

Nova Scotia throne speech announces new department for child care ^[1]

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Excerpts from news release:

The province announced in the Speech from the Throne today, March 26, its renewed focus on children and youth, most notably the creation of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

"Our children deserve the best possible start in life to help them develop to their full potential," said Premier Darrell Dexter. "We asked Nova Scotians how to improve our approach to the early years, and we are responding with a plan that will make it easier for families to receive the help and services they need."

The department will bring together dedicated staff from Education, Community Services, and Health and Wellness who oversee more than 200 programs and services such as child care and early intervention. The new Early Years branch will improve the way the province supports children and their families in the first years of life.

In this session of the legislature, Ramona Jennex, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, will outline immediate actions and multi-year goals to help Nova Scotia make the most of the early years.

The plan is based on advice and ideas received across the province during consultations, as well as the recommendations of the Early Years Advisory Council.

It builds on the success of SchoolsPlus, a program that provides social services, health services, mentoring, and parenting workshops for students and families, now available in 98 schools.

Anne McGuire, co-chair of the Early Years Advisory Council, welcomed the increased focus on early childhood development within the new department.

"The announcement of this new department is wonderful news," said Ms. McGuire, CEO of the IWK Health Centre. "This integration of programs within one department will enable increased focus on providing quality supports for families and children in the very important early years of life."

Lt.-Gov. J.J. Grant today highlighted several other government programs that are putting children first.

See full text of throne speech [here](#) ^[2]

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