

An Early Learning and Child Care Framework for Canada's Children: #TogetherWeCan



The Election Promise: In its [election platform](#), Canada's federal government promised to meet with provinces, territories, and Indigenous communities to begin work on a new National Early Learning and Child Care Framework, to deliver affordable, high-quality, flexible, and fully inclusive child care for Canadian families.

The Budget Commitment: In the [2016/2017 federal budget](#), \$500 million was earmarked for the federal government's investment in child care for fiscal 2017/18, of which \$100 million is for Indigenous child care.

\$500 Million: Is it Enough?

It's a start, but when transferred over 10 provinces, 3 territories and to Indigenous nations, it's not a lot.

To move forward, a multi-year funding framework starting in fiscal 2018/19 with a further \$1.6 billion investment, moving up to a \$2.6 billion investment in 2019/20 is needed.

Canada ranks last among 25 OECD nations in ELCC spending.

The public supports investment in early learning and child care. An overwhelming majority of Canadians agree that Canada should have a nationally-coordinated child care plan.

The CCCF respects and supports that Indigenous communities may choose unique approaches and content as it pertains to early learning and child care and that The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has called on federal, provincial, territorial and Indigenous governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Indigenous families as a part of healing and reconciliation.

Affordability

A child care space in Toronto can cost up to [\\$20,832/year](#)

Undergraduate students in Canada paid [\\$5,959 in tuition fees](#) on average in 2014/2015.

According to the OECD, [Canadian families spend almost one-quarter of their income on child care](#), a ratio that is much higher than in other parts of the world.

Quality Child Care and Development

Quality, quantity, and reliability are pressing needs across the country which are inextricably linked. Without attention to quality, we compromise our children's development; without quantity and reliability, we leave families with no options.

In order to enhance early learning and child care systems, meet growing demands and ensure quality, we need adequate financial, physical and human resources to ensure:

- adequate wages and working conditions for early learning and child care practitioners
- ongoing education and professional development for early learning and child care professionals and practitioners
- appropriate infrastructure support for early learning and child care facilities, programming, curriculum development, data gathering and child care associations



Canada's Provinces and Territories

Canada's provinces and territories have been building their respective child care policy and programs, but many long-standing national issues, such as the recruitment and retention of the child care workforce, remain as prevalent today as they have always been. There are some very encouraging developments as of late, such as the [Province of Ontario committing to building 100,000 spaces over the next 5 years](#); the [Province of New Brunswick's Child Care Review Task Force Report: Valuing Children, Families and Childcare](#); and the [Province of Manitoba's Early Learning and Child Care Commission Final Report](#). However, the federal government has outlined its policy principles that the national framework is to be based on: Quality, Affordability, Inclusivity and Flexibility. **The question is will these policy principles be enough to create a high quality, inclusive, affordable and accessible child care system for all Canadian families that need it?**



CCCF believes that a national early learning and child care system should:

- support a vision of the child at the center, surrounded by the family and the community and education system
- include a broad range of supports and services including preschool, family child care, centre-based care for children up to age 12 and after school programs.
- support parental choice
- be regulated and licensed
- be inclusive, including ALL children
- provide child-centered, play-based learning appropriate for young children
- be based on current research on early learning
- meet the needs of families living in rural, remote and northern communities as well as urban and suburban areas
- met the needs of cultural and linguistic communities

The Federal Action Taken by CCCF and National Partners

In partnership with the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada (CCAAC), the Childcare Resource and Research Unit (CRRU) and Campaign 2000, the CCCF has presented the federal government with recommendations for moving towards a national early learning and [child care system called the Shared framework for building an early childhood education and care \(ECEC\) system for all](#):

Common federal/provincial/territorial policy frameworks: A commitment to build accessible, affordable, inclusive, high-quality child care systems across Canada for all who need it.

Planning for long-term sustained funding: A commitment to provide long-term sustained federal funding to ensure affordable, high-quality services together with a planned expansion of child care programs so that, by 2020, child care can become accessible to every child whose family chooses it

System-building and policy development shared by federal/provincial/territorial and local governments, with the participation of key stakeholder groups such as educators, researchers, and parents: An agreement to share child care initiatives, such as a strategy to strengthen the child care workforce, and a shared data system and research agenda along with a commitment to use data and policy research to make evidence-based child care policy decisions.

What you can do?

Reach out to your Member of Parliament and ask

Have there been any discussions or consultations about the national early learning and child care framework in your community yet?

Reach out to your provincial/territorial Minister responsible for child care and ask

How they see the national framework working towards building a strong provincial/territorial child care system?

Reach out to other early learning and child care leaders in your community and

Invite them to participate in a joint outreach (in person meetings, emails etc.) to local MPs to inform them about the development of the National Framework.

Reach out to media

You can copy and paste the key messages from this or develop some of your own and place them into online media forums, news story feedback pages, story suggestion pages, news tip areas and Letters to the Editor of your local and national news (radio, television, print and web-based media) right from your computer, tablet or smart phone.

Reach out on social media...

Let others know what is happening, using the hashtags [#cdnchildcare](#) [#wevaluechildren](#) [#TogetherWeCan](#)