

Governments of Canada and Nunavut launch early learning and child care action plan ^[1]

Author: Employment and Social Development Canada

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Excerpts

The Governments of Canada and Nunavut today announced a three-year plan to improve and expand early learning and child care (ELCC) services in the territory. This is part of the Canada-Nunavut ELCC Agreement for 2021-2026.

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Over the course of the three-year plan, Nunavut's Canada-wide ELCC Action Plan 2023-2024 to 2025-2026 outlines spending for more than \$50 million in five areas:

1. Affordability

- More than \$32.5 million towards enhancing affordability of full-time licensed child care for children up to six years old in all Nunavut communities, including reducing out-of-pocket parental fees and providing sustained operations and maintenance funding for licensed child care centres to address rising operational costs in the territory. These funds will help maintain Nunavut's \$10-a-day for licensed child care through the life of the current Canada-wide ELCC Agreement.

2. Access

- \$2 million toward increasing the net number of licensed child care spaces across Nunavut by 238 by March 2026, through assistance with the licensing/regulation process, and assistance with the set-up of new licensed spaces including infrastructure funding. Over the first two years of the Canada-wide ELCC Agreement, 32 new licensed child care spaces have already been created in Nunavut.

3. Inclusion

- More than \$2.6 million to implement an inclusive ELCC strategy for all ELCC stakeholders in the territory to promote inclusion and equity, particularly for children with disabilities, and those requiring additional support, including Inuit, Indigenous, Black, and other racialized children, and children in foster care. Other initiatives also target bolstering the inclusion of quality official language resources to minority language children in ELCC and maintaining a strong collaborative partnership with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.

4. Quality

- More than \$12.6 million toward the ELCC workforce to support professional development and encourage the growth of quality, accessible, and inclusive early learning child care. Another area of focus will be the ELCC wage scale, which aims to address existing wage disparities, support recruitment efforts and act as an incentive for increased ELCC certification.

5. Administration and Reporting

- More than \$2.2 million towards building targeted capacity and additional resources within the Government of Nunavut to support the child care space creation, enhance access, and build reporting capacity.

In addition to the investments identified in this action plan, Inuit-specific Indigenous early learning and child care funding in Nunavut is led and coordinated by Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the regional Inuit associations to advance the vision and priorities identified in the co-developed Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework.

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Quotes

"I would like to congratulate Nunavut on their commitment to offering high-quality early learning and child care services across the Territory. Thanks to our joint work, hundreds of families in Nunavut are

already benefitting from \$10 a day child care, three years ahead of schedule. This extensive action plan will further our efforts to make life more affordable for families, while creating new child care spaces and supporting the essential early childhood workforce. When we listen to Canadians, and centre their needs, great things happen!"

– The Honourable Jenna Sudds, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development

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"A heartfelt thank you to our federal and Inuit organization partners for their invaluable support in this milestone initiative."

– The Honourable Pamela Hakongak Gross, Minister of Education

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Nunavut will be receiving \$66.2 million over the duration of its Canada-wide ELCC Agreement.

Nearly half of Canada's provinces and territories are delivering regulated early learning and child care for an average of \$10-a-day, or less, and the remainder have reduced fees by 50% or more compared to 2019 levels.

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On December 1, 2022, Nunavut became the first jurisdiction to achieve \$10-a-day child care under the Canada-wide ELCC system. Quebec and Yukon had both achieved \$10-a-day, or less, through their existing early learning and child care systems, before the Canada-wide agreements were established.

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