



**Annual Report: 2017-2018 Canada-NWT
Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC)
Bilateral Agreement and Action Plan**



The 2016 Federal Budget committed \$400M in 2017-2018 to support the establishment of the Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Framework with provinces and territories. The Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework sets the foundation for governments to work toward a shared long term vision where all children can experience the enriching environment of quality early learning and child care that supports children's development to reach their full potential. The principles set under the Multilateral ELCC Framework guided provinces and territories to invest in the quality, affordability, flexibility, and inclusivity of early learning and child care.

On June 12, 2017, a multilateral agreement on ELCC was signed between the federal government and provinces and territories, committing \$7B over 10 years, starting in 2018-2019. The notional allocation for the Northwest Territories over 3 years is \$7,358,793 (actual allocations may vary according to the latest annual population estimates), broken down as follows:

- 2017-2018: \$2,453,191
- 2018-2019: \$2,452,801
- 2019-2020: \$2,452,801

The NWT proposed to utilize the notional allocation from the Government of Canada toward investments in early learning and child care in two main areas; **high quality** and **accessibility** to early learning and child care in the NWT, with particular consideration for small communities, including those that are currently without any licensed early childhood programs. These areas of investment are aligned with the principles of quality, accessibility, affordability, flexibility and inclusivity, as outlined within the Multilateral ELCC Framework.

Through this agreement, the GNWT worked with the Federal Government to develop a three-year Canada-NWT ELCC Bilateral Agreement and Action Plan. The action plan was designed to expand upon existing initiatives as outlined in the *2017-2020 Right from the Start Early Childhood Development (ECD) Action Plan*, as well as offer a phased-in approach to improving the accessibility, affordability and inclusivity of child care in the NWT, with the ultimate goal of allowing all children aged zero to five to experience an enriching, quality early learning environment. This was purposefully designed in support of the Government of the Northwest Territories' (GNWT) *Mandate Commitment 3.6.2*, which states:

We will improve the accessibility, affordability and inclusivity of child care in the NWT to allow all children aged zero to five to experience an enriching, quality early learning environment by:

- *supporting the creation of new child care spaces and programs in all communities*
- *ensuring the sustainability of existing early childhood development programs*
- *creating an action plan for a phased in approach to making childcare more accessible and affordable*

The three-year *Canada-NWT ELCC Bilateral Action Plan* also identified the following areas of priority:

1. Support for the delivery of high quality early learning and child care experiences

- Increased investments to assist licensed early childhood programs with maintaining a safe, high quality environment that includes quality equipment and culturally-relevant materials.

2. Support culturally-relevant professional development and training for all staff working within licensed early childhood programs.

- The GNWT will further support professional development and training opportunities for staff working within licensed early childhood programs. Well-trained early childhood staff are able to provide developmentally appropriate programming and care that respects diversity and values all children and families

3. Increase the number of qualified early childhood development professionals in licensed programs.

- Expansion of current initiatives, such as scholarships for students currently enrolled in a post-secondary program in early childhood development and supporting Aurora College to expand and redesign their diploma program in early childhood development for residents of the NWT.

4. Support access to early learning and child care opportunities within all communities in the NWT.

- Focus on supporting programs that provide afterschool care for four and five-year old children, licensed early childhood programs that offer care for children from birth to three years old, as well as supporting communities that currently do not have access to licensed early childhood programs.

The *Canada-Northwest Territories Early Learning and Child Care Bilateral Agreement and 3-year Action Plan* was signed in February 2018; however, funding was not announced until March 29, 2018. Funding from the Agreement was retroactive to April 01, 2017 and was able to support some actions. \$1,291,072 was invested in 2017-2018 with the remainder carried over to 2018-2019. The following report outlines the actions and results of funding implemented during the 2107-2018 fiscal year.

The following table reflects the audited financial statement and outlines spending for the 2017-2018 fiscal year:

Area of Focus	Initiative	2017-2018 (Actual)	2018-2019 (Revised Budget)	2019-2020 (Budget)
High Quality	Professional Development & Training	211,000	1,132,000	539,000
	Cultural Resource Development and Distribution	-	100,000	60,000
	Post-secondary Learning Opportunities within the NWT	112,000	520,000	492,000
	Early Childhood Scholarships	15,000	100,000	100,000
	Health and Safety Funding	-	155,000	130,000
	Provider Enhancement Grant	-	90,000	90,000
Accessibility	Community Connections	-	150,000	60,000
	Centre-Based Funding	714,000	800,000	800,000
	New Child Care Spaces	-	150,000	120,000
	Administration	240,000	240,000	240,000
	Total	\$1,292,000	\$3,437,000	\$2,631,000

The following is a summary of the results as of 2017-2018. Due to the timing of the Agreement (funding announced on March 29th), some areas do not have any activities to report on in the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

Area of Focus: High Quality

One of the most significant elements affecting a child's early development, after the home environment and relationship with parents, is the provision of high quality early learning and child care. Quality early childhood educators and care programs positively impact children's healthy development; allow for parents to return to the workforce who would not otherwise be able to work; and reduce social, special education, and health care costs. Many of the actions within the Canada-NWT Bilateral Agreement and Action Plan focuses on fostering the development of high quality, culturally-relevant, early learning and child care environments.

Professional Development and Training

The Department of ECE proposed to coordinate and provide consistent and on-going flexible training opportunities that are relevant to the unique settings of each licensed early childhood program. Due to the timing of the Agreement, there are no financial activities to report on in the 2017-2018 fiscal year; however, during this time, ECE began the development of a comprehensive Territorial Early Childhood Training Plan. This training plan will have a multi-pronged approach to:

- Increase the number of early childhood educators with postsecondary certification;
- Coordinate and provide consistent, on-going and sustainable professional development opportunities for staff within licensed centre-based early childhood programs and family day homes; and
- Enhance the knowledge and capacity of staff in licensed centers to provide programming that is inclusive for all children, including those with, or at risk of developmental delays.

Training components will be grounded in the principles of self-regulation, child development, inclusion, universal design for learning, and Indigenization of early childhood experiences.

Several professional development and training opportunities were planned and delivered for the 2018-2019 fiscal year, including:

- Training ECE and staff from the Department of Health and Social Services (HSS) Healthy Family Program as Facilitators for the *Handle with Care* program. *Handle with Care* is a strengths-based approach to help parents and caregivers, including those who work in early childhood settings, promote the mental health of young children from birth to 6 years. It can be delivered to groups as a drop-in program or as individual support.
- *Learning Together: Right from the Start Early Childhood Symposium* in August 2018 for staff working within licensed early childhood centre-based programs, family day homes, as well as Junior Kindergarten/Kindergarten teachers from across the NWT.

- *Development, Individual-differences and Relationship-based (DIR) Floortime* was provided in November 2018 for ECE staff along with partners from Health and Social Services in order to better support the transition for children who are vulnerable or have developmental issues into licensed early childcare.
- Exploration of potential online and offline resources to support professional development and training for early childhood educators working within licensed programs.

This work is ongoing and other training opportunities will be offered and reported on within the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 ELCC Reports.

Cultural Resource Development

As part of developing a quality learning environment that is culturally responsive, ECE is supporting the development and distribution of cultural resources for licensed early childhood programs throughout the NWT. Due to the timing of the agreement, no resources were developed or distributed during this reporting period; however, ECE has been working with the Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat (ILES) to explore options for developing and consolidating music specific to early childhood in Indigenous languages and exploring the possibility of offering options for licensed programs to access books and other play-based materials that are reflective of Indigenous beliefs and culture for licensed centre-based early childhood programs in 2018-2020.

Due to the timing of the Agreement, some areas do not have any activities to report in the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

Post-secondary Learning Opportunities within the NWT

Aurora College provides northerners with options to pursue post-secondary education within the NWT. Currently, ECE funds Aurora College to deliver a part-time distance certificate program in Early Childhood Development which allows individuals in the 33 communities of the NWT, many of whom are already working in the early childhood field, to participate in a program of studies and make progress toward a recognized credential.

ELCC funding from the federal government will support Aurora College in the delivery of a full-time, face-to-face two-year diploma program in Early Childhood Care and Learning.

In 2017-2018, funding received from the ELCC Bilateral Agreement was given to Aurora College retroactively to support the delivery of the Early Childhood Diploma year in Inuvik and preparation for the delivery of the two year, face-to-face Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Diploma in Yellowknife, commencing in the fall of 2018.

ECE is supporting Aurora College with funding toward the delivery of full-time, part-time and distance postsecondary programs in ELCC. This includes the offering of a two-year diploma in ELCC during the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school years in Yellowknife. The recommendations in the *Aurora College Foundational Review Report (Review Report)* will inform post-secondary program delivery, including the Early Learning and Child Care Diploma.

At the end of 2017-2018, six students completed Aurora College's Diploma program in Inuvik.

Early Childhood Scholarships

Since 2014, ECE has offered up to ten \$5000 scholarships annually to support postsecondary students enrolled in full-time early childhood programs at the diploma level or above. These scholarships have been oversubscribed. Additionally, with the expansion of offering a fulltime postsecondary ELCC diploma program through Aurora College, the Department of ECE anticipates a further increase in demand for this support.

Through ELCC funding, ECE will increase the number of scholarships offered to support students enrolled in early childhood education programs from a total of ten up to a total of 30 annual scholarships.

Due to the timing of this agreement, an additional three scholarships were awarded through ELCC funding (ten scholarships were funded through the territorial budget).

Health and Safety Funding

This funding will assist existing licensed centre-based early childhood programs and family day homes (in the initial licensing phase) with the cost (up to \$10,000) of health and safety repairs and maintenance as directed by annual health and safety inspections.

Due to the timing of this Agreement, there are no financial activities to report in the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

This funding is available to eligible licensed programs in 2018-2020 and will be reported on within subsequent ELCC annual reports.

Provider Enhancement Grant

This grant was designed to assist licensed early childhood centre-based programs to purchase or replace equipment, such as high chairs, car seats, playground equipment, furniture and other learning materials that support quality play-based environments. The GNWT currently provides the Early Childhood Program (ECP) subsidy to assist with offsetting operational costs for licensed early childhood programs. It is important to note that operational costs in the NWT are often higher than in other areas of Canada. This is due to the higher costs of utilities, food and shipping materials in the north. This subsidy does not currently provide licensed programs with funding to replace equipment and other materials. As the majority of licensed centre-based early childhood programs operate as non-profit organizations, purchasing and replacing materials can be a difficult endeavor. Since quality materials are an important aspect of a quality early childhood environment, all licensed centre-based early childhood programs will have the option to apply to receive this funding as a grant.

Due to the timing of the Agreement, some areas do not have any activities to report in the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

This grant is available to eligible licensed centre-based programs in the 2018-2020 and will be reported on within subsequent ELCC annual reports.

Community Connections

Licensed early childhood programs are operated by Indigenous Governments, non-profit organizations, and individual operators. ECE licenses and inspects early childhood programs, as well as provides training and operational funding to offset costs.

The goal of this work will be to help to identify gaps and opportunities for early learning and child care options and assist with raising awareness and knowledge of the importance of early childhood development.

Due to the timing of the Agreement, there are no activities to report.

Centre-based Program Funding: Centre-based programs with out-of-school spaces

Since the introduction of Junior Kindergarten, out-of-school programs have an increased need to expand their current afterschool programs to include four year old children; therefore although designed to benefit four and five year old children, this initiative may incidentally benefit older children who also participate in out-of-school programs.

This initiative is focused on providing enhanced daily rates for licensed centre-based programs that offer out-of-school (before and/or afterschool care) for four and five year old children.

This funding was provided retroactively to 24 licensed programs that offer out-of-school care.

Centre-based Program Funding: Centre-based programs with preschool spaces

In October 2016, ECE implemented increases to the daily operations subsidy rates for licensed early childhood programs. A larger proportion of the increases were dedicated to infant rates. Providing increased ECP funding rates for preschool spaces, for children aged two to five, in centre-based programs may incent the creation of new spaces and will support existing spaces. The rate enhancement will be used to pay for operational and maintenance costs, including staffing, rent, and utilities which help provide stability to licensed centre-based early childhood programs.

This funding was provided retroactively to 36 licensed centre-based programs that offer preschool spaces.

New Child Care Spaces

This application-based funding will assist with the creation of new licensed centre-based programs and family day homes by providing additional funding for the purchase of supplies, materials and other costs incurred when setting up a new licensed program. This funding will also be available to programs who wish to re-profile spaces (for example: preschool to infant, based on community need).

As of March 31, 2018, there were 111 licensed early childhood programs operating in 22 of 33 communities, with a total of 1852 child care spaces available for children from birth to five years old.

Although this plan will support out of school spaces for four and five year old children, the current methods of gathering attendance data does not require programs to report ages of the students attending. The Department is currently working on a way to capture this information.

Number of Licensed Early Childhood Programs in the NWT

Region	Centre	Out-of-school	Family Day Home	Preschool	Total
Beaufort Delta	5	2	2	3	12
Deh Cho	2	1	0	2	5
North Slave	8	19	37	7	71
Sahtu	1	0	0	2	3
South Slave	2	2	12	4	20
Total	18	24	51	18	111

*Data as of March 31, 2018

Number of Licensed Child Care Spaces in the NWT

Region	Infant	Preschool	Out-of-School	Total
Beaufort Delta	49	151	114	314
Deh Cho	22	50	30	102
North Slave	170	450	505	1125
Sahtu	8	51	-	59
South Slave	31	150	72	253
Total	280	852	720	1852

*Data as of March 31, 2018

When viewing these charts, it should be noted that:

- 506 four-year-old children attended Junior Kindergarten during the 2017-18 school year, representing approximately 85% of the population of four-year-olds in the NWT.
- 596 five-year-old children attended Kindergarten during the 2017-18 school year, representing approximately 91% of the population of five-year-olds in the NWT.

Summary Table

2017-2108 Canada-NWT ELCC Bilateral Agreement and Action Plan

Objectives/Programs	Outputs/Outcomes	Indicators	Targets	2017-18 Results
Professional Development and Training	ECE will provide training and access to professional development for staff working in licensed programs to improve quality of programming offered.	Number and proportion of providers participating in professional development and/or training.	This initiative is expected to directly benefit as many as 200 staff working in licensed early childhood programs.	No training was offered during the reporting period. Due to the timing of the Agreement (funding announced March 29 th 2018), there are no activities to report in the 2017-2018 fiscal year.
Cultural Resource Development & Distribution	Increase number of programs that have access to culturally appropriate ELCC resources.	Number and proportion of providers adopting innovative new tools.	As many as 59 licensed programs stand to benefit from this action.	No resources were developed or distributed during the reporting period. Due to the timing of the Agreement, there are no activities to report in the 2017-2018 fiscal year.
		Number of children participating in NWT licensed early childhood programs that have access to culturally appropriate ELCC resources.	As many as 1,794 children participating in NWT licensed early childhood programs stand to benefit from this action.	No resources were developed or distributed during the reporting period. Due to the timing of the Agreement, there are no activities to report in the 2017-2018 fiscal year.
Post-secondary Learning Opportunities within the NWT	Increase the number of qualified early childhood development professionals working	Number and proportion of licensed early childhood centre staff with	N/A	Of the 228 staff receiving the Early Childhood Staff Grant, 25 licensed early childhood program staff have an accredited certificate in early childhood; 17 licensed early childhood

Annual Report: NWT Early Learning and Child Care Bilateral Agreement and Action Plan

	in licensed programs.	postsecondary Early Childhood Education.		program staff have an accredited postsecondary diploma or higher in early childhood.
		Number of individuals who completed the post-secondary Early Childhood diploma offered in the NWT.	As many as 25 students stand to benefit from these program deliveries.	As the first year of the program started in September 2018, there is no completion number to report in the 2017-2018 fiscal year.
Early Childhood Scholarships	Increase the number of Early Childhood Scholarships offered to NWT residents that are registered in a postsecondary program in early childhood development.	Number and proportion of licensed early childhood centre staff with Early Childhood Education.	Targets are being developed as data collection improves.	Of the 228 staff receiving the Early Childhood Staff Grant, 25 licensed early childhood program staff have an accredited certificate in early childhood; 17 licensed early childhood program staff have an accredited postsecondary diploma or higher in early childhood.
		Number of scholarships awarded.	As many as twenty additional students pursuing post-secondary education in early childhood development stand to benefit from this action annually.	Three (10 additional scholarships were funded through the Territorial budget).
Health and Safety Funding	Provide needs-based funding for licensed centre-based early childhood programs that require renovations/upgrades, as per the annual	Number of licensed child care programs/spaces who accessed Federal Health and Safety funding.	Up to 28 licensed early childhood programs could benefit from this funding over three years.	Due to the timing of the Agreement, there are no activities to report in the 2017-18 fiscal year.

Annual Report: NWT Early Learning and Child Care Bilateral Agreement and Action Plan

	<p>health and safety inspections.</p> <p>Support the delivery and sustainability of high quality early learning and child care experiences.</p>			
Provider Enhancement Grant (PEG)	One time funding for licensed centre-based early childhood programs to support the delivery and sustainability of high quality early learning and child care experiences.	Number of licensed child care programs/spaces who accessed PEG.	Up to 59 licensed child care centres stand to benefit (1,386 children).	No PEG funding was provided during the reporting period. Due to the timing of the Agreement, there are no activities to report in the 2017-2018 fiscal year.
Community Connections	Support access to early learning and child care opportunities within all communities in the NWT.	Number and percentage of children who have access to licensed child care spaces and/or early learning programs.	<p>Assist 100% of communities requesting to access ELCC programs or funding.</p> <p>Potentially result in the creation of up to 16 new child care spaces.</p>	Due to the timing of the Agreement, there are no activities to report in the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

		<p>Number of licensed early childhood programs.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>In the Northwest Territories, there were 111 licensed early childhood programs operating in 22 of 33 communities as of March 31, 2018:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •18 day care centres •18 preschool programs •51 family day homes •24 before and after school programs <p>Due to the timing of the Agreement, ECE did not engage with communities in 2017-2018. These engagements will take place in 2018-2019 and 2019-2020.</p>
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Annual Report: NWT Early Learning and Child Care Bilateral Agreement and Action Plan

Centre-based Programs with Out-of-School Spaces	Support the delivery and sustainability of high quality early learning and child care experiences Support access to early learning and child care opportunities within all communities in the NWT.	Number of licensed child care out-of-school spaces for 4 and 5 year old children.	Expected to benefit as many as 21 licensed early childhood programs.	614 out-of-school spaces (as of March 31, 2018) in centre-based out-of-school programs for children aged 4-11. While the funding is targeted for children ages 0-6, there is an incidental benefit for children ages 6 – 11 years of age because licensed early childhood programs provide services for children up to age 11.
		Number of out-of-school programs receiving additional funding to support children with identified specific needs	Expected to benefit as many as 21 licensed early childhood programs	ECE is developing a method to track the number of out-of-school programs receiving additional funding to support children with identified specific needs.
		Number of flexible early learning and child care arrangements for harder-to-serve population of children.	Expected to benefit as many as 21 licensed early childhood programs.	Due to the timing of the Agreement, there are no activities to report for the 2017-2018 fiscal year. This information will be collected through the licensing process for 2018-2019.
Centre-based Programs with Preschool Spaces	Support the delivery and sustainability of high quality early learning and child care experiences. Support access to early learning and child care	Number of children benefiting from program and/or number of programs designed to serve children from diverse populations, which includes but is not	As many as 38 centres stand to benefit.	The total number of licensed centre-based preschool spaces is 650 which includes one French linguistic program (with 22 licensed spaces). All NWT programs serve diverse populations.

	<p>opportunities within all communities in the NWT.</p>	<p>limited to children from French linguistic minority communities.</p>		
		<p>Number and percentage of children who have access to licensed child care spaces and/or early learning programs.</p>	<p>As many as 38 centres stand to benefit.</p>	<p>The total number of licensed child care preschool spaces, as of March 2018, is 852.</p> <p>As of July 1st, 2017, the estimated population of children ages 2-5 years old in the NWT was 2,444.</p> <p>The 852 spaces represent approximately 35% of the total number of children who may require preschool programming.</p> <p>It should be noted that: 506 four-year-old children attended Junior Kindergarten during the 2017-18 school year, representing approximately 85% of the population of four-year-olds in the NWT.</p> <p>596 five-year-old children attended Kindergarten during the 2017-18 school year, representing approximately 91% of the population of five-year-olds in the NWT.</p> <p>If the 4 and 5 year old population is removed due to the provision of Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten, with high enrollment in these</p>

Annual Report: NWT Early Learning and Child Care Bilateral Agreement and Action Plan

				programs, the 852 spaces provide access to approximately 71% of the total number of 2-3 year olds (1194 as of July 1 2017 estimates).
		Number of additional licensed child care preschool spaces created.	As many as 38 centres stand to benefit.	Due to the timing of the Agreement (funding announced March 29 th), there are no activities to report in the 2017-2018 fiscal year.
Federal Funding for New Child Care Spaces	Support the delivery and sustainability of high quality early learning and child care experiences.	Number of new licensed programs that have accessed federal funding for new child care spaces.	The potential creation of up to 100 new child care spaces.	Due to the timing of the Agreement, there are no activities to report in the 2017-2018 fiscal year.
	Support access to early learning and child care opportunities within all communities in the NWT.	Number of additional licensed child care preschool spaces created over the life of the agreement.	The potential creation of up to 100 new child care spaces.	Due to the timing of the Agreement, there are no activities to report in the 2017-2018 fiscal year.