

Bilateral Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care for Prince Edward Island

Prince Edward Island At-a-Glance	
Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulated centre-based spaces are available for 39.4% of children aged 0-5 (2016)¹³ Kindergarten is full-day and compulsory for 5-year-olds
Fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average daily fees in regulated centres (2016): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infants - \$36 2 years - \$29 3 years (school entry) - \$28 Early Years Centres (the majority of centres) receive operating funding and have provincially-set parent fees (fees are not set in other centres) (2017): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$34 for 0-2 years \$28 for 2-3 years \$27 for 3-school age
Auspice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 59% 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: \$15 (2012) Median gross hourly wages of program directors: \$21 (2012) Early Years Centres have a salary grid (2017): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Directors: \$21.42/hour ECEs: determined by level of qualifications and years of experience, ranges from \$12.24-\$17.22/hour Uncertified and support staff: \$11.25/hour
Provincial allocations for regulated child care (2015-2016) Total spending on regulated child care: \$11,821,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fee subsidies: \$2,871,500 One-time funding – not available Recurring funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operating grants \$295,000 Special needs funding \$1,200,000 Early Years Centres \$7,455,000 Other related funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Home visiting program \$1,221,100 Early Childhood Development Association \$160,000

¹³ 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) in Prince Edward Island to cover 23.2% of children aged 0-12.

Recent Initiatives in Prince Edward Island

In 2010, full-day kindergarten, administered by the public school system, became mandatory for 5-year-olds. This had a significant impact on the early childhood sector. In particular, trained ECEs began to move into positions in public schools, while enrolment declined in early childhood centres. The province was therefore forced to re-think the kinds of ELCC programs offered to children aged 0-4.

Based on research by Kathleen Flanagan (Flanagan, 2010), the province launched a new approach to ELCC: *Securing the Future for Our Children: Preschool Excellence Initiative* (Government of Prince Edward Island, 2010). This initiative provides a detailed and ambitious plan to transform ELCC from a *sector* to a *system* that is publicly managed. At the core of this new system are Early Years Centres, which receive provincial funding to bridge the gap between regulated parent fees and operating costs. In return for quarterly operating funding, Early Years Centres are required to meet a set of criteria:

- A minimum number of children.
- Commitments to inclusion.
- High levels of quality measurements, such as additional educational requirements for staff; a uniform wage grid that includes benefits; parental advisory committees; and a standardized fee structure set by the provincial government.

As of February 2017, there were 46 Early Years Centres in the province (Government of Prince Edward Island, 2018).

Several other changes resulted from, or occurred alongside, the *Preschool Excellence Initiative*, including the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (now the Department of Education, Early Learning, and Culture); an online centralized waiting list of all licensed ELCC spaces in the province; supports for curriculum implementation; and investments in staff training.

In July 2016, an Early Years Advisory Committee was established to build and sustain these initiatives. The Advisory Committee's recommendations informed the Action Plan.

The Action Plan proposes to use the federal government's investment in ELCC to increase access in under-served populations, particularly for children who are vulnerable, and to improve quality of services.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND'S ACTION PLAN

	Year 1:	Year 2:	Year 3:	Total:
Federal transfers	\$3,519,129	\$3,517,820	\$3,517,820	\$10,554,769

Availability/Spaces

- Through a one-time investment (**\$60,000 in Year 1**), update the Early Learning and Child Care Registry to improve access and provide an understanding of demand for spaces across the province.
- **In years 1-3, \$849,129/\$1,176,820/\$1,179,820** to increase the number of spaces, with a particular focus on infant spaces (an area of need due to high staff-child ratios and expense). This will result in approximately 200 new spaces for infants and preschoolers.
- **\$400,000 in Year 1** for capital investments in new spaces.
- **\$500,000 in each of the 3 years** to create spaces for children whose parents work non-standard hours and/or seasonally, through a couple of different strategies:
 - Create up to five new Early Years Centres with a focus on serving these populations.¹⁴
 - Work with stakeholders and industry to identify flexible ELCC needs.
 - License additional spaces for non-standard hours to serve these populations.

Affordability

- **In years 1-3, \$700,000/\$700,000/\$700,000** to increase the child care subsidy program and modify entrance criteria. These increases and modifications will target vulnerable children and families, making child care affordable for approximately 100 children.

Working Conditions

- **In years 1-3, \$100,000/\$75,000/\$40,000** to incentivize ELCC workers to achieve greater levels of education. The goal is for up to 20 staff to attain their ECE certification and/or further their professional development.
- **In years 1-3, \$75,000/\$100,000/\$100,000** investment in the Quality Enhancement Grant to increase the credentials of educators.

Auspice

- The only mention of auspice is in the discussion of the six French first-language programs in the province, which are all non-profit and located in Francophone schools.

¹⁴ The Education, Early Learning and Culture website currently says that three Early Years Centres designations are available, one in each of the communities of Charlottetown, Stratford, and the area of Montague, Lower Montague, Brudenell, and Cardigan. See <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/education-early-learning-and-culture/early-years-center-designation>.

Inclusion, Equity, Diversity

- **In years 1-3, \$20,000/\$26,000/\$26,000** to support up to 50 children in newcomer families. This may include creating culturally appropriate guidelines, building capacity, developing interpretation materials, and providing cultural sensitivity training.
- **In years 1-3, \$510,000/\$515,000/\$515,000** to increase educational resources for children with unique needs. This will support approximately 30 children—representing an expansion of such services by 25%.
- **\$60,000 in each of the 3 years** to invest in “Dès la naissance,” a Francophone Early Learning Supports program. This will allow up to 15 additional Francophone and Acadian children to receive early intervention supports.
- **In years 1-3, \$70,000/\$125,000/\$205,000** for the Handle With Care program, which promotes mental health for children aged 0-6.

Other

- The province will undertake a feasibility study to identify needs and gaps in the existing program, and will establish indicators to measure the impacts of the BA based on this benchmark data.
- **In years 1-3, \$175,000/\$240,000/\$192,000** investment in administration and data collection.

What is identified as innovative in the PEI Action Plan?

In the past few years, the province has adopted a model that includes operational funding for some centres and sets a wage scale for ECEs and other staff. The Action Plan identifies as innovative services that provide parents with non-standard hours of care as well as ELCC programs that are co-developed with the Francophone and Acadian communities.



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

