

Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Agreement



Annual Report for Fiscal Year
2021-2022



On July 27, 2021 the province of PEI signed a five-year Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (CWELCC) with the Government of Canada. Building upon the strengths and learnings of the Bilateral Agreement (signed in 2017 between PEI and Canada) the CWELCC agreement maintained the focus on quality and access of child care across Prince Edward Island with the vision that all families have access to high-quality, affordable, flexible and inclusive early learning and child care no matter where they live and work. This vision is in sync with the national vision for a Canada-Wide child care system. In particular, four key pillars emerged in the vision for the Canada-PEI CWELCC Agreement: Affordability, Accessibility, Quality and Inclusivity.



PEI Early Years and Child Care System

In Prince Edward Island, the Department of Education and Lifelong Learning is responsible for early learning and child care programs through the Early Childhood Development Division. The Department sets overall policy, legislation and regulations for early learning and child care in the province under the authority of the *Early Learning and Child Care Act, 2017*. The total annual investment in Early Learning and Child Care from Prince Edward Island, including contributions from Canada as part of the bilateral and Canada-Wide agreements, equaled \$34,500,000 in 2021-2022. Of this amount, \$9,828,885 came from federal investments.

The Department provides the following supports and services:

- Curriculum, program development and support to Early Years Centres;
- Supports to non-designated Early Learning and Child Care programs and Family Resource Centres;
- Early Years Autism services;
- Administers the direct funding program and the special needs funding program;
- Resource support and inspectors to the Early Learning and Child Care Board.

The Early Learning and Child Care Board is responsible for licensing of early learning and child care centres and certification of early childhood educators. The Board conducts regular inspections and investigates complaints under the Act.

There are three categories of licensed early learning and child care centres for children from birth to school age; additionally, there are licensed school-age child centres on PEI.

- **Early Childhood Centre:** A licensed centre where the operator is authorized to provide services to infants, preschool children and school-age children.
- **Family Home Centre:** A licensed centre located in a private residence where the operator is authorized to provide services to not more than a total of eight children, including the children of the operator.
- **Preschool Centre:** A licensed centre where the operator is authorized to provide services for less than four consecutive hours per day to children who are three years of age or over but are not school-age children.



In addition to the three categories of licensed early learning and child care centres, most licensed early learning and child care centres in PEI are designated as Early Years Centres by the Department of Education and Lifelong Learning. In 2021-2022 eleven (11) additional centres received Early Years Centre designations through the Province (four of these new designations are funded through the Canada-Wide agreement) bringing the total designations across PEI to 65.

The Early Years Centre designation requires centres to uphold the highest standards of care in early childhood. Early Years Centres receive funding through the Department to help bridge the difference between regulated parent fees and operating costs. Some of the requirements for Early Years Centres include the following:

- Curriculum and program development that follows the Provincial Early Learning Framework;
- All certified staff regularly engage in professional development;
- Year-round operating schedule;
- Parent Advisory Committee;
- Regulated parent fees;
- 40-50 early learning and child care spaces, except where local circumstance require smaller centres;
- Integrated model including children with special needs and infants;
- Wage grid for Early Childhood Educators (ECEs);
- Quality learning environment;
- On-going quality improvement;
- Good standing with all applicable legislation.

To qualify for designation, centres are required to be licensed and in good standing with the Early Learning and Child Care Board and demonstrate readiness for designation.



Affordability:

PEI has worked to make child care more affordable for Island families by significantly reducing parent fees for children between 0 and school entry age in licensed early learning and child care spaces.

The first reduction under the 2021-2023 Action Plan was in January 2022, bringing the rates for all children from 0- school-age to \$25 per day. This was a rate decrease of \$9/day for infants, \$3/day for toddlers, and

\$2/day for preschool children attending Early Years Centres. This reduction brought PEI closer to the 50% rate reduction and closer to the average of \$10 a day child care for Islanders as outlined in the Canada-PEI Action Plan. An additional factor in achieving the average of \$10 a day child care is that the costs of child care for lower-income families are further reduced, and in some cases fully subsidized through the provincial child care subsidy program.

Table 1 - Affordability Table						
Program Initiative	Indicators	Baseline ¹ (2020)	Targets	Funding Allocated (2021-22)	Funding Spent (2021-22)	Results (2021-2022)
Reducing parent fees to \$25/day by January 2022		\$34 (Infant), \$28 (Toddler), \$27 (Preschool)	Reducing parent fees for approximately 46% of children. (approximately 3312)	\$550,000	\$329,785	Following the Action Plan, parent-fees were reduced in January 2022 for EYCs through CW funding to \$25/day. All 3302 licenced spaces in designated EYCs benefited from the parent-fee reduction.
Provide Family Home Grant to 10 Family Home Centres		4 Family Home Centres	10	\$75,000	\$22,500	Work began to promote becoming a licensed FHC throughout this fiscal year. Due to fewer than anticipated applications, three operational grants were provided to FHC in 21-22.
Bridge funding to 13 centres to support and plan transition to publicly managed EYC model.		17 non-designated centres in ELCC system	13 "Bridging " centres	\$741,000	\$172,703	At the end of fiscal 21-22 there were 6 centres demonstrating readiness who applied and were approved to take part in the Bridging program.
Designate 4 EYC centres		54 EYCs	4* New EYCs	\$630,000	\$158,238	There were 11 new centres designated as Early Years Centres in 2021-2022, two of which were funded through the CW ELCC agreement. <i>*Two of the 4 CW-funded centres chose to not begin their designation until the Spring/Summer, which fell in the new fiscal</i>

¹ Baseline data should be based on 2020 levels, unless otherwise specified in the Agreement.

Access:

Prince Edward Island indicated a goal of increasing the net number of licensed spaces for children ages 0-school entry to a coverage rate of at least 59% FTE (full-time equivalent) spaces by the end of fiscal year 2025-26. These spaces will be created predominantly in not-for-profit, public early learning and child care operations, as well as in family home child care; the expectations for both types of centres are to operate with equitable parameters for rigour and excellence.

The goal for 2021-2022 was to increase spaces by 280.5 FTE spaces.

Prince Edward Island took three approaches to this investment under the 2021-2023 Action Plan.

1. Designation of new Early Years Centres: In 2021-2022 an additional 11 early learning and child care centres received Early Years Centre designation, with seven (7) funded through the province and four (4) funded through the Canada-Wide agreement funding. As noted in the chart above, two of the four EYCs funded through the Canada-wide agreement deferred the beginning of their designation to later in the 2022 calendar year; as such, the funding for those locations came out of the 2022-2023 budget, and only two of the four newly designated centres received funding from Canada-Wide in 2021-2022.
2. Allocation of additional EYC spaces to existing Early Years Centres: A call to expand spaces was made for existing Early Years Centres, and 106 spaces were approved through this stream.
3. Approval of new licenses for early learning and child care centres: One new early childhood centre and five new Preschool centres were licensed across PEI in 2021-2022.

The total of all initiatives resulted in 286.5 net new spaces in 2021-2022.

Table 1.A. Summary of Licensed Early Learning and Child Care Centers and Spaces (March 31, 2022)

License Type	# Centres	# Spaces		
		Infant	Preschool	Total
Early Years Centre (ECC License / EYC designation)	65	411	2891	3302
Early Childhood Centre (ECC)	17	45	663	708
Preschool Centre	14	0	363	363
Family Home Centre	4	0	28	28
Total # Licensed Centres and Spaces	100	456	3748.5	4401

Baseline Total Spaces: 4050 / FTE: 3968				
	Designated Early Years Centre	Non-Designated	Preschool	Family Home Centre
As of July 15, 2021	2700 FTE	1159 FTE	164 part time, 82 FTE	27 FTE
Anticipated Growth				
	Designated Early Years Centre	Non-Designated	Preschool	Family Home Centre
2021-22	70 FTE	77 FTE (30 new ECC, 3 new infant spaces in-ECC/44 Pre-K spaces)	97.5 FTE, 195 PT	36 FTE
Actual Growth				
2021-22	106	89	91.5	0

Table 2 -						
Program Initiative	Indicators	Baseline ² (2020)	Targets	Funding Allocated (2021-22)	Funding Spent (2021-22)	Results (2021-2022)
Capital grants for new EYC spaces		\$-	Increase spaces by 280.5 FTE spaces (supported through capital grants for expansion)	\$675,000	\$429,543	\$46,353 of this funding was specific to Capital grants within Family Home Centres and the remaining \$383,190 was for Capital Grants for other licensed EYCs throughout the sector.
Family Home Centre Licensing Incentive		4 FHC	6 additional FHC	\$18,000	\$-	Work began to recruit additional Family Home Centres to become licensed within the PEI ELCC system in 2021. Consultations and information meetings were offered, and work began with interested operators to license their centres, although ultimately these centres would not complete the licensing process until the 2022-2023 fiscal year.
Autism Grant		76 children	Support an additional 15 children	\$250,000	\$16,194	Support for an additional Early Years Autism Consultant was approved under the CW funding. Position was filled in late February and seven children were immediately supported through this funding.
Special Needs Inclusion			Increase access for children	\$200,000	\$214,910	Support allowing more children to work with a Special Needs Assistant began in 4 th quarter of 2021-2022 and brought an additional 49 children into this program.

² Baseline data should be based on 2020 levels, unless otherwise specified in the Agreement.

Quality:

As a component of the Action Plan priority 'Quality', Prince Edward Island recognized the cornerstone to a Quality system as having a strong workforce. Many of the Quality initiatives focused on recruiting, retaining and supporting the professional growth of the workforce. As a result, those projects were supported through the one-time allocation of Workforce Funding and have been reported on separately.

Funding in the amount of \$1850 provided additional training and skill development through the University of Prince Edward Island to the Department's Executive Assistant to support the work of the Canada-Wide agreement.

Under the Canada-Wide agreement three primary projects were funded for the 'Quality' priority: wage increases, a new pedagogical support position in EYCs, and a retention grant for educators currently working in the field.

- *Wage Increases:* Compensation reflective of the work was an extremely important piece of the Action Plan, and as such all levels of certified ECE saw significant increases in their hourly rates through a wage grid update in October 2021. A second grid increase is planned for 2022-2023.
- *Certified Special Needs Assistants and Autism Assistants were added to the wage grid.* Cooks in EYCs received a wage increase, and Directors in EYCs became eligible for wage increases reflecting their education and years of service as well. These wage increases were supported through the one-time allocation of Workforce Funding.
- *Pedagogical Support* (previously defined as "float staff" in the Action Plan) for all EYCs: An additional staff person for EYCs to support work inside the centres on any number of the following responsibilities:
 - Assisting with programming;
 - Maintaining records;
 - Monitoring behaviour and participation of individual children;
 - Relieving assigned ECEs when they are required for other duties;
 - Other duties related to supporting program delivery.
- *Retention Grant:* A one-time retention grant was provided in the Fall of 2021 to recognize years of service to those working in the early learning and child care industry. The grant was received by 686 individuals: 603 full-time employees and 83 part-time employees.

Table 3 - Quality

Program Initiative	Indicators	Baseline (2020)	Targets	Funding Allocated (2021-22)	Funding Spent (2021-22)	Results (2021-2022)
Wage increases		Table 7.A provides baseline wages	PEI ELCC workforce will receive an adjustment in hourly wage	\$1,325,000	\$1,186,390	The wage increase program initiated a wage grid increase for all educators. Additional wage increases for certified Autism Assistants and Special Needs Assistants were funded through the Workforce Funding and have been reported on separately. Please see Table 7 for updated wage grid.
Float staff for all EYCs		N/A	Hire 79 float staff	\$683,000	\$573,912	The Pedagogical Support position (Float Staff position) was created to support EYC educators in various tasks.
Retention Grant		N/A	837 recipients	\$325,000	\$1,144,510	686 educators received this grant to recognize their years of service and support retention in the field.

Inclusivity:

Inclusivity as it relates to children, families and educators was identified as a pillar within the Prince Edward Island 2021-2023 action plan. PEI's early learning and child care system is growing in diversity from both a workforce perspective and that of the children and families participating in ELCC programs. A focus on inclusivity is integral to respond fully to the evolving needs of the sector and within communities island-wide.

Developing an inclusion plan is a cornerstone to this work. While the groundwork for this project was underway in 2021-2022, there were no fiscal expenditures during this year.

BIPOC USHR, a PEI-based support and advocacy group for Black, Indigenous and People of Colour, held a series of workshops for the sector focusing on anti-racism, recognizing and dismantling white privilege and unconscious bias, and illuminating how various marginalized identities (gender, ability, class, sexual orientation) intersect to create unique experiences of oppression. Sixty-four (64) educators in the ELCC sector attended these virtual workshops, bringing their new learnings and understanding back to their centres and the children and families they work with every day. Additionally, staff within the Early Childhood Division of the Department of Education and Lifelong Learning took part in this training. This enabled the Early Childhood Coaches to continue the conversations and learnings from this workshop with the sector.

Table 4 - Inclusivity

Program Initiative	Indicators	Base-line (2020)	Targets	Funding Allocated (2021-22)	Funding Spent (2021-22)	Results (2021-2022)
Develop an inclusion plan with attention to low income, Indigenous, Black and other racialized communities, newcomers to Canada, official language minorities and underserved populations				\$125,000	NA	This work began after the fiscal year 2021-2022 closed.
Increase the number of children benefitting from resources and programs designed to respond to the needs of low income, Indigenous, Black and other racialized communities, newcomers to Canada, official language minorities and underserved populations			Approximately 450 Early Childhood Educators	(Part of Inclusion Plan budget above)	\$6000	PEI partnered with BIPOC USHR to offer a series of workshops to the sector focusing on anti-racism, white privilege and unconscious bias. 64 educators attended the training sessions. Thirty (30) Department staff also underwent the same training with BIPOC USHR. The knowledge transmission from the training for coaches makes a direct impact within EYC centres.

Prince Edward Island has an established history in the Early Learning and Child Care sector and has built a reputation on quality care for children and families and a supported and inspired workforce.



Consultation with stakeholders

Consultation with stakeholders has been instrumental in the development and implementation of the Canada-Prince Edward Island Canada-Wide agreement. Prince Edward Island has an established history in the Early Learning and Child Care sector and has built a reputation on quality care for children and families and a supported and inspired workforce. Maintaining this close connection with the sector throughout this rollout was a priority in order to ensure the programs and progress accurately reflect the needs of the population it serves. Consultations were essential as Prince Edward Island prepared an Action Plan to best support the sector and continued to ensure the work stays the course and continues to represent the interests of children, families and early childhood educators.

- The Minister's Early Years Advisory Committee met during this time.
- The Early Childhood Development Association represents early childhood educators and this group was consulted on various elements of the Canada-Wide agreement and rollout to ensure programs were prioritizing the needs of the sector. ECDA has been a partner in rolling out the accelerated training opportunities, among other work.
- Family Home Centre operators and individuals interested in becoming a licenced centre have been integral in stakeholder conversations. A regularly scheduled series of meetings for Family Home Centre operators and individuals interested in becoming licensed FHC operators provided opportunities for questions and support to this area of the sector. These meetings were a chance for interested individuals to ask questions, clarify any uncertainties, and for the Department of Education and Lifelong Learning to share information about grants and initiatives designed to support their journey to becoming a licensed Family Home Centre.
- Holland College and College de L'Île were consulted regarding offering expanded and accelerated programs for early childhood educators to remove barriers and provide an opportunity for continued education in a format that did not disrupt the sector or their employment income.

Administrative Information

As part of the Canada-Wide agreement between Canada and Prince Edward Island there were 12 FTE positions created within the Department of Education and Lifelong Learning in the Early Childhood Development division to support the roll out and initiatives under the Canada-wide agreement.

At the close of fiscal year 2021-2022 both Administrative Clerks had been hired, however the start date for one fell into the 22-23 fiscal year. The coach and autism consultant positions were hired and began work during the 4th quarter of 2021-2022 year.

Communication Strategy

Work on the communication strategy began in fiscal 2021-2022 through partnership with a local firm to complete branding work for the early childhood sector, and create messaging campaigns to promote the sector from a workforce perspective, a families perspective and to motivate family home centre operators to become licensed. Four campaigns were created:

- When I grow up (A public perception campaign demonstrating the important role that early education plays in the development of children)
- Now is the time (A recruitment campaign reinforcing that becoming an ECE is a valuable, meaningful and stable career choice)
- Setting families up for success (A communications campaign sharing the investments of the provincial and federal partnerships and how they will benefit PEI families)
- The benefits of being licensed (A campaign designed to share the benefits of being a licensed family home child care centre)



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Table 5 - Other Canada-wide ELCC Reporting Indicators
Canada-wide ELCC Indicators

Principle	Outcome	Indicator	Results
Affordability	Decrease the average daily child care fee	Average daily parental out-of-pocket fee for regulated child care spaces at the end of each Fiscal Year	2020-2021: \$34/day Infant \$28/day Toddler \$27/day Preschool 2021-2022 (as of Jan. 2022) \$25/day for all ages
		Number of children under age six and 6 to 12 years receiving fee subsidies, broken down by families receiving partial and full subsidies	Data recently collected; analysis currently underway
Access	Increase number of ELCC spaces available	Number of ELCC spaces available during the Fiscal Year - broken down by age groups of child and type of setting	4401 or 4204.5 FTE spaces (See supporting Table '6' below)
		Number of net new spaces created during the Fiscal Year - broken down by age groups of child and type of setting	637 Total 477 EYC: 48 Infant, 390 Preschool 160 Existing licenses: 151 in ECCs – 25 Infant, 120 Preschool, 9 in Preschool – 4.5 FTE
		Number of children on waiting lists to access regulated ELCC spaces	762 0-2: 563 2-3: 87 3-4: 49 4-5: 34 5+: 29
Quality	Increase quality early learning and child care	Number and percentage of staff working in regulated child care programs who fully meet the certification/ educational requirements	EYC 64 Centres [300 ECE III, 40 ECE II, 80.5 ECE I, 80 Uncertified] EYC 84% certified
		Wages of the early childhood workforce according to the categories of certification, including any wage enhancements, top-ups and/or supplements	(see Table 7)
		Annual public expenditure on training and professional development of the early childhood workforce	\$627,577

Canada-wide ELCC Indicators

Principle	Outcome	Indicator	Results
		Average child-to-staff ratio among licensed child care service providers	0-22 months: 3:1 23mo-3 years: 5:1 4-5 years: 10:1
Inclusivity	Increase number of inclusive spaces	Number of inclusive spaces created/converted – broken down by age group of child and type of setting	56
		Number and proportion of children under age six and 6-12 years in flexible regulated ELCC arrangements	0-5 years: 90 children in flexible regulated ELCC arrangements 6-12 years: Not Applicable
		Number and proportion of centers/providers that provide flexible arrangements (i.e. non-traditional arrangements such as flexible/irregular hours, weekend and emergency services; and geographic distribution of spaces)	Non-standard Hours: 7/82 centres (Funded through the Bilateral Agreement) 3-Charlottetown Area 2-Summerside Area 1- West Prince 1-Southern Kings
		Number of children under age six and 6-12 years with disabilities and children needing enhanced or individual supports that are in regulated ELCC spaces	0-5 years Early Years Autism supports: 7 (funding will support up to 15) 6-12 years: Not Applicable 0-5 years Special needs Funding: 49 6-12 years: Not Applicable
		Number or proportion of child care service providers who provide services that are adapted to the needs of children with disabilities and children needing enhanced or individual supports	100% of licensed ELCC centres are able to apply for funding to support the needs of children with disabilities, or provide enhanced individual supports in their centres
		Number of Indigenous children under age six years in regulated ELCC spaces, where possible broken down by distinction-based	Data unavailable
		Number of racialized Canadian children, including Black Canadian children under age six in regulated ELCC spaces	Data unavailable

Table 6 - LICENSES & SPACES

License Type	Number of Centres	# of Spaces		
		Infant	Preschool	Total
Early Years Centre	65	411	2891	3302
Early Childhood Centre	17	45	663 or 648 FTE spaces	708 or 693 FTE spaces
Preschool Centre	14	0	363 or 181.5 FTE Spaces	363 or 181.5 FTE spaces
Family Home Centre	4	0	28	28
TOTAL	100	456	3942 or 3748.5 FTE Spaces	4401 or 4204.5 FTE Spaces

Preschool spaces are calculated by 0.5 to account for the half day space.

Wage Grid

Following the signing of the Canada-Wide agreement, wage increases have been implemented throughout the sector. Wage increases for Special Needs Assistants, Autism Assistants, Cooks and Director wage increases were funded through the Workforce funding as part of the Canada-Wide Agreement. The following wage increases were funded through the Canada-Wide stream.

- The wage grid increased in October 2021 increasing Directors and ECE3 Educators by \$4.00/hour over their previous rate of pay. New rates of pay range between \$24.11-\$26.06 for Level 3 educators based on length of experience and \$30.35-\$33.37 for Directors based on level of experience. Similarly, Level 1 and 2 educators have also seen increases throughout their pay bands with Level 1 increasing by \$1.00 and Level 2 increasing by \$2.00.



Table 7: Effective October 1, 2021

POSITION*	EDUCATION COMPLETED	EXPERIENCE AFTER CERTIFICATION				
		1 yr or less	2yr	3yr	4yr	5yr or more
Director	Post Diploma/Degree	\$30.35	\$31.08	\$31.83	\$32.38	\$33.37
ECE Level 3	2 year diploma	\$24.11	\$24.58	\$25.05	\$25.54	\$26.06
ECE Level 2	1 year certificate	\$19.05	\$19.47	\$19.91	\$20.35	\$20.78
ECE Level 1	3X 30 hour EC courses	\$15.98	\$16.36	\$16.74	\$17.14	\$17.55
Cook	N/A	\$14.50				
Uncertified	N/A	\$13.25				
Support Staff	N/A	minimum wage				

Baseline Wage Grid- Table 7.A: Effective October 1, 2020

		EXPERIENCE AFTER CERTIFICATION				
Position	Education Completed	Step 1 1 yr or less	Step 2 2 yrs	Step 3 3 yrs	Step 4 4 yrs	Step 5 5 or more yrs
Director	ECE Degree/Related Degree plus ECE Credential	\$26.35				
ECE 3	2 year diploma	\$20.11	\$20.58	\$21.05	\$21.54	\$22.06
ECE 2	1 year certificate	\$17.05	\$17.47	\$17.91	\$18.35	\$18.78
ECE 1	3 X 30 hours EC courses	\$14.98	\$15.36	\$15.74	\$16.14	\$16.55
Uncertified	N/A	\$13.25				
Support Staff	N/A	Minimum Wage				



Conclusion

The first year of implementation for the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement was productive as PEI operationalized the many initiatives required to meet targets within Prince Edward Island's Action Plan. Some programs, including the one-time retention grant, new EYC designations, and the first wave of parent-fee reductions, and early childhood educators wage increases, were implemented swiftly and with positive response. These programs made an immediate and measurable impact for those working in the sector and for parents and families across the island. The implementation was not without challenges; it took some time to staff the 12 FTE positions that were created under Canada-Wide and the majority were not filled in the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

The ongoing support of the Canada-Wide Agreement into year two of the action plan will allow the province to scaffold onto the initial projects and roll out additional parent-fee reductions, wage-increases for early childhood educators and support staff and to increase spaces. The overall focus within the agreement is on access, affordability, quality and inclusion. In year two PEI will continue to expand spaces through building the Family Home Centre network, providing capital grants to help centres expand their spaces, and continuing to support the education and retention of educators to support the workforce. As the roll-out of the Canada-Wide ELCC Agreement continues there remains a priority for specific and ongoing financial support and initiatives focused on the recruitment and retention of a highly educated workforce. In addition, quality and inclusion will remain at the heart of the work throughout 2022-2023 with programs that represent and support Island families and children from all geographic regions, all cultural backgrounds, and varying levels of ability. Prince Edward Island entered into the Canada-Wide agreement with a well-established publicly managed system and has made significant strides to build on that foundation to continue to expand and grow the sector.



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