

Early childhood development programs benefitting from boost ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Massive changes in how early childhood development intervention programs are delivered in Nova Scotia are benefitting those who provide and receive them.

Early intervention programs in Nova Scotia deliver services for young children who are diagnosed with, or are at risk of, developmental delay. The services are designed to help both the child and the family from the time the baby is born to when they are old enough to enter school.

The new program includes a boost of \$2.1 million in funding (budget is now \$5 million), salary increases and the hiring of new developmental interventionists to help eliminate wait lists. Before the review and increased support from government, more than 300 families were waiting for services. New families will now be seen within a month of being referred.

Last year, Dr. Gerry Kysela co-chaired a board appointed by Education Minister Karen Casey to develop recommendations for the new governance structure.

"It's all come to fruition now," said Kysela.

Within the new governance structure there are now eight regions around the province incorporating the 22 sites previously operated by 17 boards.

These regions are responsible to the central office and executive director Patty Monaghan, located at the Progress Centre in Halifax.

The program is now operated by one provincial board under the name Nova Scotia Early Childhood Development Intervention Service, funded from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Developmental interventionists work to support the family in their natural caregiving and decision-making roles, ensuring they have the information and resources they need to be successful advocates and strong supports for their child and family.

The department also plans to work with First Nations, African Nova Scotian, Acadian and immigrant communities to ensure they are aware of, and can access, available services.

-reprinted from Yarmouth County Vanguard

Region: Nova Scotia ^[3]

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