improved working conditions and compensation that reflects their professional education, experience and responsibilities. After the ministers reviewed a jointly developed conceptual framework, all ministers agreed to develop a Canada-wide, multilateral workforce strategy for the early learning and child care workforce, recognizing that federal, provincial and territorial governments will have final authority on any implementation actions within their respective jurisdictions. The multilateral workforce strategy will centre on the pillars of recruitment, retention and recognition.

Provinces and territories shared how they have been working to strengthen the workforce by establishing and expanding wage grids and training initiatives and by advancing recruitment, retention and recognition supports. The strategy will be an added tool for all ministers to consider as they continue to work toward their shared goal of providing more families in Canada with access to high-quality, affordable, flexible and inclusive early learning and child care, no matter where they live. Additionally, Ontario has committed to taking the lead on establishing a working group on inter-provincial and territorial mobility and foreign credential recognition for the early childhood education workforce to ensure seamless movement of qualified staff across Canada and from around the world.

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"We have an opportunity to make our country a global leader in providing access to high-quality, affordable, flexible, and inclusive early learning and child care. While provinces and territories have made progress on making child care more affordable across Canada, there is more work to do to create new spaces and support the workforce. Early childhood educators are the cornerstone of a strong early learning and child care system and we will continue to work with provinces and territories to provide early childhood educators with the wages, training and development opportunities they need for success."

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

"Since we last met, every jurisdiction has been working diligently to strengthen its early years sector through targeted investments in high-quality accessible child care spaces, decreasing fees and increasing supports for the workforce. Collaboration is essential, and through these meetings, federal, provincial and territorial governments have all shown their commitment for coordination, as we build on the excellent work underway across the country. Together, we are striving to give children the best possible start in life and supporting families where and when they need it the most."

– The Honourable Natalie Jameson, Prince Edward Island's Minister of Education and Early Years and Minister responsible for the Status of Women

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