

# Bilateral Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care for Northwest Territories

Northwest Territories At-a-Glance	
Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regulated centre-based spaces are available for 26.9% of children aged 0-5 (2016)<sup>33</sup></li> <li>Kindergarten is not compulsory for 5-year-olds though they are entitled to it; Junior Kindergarten for 4-year-olds was introduced in 2017-2018</li> </ul>
Fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Centre-based monthly fees vary widely (2014):               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infants – from free to \$1380</li> <li>Preschool – from free to \$1170</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Auspice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0% of child care is for-profit (2016)</li> </ul>
Wages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NA</li> </ul>
Provincial Allocations (2015-2016)  Total spending on regulated child care: <b>\$4,487,276</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fee subsidies are provided through Income Assistance. There is no child care subsidy available.</li> <li>One-time funding               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start-up contributions \$52,321</li> </ul> </li> <li>Recurring funding               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operational contributions \$2,265,829</li> <li>Rent and mortgage contributions \$105,805</li> <li>Minor health and safety renovations \$133,279</li> <li>Healthy Children Initiative \$1,641,042</li> <li>Small Community Initiative \$289,000</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Recent Initiatives in the Northwest Territories

Due to geographic remoteness, high rates of vulnerability among children and single-parent families, and variable demand and supply of services, delivering high-quality ELCC programs is challenging.

In 2013, the Government of Northwest Territories released a 10-year framework for early childhood development called *Right from the Start* (Government of Northwest Territories, 2014). Since then, two more development frameworks and Action Plans were released in June 2017 (Government of

<sup>33</sup> All provinces and territories also provide regulated home child care. However, an age breakdown (0-5, 6-12) is not available. In 2016, there were enough regulated spaces (including centres and home child care) to cover 22.2% of children aged 0-12.

Northwest Territories, 2017). In particular, the *Early Childhood Development Action Plan, 2017-2020* includes commitments to maternal and child health care services, early intervention programs, and early childhood programming.

Since the release of *Right from the Start*, a number of changes were implemented, including:

- A grant to increase the income of workers and offer an incentive to attract new professionals to the ECE workforce.
- Scholarships to offset the costs of attending full-time, on-site diploma, or degree programs in the field of early childhood development.
- Attendance-based funding through the Early Childhood Program Funding model for all licensed early childhood programs as well as a significant increase in funding for infant and special needs spaces.
- Junior kindergarten for all four-year-olds.

The *2017-2020* Action Plan also identifies a number of ongoing targets:

- The ongoing infrastructure needs of junior kindergarten.
- Appropriate space within schools and other government buildings that could be used for 0-3 years programming.
- Infrastructure needs within every community.

Finally, the *2017-2020* Action Plan commits to the implementation of universal day care, a recommendation that was approved by the 18th Legislative Assembly based on the 2015 report *Feasibility Study of Universal, Affordable Daycare in the Northwest Territories* (McCuaig et al., 2015).<sup>34</sup>

## **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ACTION PLAN**

The Action Plan identifies four priority areas: (1) supporting the delivery of high-quality ELCC experiences, (2) carrying out culturally-relevant professional development and training for all staff working in licensed early childhood programs, (3) increasing the number of qualified early childhood development professionals in licensed programs, and (4) supporting access to ELCC opportunities in all communities.

Specifically, federal investments will be used to improve quality and access, with particular consideration for small communities, including those that are currently without any licensed early childhood programs.

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<sup>34</sup> An action plan for universal child care will be drafted in 2017-2018 and implemented in 2018-2020.

Federal transfers	Year 1: \$2,453,191	Year 2: \$2,452,801	Year 3: \$2,452,801	Total: \$7,358,793
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### Availability

- **In years 1-3, \$25,000/\$140,000/\$60,000** to engage with communities to identify gaps and opportunities for ELCC options, with a particular focus on the eleven communities with no licensed early childhood programs.
- **In years 1-3, \$800,000/\$800,000/\$800,000** for centre-based program funding:
  - Centre-based programs with out-of-school spaces to address the need for such services created by the implementation of junior kindergarten (i.e. before and after school care and care on professional development days for 4- and 5-year-olds).
  - Increased funding to preschool spaces (2-5-year-olds), with the intention of creating new spaces and supporting existing spaces. This funding will be for operational and maintenance costs.
- **In years 1-3, \$100,000/\$130,000/\$120,000** to create new spaces. This will be application-based funding for the purchase of supplies, materials, and other costs incurred when setting up a new licensed program or re-profiling spaces (i.e. preschool to infant).

### Affordability

- **In years 1-3, \$75,000/\$155,000/\$130,000** to assist existing licensed centre-based early childhood programs and family day homes with the cost of health and safety repairs and maintenance. All licensed programs that require such funding to maintain licensing will receive up to \$10,000 per program. This will allow programs to make improvements without increasing parent fees.
- **In years 1-3, \$90,000/\$80,000/\$90,000** for a Provider Enhancement Grant, which will allow centre-based programs to purchase or replace equipment. This will also allow programs to make improvements without increasing parent fees.

### Working Conditions

- **In years 1-3, \$120,191/\$517,801/\$538,551** for Professional Development and Training. This will include a variety of ongoing and flexible training opportunities, such as online courses, on-the-job training, and more. It will also create two early childhood positions within the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.
- **In years 1-3, \$499,500/\$520,500/\$492,250** to create post-secondary learning opportunities. Specifically, this will support the delivery of a full-time face-to-face two-year diploma program in Early Childhood Care and Learning at Aurora College.
- **In years 1-3, \$15,000/\$80,000/\$100,000** for scholarships for students pursuing post-secondary education in early childhood development

### Auspice

- All licensed child care is not-for-profit.

### Inclusion, Equity, Diversity

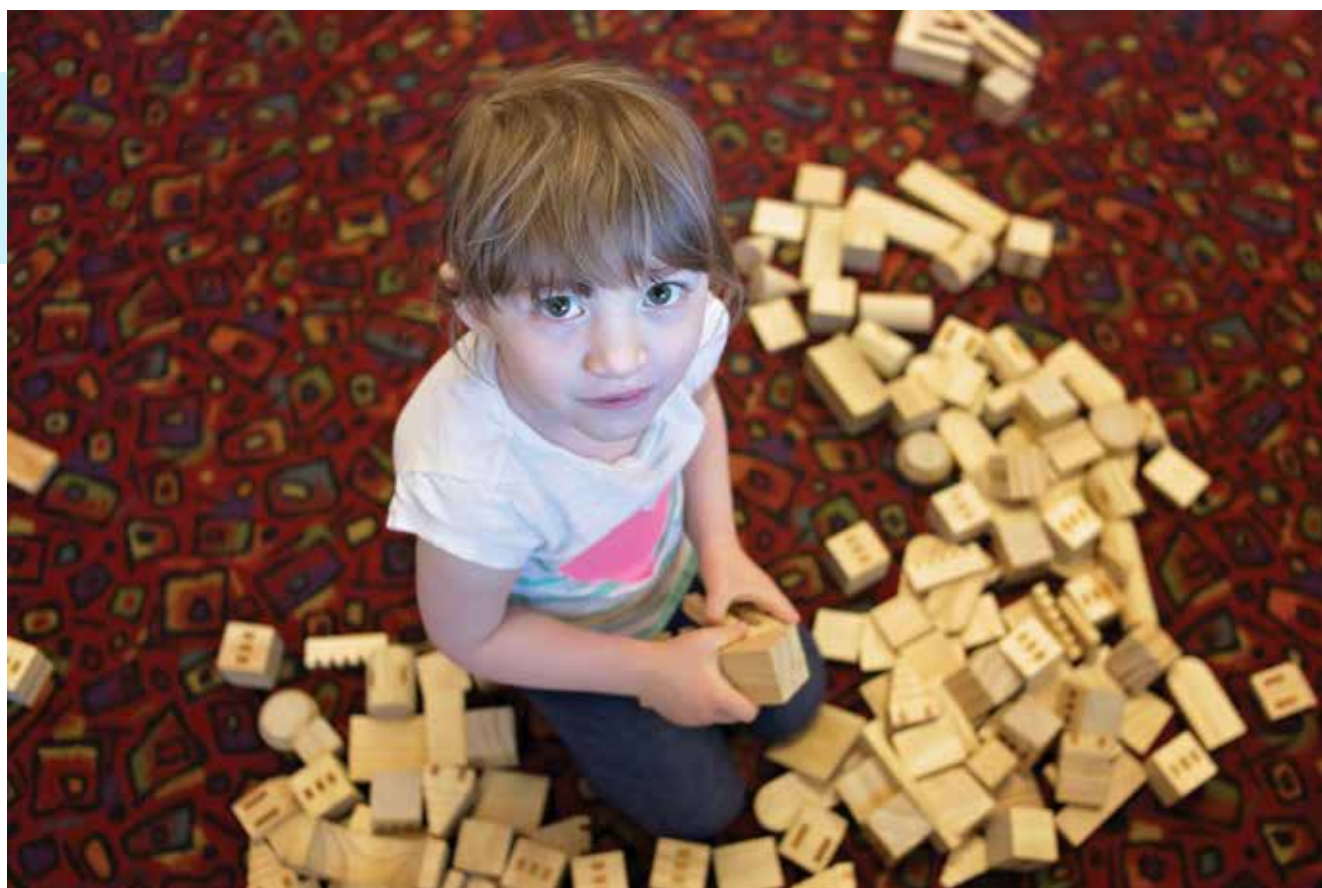
- In years 1-3, \$50,000/\$50,000/\$60,000 for cultural resource development and distribution, including music, books, and play materials that reflect Indigenous languages, beliefs, and culture. Francophone resources will also be provided.

### Other

- In years 1-3, \$240,000/\$240,000/\$240,000 for program support.

## *What is innovative about the Northwest Territories' Action Plan?*

Citing challenges of geographic remoteness, the Action Plan identifies as innovative ECE training and professional development. The Action Plan promises to offer a range of flexible alternatives that will result in the growth and increased professionalization of the ECE workforce.



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](http://timeforchildcare.ca)

