

Government of Nova Scotia and Canada agree on three-year child care action plan ^[1]

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The governments of Canada and Nova Scotia have released a new Action Plan to continue implementation of the Canada-Nova Scotia Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement in the province.

Nova Scotia is the second province/territory to reach agreement with the Government of Canada and publish Action Plans for the 2023-2026 period. Agreements are required for federal funds to continue flowing to the provinces and territories for early learning and child care.

In this action plan, Nova Scotia will bring parent fees down to an average of \$10/day by March 2026 and expand child care access by a total of 9,500 not-for-profit spaces from July 2021. The province reports it has already created 3,861 spaces as of December 31, 2023.

Child Care Now applauds the Action Plan's commitment to creating new partnerships with a range of public sector organizations to build new child care facilities and expand existing ones,

"Engaging the municipal and public education sectors in the expansion of licensed programs is the best way to rapidly expand the availability of licensed early learning and child care programs where they are needed most urgently," said Morna Ballantyne, Child Care Now's Executive Director.

The Action Plan also details the commitments to a well compensated workforce, and describes their ECE wage framework, new professional development and training opportunities and the recently announced a sector-wide benefits and defined-benefit pension plan.

The Nova Scotia government is intending to increase the number of classified ECEs working in the sector to at least 70% by 2025-2026 and to introduce a redesigned quality improvement program. Child Care Now, and our provincial chapter Child Care Now Nova Scotia, will be monitoring closely the impact of these initiatives on retention and recruitment.

"In this action plan, Nova Scotia promises to make licensed not-for-profit programs more accessible to families and recognizes that decent compensation and working conditions for those who work in the sector is essential to achieve that objective," said Ballantyne. "The provincial government's decision to fund a pension and benefit plan is a model to be followed by other jurisdictions but child care advocates would also like to see steady improvements in wages over the next two years because the current wage rates are still too low."

As the Canada-wide ELCC system continues to roll out across the country, publicly available Action Plans and background information are essential to public accountability and monitoring progress. Child Care Now looks forward to the continued publication of these plans across provinces and territories.

Related link: [Canada Nova Scotia Canada-wide early learning and child care agreement: 2023-2024 to 2025-2026 action plan](#) ^[4]

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