

Bilateral Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care for Newfoundland and Labrador

Newfoundland and Labrador At-a-Glance	
Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulated centre-based spaces are available for 24.3% of children aged 0-5 (2016)¹² Full-day kindergarten is available for 5-year-olds but is not compulsory
Fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Median full-time monthly fees in St. John's, including centres and home-based care (2016): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infants - \$1085 Toddlers - \$890 Preschool - \$868
Auspice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 72% of regulated child care for children aged 0-12 is for-profit (2016)
Wages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Median gross hourly wages of program staff: \$14 (2012) Median gross hourly wages of program directors: \$16 (2012)
Provincial Allocations (2015-2016) Total spending on regulated child care: \$39,313,197	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fee subsidies: \$17,325,831 One-time funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equipment grants (paid out of the Operating Grant budget) Recurring funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ELCC Supplement \$6,500,874 Inclusion \$1,986,894 Capacity Initiative \$1,815,300 Family Child Care Initiative \$1,000,000 Operating Grant Program \$10,684,298 Other related funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECE bursaries \$224,000 Other grants and funding \$4,695,160

¹² All provinces and territories also provide regulated home child care, but an age breakdown (0-5, 6-12) is not available. In 2016, there were regulated spaces (including centres and home child care) in Newfoundland and Labrador to cover 12.9% of children aged 0-12.

Recent Initiatives in Newfoundland and Labrador

In 2012, the province launched its 10-year strategy *Caring for Our Future: Provincial Strategy for Quality, Sufficient and Affordable Child Care in Newfoundland and Labrador 2012-2022* (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2012). As the title suggests, the strategy builds on the three pillars of quality, sufficiency, and affordability. Since 2012, it has resulted in a number of new initiatives:

- Full-day (non-compulsory) kindergarten for 5-year-olds was launched in the 2016/2017 school year. It is available in public schools.
- The *Child Care Act and Regulations*, introduced on July 31, 2017, includes somewhat enhanced qualification requirements for ECEs, changes in age ranges, flexibility for licensees, and the opportunity to provide child care services outside regular hours.
- *Navigating the Early Years: An Early Childhood Learning Framework* was introduced as a new curriculum framework.
- In November 2016, a Premier's Task Force conducted a review of K-12 education and ELCC. Key recommendations include expanding the Operating Grants Program and enhancing training and opportunities for ECEs.
- In August 2017, the ELCC Supplement increased (increases ranged from \$2,840 to \$5,340 annually). The supplement is paid to eligible, qualified ECEs, and is anticipated to be "an important factor in recruiting and retaining well-educated early childhood educators and... encourage them to upgrade their qualifications."
- Three core programs are available:
 - o The Child Care Services Subsidy assists eligible low-income and moderate-income families with the costs of regulated child care.
 - o The Operating Grant Program provides grants to centres to improve the affordability and sustainability of their services. Centres may receive operating grants as long as they adhere to conditions that include capping parent fees, serving healthy snacks and lunches, and ensuring minimum wages for staff.
 - o The Child Care Capacity Initiative provides start-up, developmental, and capital funding to not-for-profit community groups who want to develop child care spaces in underserved areas of the province, particularly in linguistic minority and Indigenous communities.

Almost all funds are available both to for-profit and non-profit services, except the Capacity Initiative.

The Action Plan will use federal funding to improve accessibility, affordability, and quality for low-income and moderate-income income families.

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR'S ACTION PLAN

Federal transfers	Year 1: \$7,383,089	Year 2: \$7,378,451	Year 3: \$7,378,451	Total: \$22,139,991
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Availability

- In **each of the 3 years, \$500,000 investment** in the Child Care Capacity Initiative. This will provide increased developmental, capital, and start-up funding to not-for-profit community groups who want to create child care centres, *as well as* family child care. The goal of this investment is to increase the number of regulated services in underserved areas, resulting in 180 new spaces in centres and 56 spaces in family child care for small, rural, remote, and linguistic minority communities.
- Introduction of a one-year Capital Renovation Grant for licensed child care centres, which is intended to address the pressing quality-related physical changes required for 195 licensed centres and family child care homes. These facilities were granted waivers when the new *Child Care Act* introduced physical space requirements. It is anticipated that 50 centres/homes will apply for this grant to address these requirements.

Affordability

- In **each of the 3 years, \$4,150,000 investment** in the Operating Grant Program. This includes increasing the operating grants available to licensed centres and introducing new operating grants to licensed family day care homes. The Operating Grant Program caps parent fees at the child subsidy rate at participating centres. This investment will reduce child care costs for low-income and moderate-income income families and enhance affordability for all. It is expected to result in five additional centres participating in the program, amounting to 180 affordable centre-based spaces. It will also provide 360 affordable spaces in family day care homes.
- In **each of the 3 years, \$1,000,000 investment** in changes to the Child Care Services Subsidy. This includes increasing the income threshold from \$32,000 to \$35,000 for full subsidy. It is expected to result in 100 additional families receiving full subsidy and 60 moderate-income families receiving partial subsidy by 2020, thereby eliminating or reducing child care costs for 540 children.

Working Conditions

- Increasing the ECE Trainee Bursary, including lifting the cap on the number of courses eligible for the bursary. The maximum amount available to those upgrading their qualifications is \$1,000 per year (up from \$500/year). Lifting the cap is expected to attract up to 10 ECEs per year to upgrade their qualifications faster.
- Increasing the ECE On-Campus Field Placement Bursary to \$2,500 (from \$1,200) in order to support the cost of completing the mandatory field placement, which is part of the ECE certificate and diploma programs. This is expected to allow up to five additional ECEs per year to complete their training.
- Increasing the ECE Graduate Bursary Program. Recipients of this bursary are enrolled full-time in ECE diploma programs, and must agree to a two-year return in service in regulated child care in the province. New investments will increase the bursary to \$7,500 (up from \$5,000) and the service return to three years. This program is anticipated to retain up to an additional 10 ECE grads per year to remain in the province.

Auspice

- The enhancement of the Child Care Capacity Initiative (see above) is only available to not-for-profits (centre-based and family-based). All other funds are available to all.

Inclusion, Equity, Diversity

- Of the 180 anticipated new spaces provided through the Child Care Capacity Initiative (see above), the province will make an effort to ensure that 20 of them are in an official-language minority community. The expectation is that, by opening the Child Care Capacity Initiative as well as the Operating Grants Program to family day care, more families in remote and underserved communities will benefit.
- The province will undertake a needs assessment to “help target resources to communities and neighbourhoods most in need of early learning and regulated child care, including rural, Indigenous, and official language minority communities.”
- The province will complete “targeted engagement with Indigenous peoples and official language minority groups” to gather input on how best to deliver services to those groups.
- At this time, there is no specific budget in the ELCC area that focuses on Indigenous populations.

Other

- In 2018/19, the province will roll out the Quality Improvement Program. Child care consultants will work with all child care services looking to increase quality. It is anticipated that 50 centres and 20 family day care homes will benefit from this program.
- In addition, a Quality Enhancement Grant will be available to centres participating in the Operating Grant Program in order to improve quality and provide consultation. It is anticipated that about 15% of centres and homes participating in the Operating Grant Program will apply for this grant.

What is innovative about the Newfoundland and Labrador Action Plan?

Much of the province's actions emerge as a response to the need for high-quality child care services in remote, rural, and underserved communities. Thus, the Action Plan focuses on expanding grants to, and enhancing the capacity of, home child care. They call this “an innovative approach to filling the gap where a child care centre may not be viable,” because of remote locations or to serve a linguistic minority community. The Action Plan also identifies quality improvement support through consultation services and a quality improvement grant as innovative approaches to improving ELCC in the province.



Following the signing of the Multilateral Framework Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care in 2017, the federal government reached a bilateral agreement with each province and territory, and an asymmetrical agreement with Quebec. For more information about these agreements, go to

timeforchildcare.ca

