



Canada-New Brunswick Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement

NEW BRUNSWICK ACTION PLAN 2021-2023



**Canada-New Brunswick Canada-Wide
Early Learning and Child Care Agreement
New Brunswick Action Plan 2021-2023**

* Notes to the reader: The province of New Brunswick is Canada's only officially bilingual province. As such, all actions identified throughout this Action Plan applies to both francophone and anglophone linguistic communities, unless otherwise specified.

** Additional note to the reader: In addition, all references in the text to early learning and child care implies the regulated status of these services, unless otherwise specified.

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Table of contents

Message from Premier Blaine Higgs.	1
Minister’s message	3
Introduction	5
Federal vision.	7
Early learning and child care in New Brunswick	8
New Brunswick’s Early Learning and Child care System	8
New Brunswick’s Early Learning and Child care Funding Model	10
Management of the Early Learning and Child care System in New Brunswick	11
New Brunswick’s priorities and investments – Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement in FY 2021-2022 and FY 2022-2023.	16
Engagement and Partnerships	16
Funding	25
Administrative Funding.	25
Federal Contributions and Proposed Allocations	25
Appendix A: Summary of indicators and targets 2021-2023	27
Appendix B: Inclusion and diversity in early learning and child care in New Brunswick	29
Appendix C: Data collected through the registry	31

Message from Premier Blaine Higgs

New Brunswick is already a recognized leader in early learning and child care, and our government is committed to taking the steps necessary to continue to improve our services in this sector.

Our goal is to build on the solid foundation we have laid, a foundation that ensures that the quality of education and care that the children in our province receive is second to none. We are proud of the substantial investment we've made in improving the quality of child care and early childhood education.

We have a hybrid version of early learning and child care in that private operators provide the care but receive wage subsidies linked to training for employees.

We had to be sure that under any agreement we made, not only would our not-for-profit and hybrid sectors grow, but our early childhood sector would remain modern and progressive.

That is why we made sure to take the time to fully understand the agreement we were entering into with the federal government and any impacts and implications it might have.

I am pleased to say that the agreement we signed was specifically structured to support the existing sector in New Brunswick.

This agreement allows us to work with our operators across the early learning and child-care sectors to support a common vision and social mission, while making it easier for families to find quality, affordable child care.

The early learning and child-care sector in New Brunswick plays an important role in our economy and making sure that families are able to fully participate in the workforce. By making child-care fees more affordable and accessible, more parents will be able to take advantage of these programs and join or re-join the workforce.

Supporting our provincial workforce in this way isn't just the right thing to do, it will bring economic growth to our province.

Truly, it is a made in New Brunswick agreement that supports our unique needs and the families who live and work here.

This action plan is only the beginning. We will continue to work to improve our early learning and child-care system for years to come. By doing so, we will be able to better meet the needs of New Brunswickers and their children, while also creating a system that is sustainable, resilient and successful.

By working together, we will be able to achieve our long-term goal of providing the best possible learning and care environments for our youngest residents.



Premier Blaine Higgs

Minister's message

February 11, 2022

We've spent the past few years building and expanding an early learning and child care sector in New Brunswick that provides families with access to quality, affordable, inclusive child care. Our system was built around the designation program, which means New Brunswick Early Learning Centres and Homes meet the ever-higher standards of learning, health and safety.

Through the Canada-wide Childcare Agreement and Action plan, we will build on these successes.

The first years of a child's life are their most crucial stages of development. Early childhood educators play an incredibly valuable role in the lives of our youngest learners in facilitating children in exploring and understanding their world. The impact of quality early learning at such a young age resounds through their lives and shapes the adults they will become. We want every child to be equipped with the right tools, right from the very start.

We believe in creating environments that are inclusive, flexible and responsive to the individual needs of children. Inclusive education practices are not only necessary for all children to develop and prosper, but also critical to building a society that is inclusive of all people and their basic legal, civil and human rights. They are the foundation of having citizens who are active and engaged within their communities.

We'll work to address barriers and ensure that every child is able to access affordable, quality, inclusive and flexible early learning and provide learners with the building blocks they need to be successful throughout school and beyond.

This agreement will benefit New Brunswick families and their young children. Not only will we focus on ensuring that parents pay less for childcare, we will have a major focus on driving quality preschool learning.

Research has proven time and time again that skilled and competent educators have the biggest impact on the quality of preschool education. As such, and over the next five years, more resources will be added to ensure our early childhood education workforce has the tools, the training and the recognition needed to bolster quality in early learning and child care. We'll create more opportunities for professional learning and development and work to attract more international educators to come to New Brunswick. This includes the implementation of a wage grid for educators in designated facilities.

We will engage with families, early childhood educators, operators and other stakeholders across the system to join us in important conversations that are crucial to the implementation and success of our plans.

I want to thank all our educators and operators for their unwavering commitment to teaching and caring for our children. New Brunswick is lucky to have you.



Dominic Cardy
Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development

Introduction

New Brunswick is a leader in Canada in the early learning and child care sector, having been ranked third nationally in the 2020 *Early Childhood Education Report*.¹ This report links research to practice in public policy to improve outcomes for children and family and assesses the overall frameworks for early childhood care and services in Canada. It contains 21 benchmarks that evaluate governance structures, funding levels, access, quality, and rigour of accountability. The report highlights that New Brunswick waives costs for low income families and sets a fee ceiling for its designated early learning centres. New Brunswick is also the only province that meets all governance benchmarks. The governance benchmarks include early childhood education and care (ECEC) under a common department/ministry, ECEC supervisory unit, common ECEC policy framework and common local authority for ECEC administration and delivery.



Over the last three years, the transformation of New Brunswick's early learning and child care system has been a resounding success. The key to this success resides in the comprehensive approach in addressing access, affordability, and quality by creating a new model for service delivery with the designation program through a comprehensive public policy framework. New Brunswick has streamlined its legislative and policy frameworks to establish its system of early learning and child care services, therefore reducing the fragmentation of services for children and their families with an increased accountability.

Notwithstanding national challenges within the for-profit provision of early learning and child care, New Brunswick has successfully transformed its early learning and child care system, moving from a market driven system toward a more social entrepreneurial mindset. The success of the designation program was evident throughout the pandemic. New Brunswick's for-profit (designated) facilities were instrumental in keeping parents working during the early days of the pandemic where 70 of the 93 facilities serving essential workers were for-profit facilities.

New Brunswick has made considerable improvements over the last four years in ensuring its early learning and child care system is higher in quality and more affordable and accessible for families. As noted earlier, New Brunswick's early learning and child care system ranks above most other provinces and territories, despite challenges unique to New Brunswick. The high rurality of the province and the specific constitutional obligation to ensure equality of services for both official languages increase the cost of delivering this high-quality programming.

New Brunswick has one of the highest proportions of its population living in rural communities in the country. According to the 2016 census, 48% of New Brunswick's population resides in rural areas.² Due to the challenges associated with service provision in rural communities, it is not surprising that there is limited access to child care spaces in rural communities in the province.

As well as being Canada's only official bilingual province, New Brunswick's public education system is delivered by two independent sectors: francophone and anglophone. These sectors have two (2) different governance structures and two (2) different curricula. New Brunswick's early learning and child care system mirrors the linguistic

1 Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development. (2020). *Early Childhood Education Report*. Retrieved from: Home | Early Childhood Education Report (ecereport.ca)

2 Canada. Statistics Canada. *2016 Census*. 2016 Census of Population – Data products (statcan.gc.ca)

duality of its education systems. As such, the early learning and child care facilities are aligned with the education sectors and must choose one of the two curricula (French or English) to implement in their facility. In addition, each linguistic community is responsible for the development of their pedagogical materials, tools and training to appropriately reflect their culture and language. As the New Brunswick population becomes more multicultural, diversity is continually being embedded into the educational programming.

Staffing services with early childhood educators (ECE) is a challenge in the early learning and child care sector in New Brunswick. New Brunswick is exploring strategies to address the recruitment and retention challenges including establishing a mechanism for recognition of qualification for ECEs who completed their training outside of Canada to help support the recruitment and retention of ECEs.

New Brunswick will collaborate with First Nations organizations and communities to better understand their needs and establish a plan for early learning and child care services for Indigenous children.

New Brunswick is committed to working with the Government of Canada to increase access to high quality, affordable and inclusive early learning and child care for New Brunswick families. The funding allocations reflect the diverse needs of New Brunswick families and communities and will support all types of high-quality facilities. Investments outlined in the 2021-2023 Action Plan include increasing affordability, increasing access to early learning and child care spaces, supporting inclusion, strengthening the workforce and investments in data and reporting.



Federal vision

The Government of New Brunswick will collaborate with the Government of Canada to achieve the shared vision of providing greater access to high quality, affordable and inclusive early learning and child care. The dual mission of the early learning and child care system is to support both the workforce and children's early education and the system plays critical roles in the economy both in the immediate and long-term. The child care plan increases workforce participation by ensuring children are in safe, secure, and healthy environments while parents work, and it further provides quality learning environments to support children's healthy development and growth.

The Government of Canada key funding objectives include:

- Providing a 50% reduction in average parent fees for regulated and designated New Brunswick Early Learning Facilities by the end of 2022 and reaching an average of \$10 a day by 2025-2026 for all regulated designated ELCC spaces;
- Creating more high-quality, affordable regulated child care spaces;
- Addressing barriers to provide inclusive and flexible child care;
- Valuing the early learning and childhood workforce and providing them with training and development opportunities; and
- Building a strong baseline of common, publicly available data to measure progress, report to Canadians, and help continuously improve the system.



Early learning and child care in New Brunswick

In 2016, the government of New Brunswick received the *Valuing Families, Children and Child Care*, the Child Care Task Force Review final report. The report provided recommendations for a path forward for creating the right conditions for quality child care for the province that is accessible, affordable and inclusive and supports parents' workforce participation.

Around the same time, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development released its 10-year education plans: *Everyone at their best* and *Donnons à nos enfants une longueur d'avance*. For the first time in the province's history, the education plans included early childhood learning and development.

The results of the Child Care Task Force Review's final report as well as the 10-year education plans were the basis for the transformation of the child care sector in the province which began in 2017. The *Everyone at their best...from the start* and the *Donnons à nos enfants une longueur d'avance...dès le départ* launched the comprehensive plans to transform New Brunswick's early learning and child care system to offer higher quality services that are universally accessible and affordable to all families and children through a robust public policy framework. The idea was to remove the barriers for families in accessing the child care services to meet their needs with a particular focus on families more in need.

The creation of the designation of New Brunswick Early Learning Centres and Homes (Designation Program) was a resounding success. To this day, 92% of spaces for children aged five (5) years and under, prior to school entry, are in designated facilities and the occupancy rate as of July 2021 sits at 73%. The Designation Program is available to all licensed facilities and the designation process is initiated by the operators. As of September 2021, less than 4% of occupied licensed spaces for children aged five (5) years and under, prior to school entry, were in non-designated facilities. A small number of facilities choose not to become designated because of the type of service they offer and the low enrollment of preschool aged children. Some facilities, for example, offer part-time preschool programs and those families do not qualify for subsidies while other facilities may only have one child in attendance. Other facilities choose not to become designated so they can control their fees.

New Brunswick will build on the success of its Designation Program to expand and continue to advance the access to affordable high-quality early learning and child care as part of its Canada-Wide ELCC efforts.

NEW BRUNSWICK'S EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE SYSTEM

In New Brunswick, an operator is required to obtain a license from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to offer services to more than five (5) children under the age of twelve (12) as indicated in the *Early Childhood Services Act*. Licensed early learning and child care centres are approved by government to provide child care services for six (6) or more children from infants to twelve (12) years of age, but not more than 60 children per license. An individual or organization can hold more than one licence.

There are two categories of licenses: centres and homes. Licensed facilities (centres or homes) may offer services for:

- infants (0-24 months)
- preschool aged children (2 to 4 years old, prior to school entry)³
- school aged children (5 to 12 years old, in school)

These centres may be for-profit (commercial) or not-for-profit (governed by a board of directors). The legislated adult to child ratios determines the number of ECEs required in the facility. In New Brunswick, 68% of the child care spaces are for-profit.

A licensed early learning and child care home is approved to provide child care services for six (6) or fewer children from ages 0 to twelve (12) years in an individual's home. These are for-profit (commercial) facilities. An operator of an early learning and child care home cannot have an employee and the number of children allowed is based on the age of the children.⁴

The table below provides the current breakdown of business types in New Brunswick.

Data as of Sept 1st, 2021				Spaces in Centres			Enrolment		
Designation	Business Type	Facility Type	Facility Count	Infant (0-24 months)	Preschool (2-5 year old)	Total Spaces	Infant (0-24 months)	Preschool (2-5 year old)	Total Enrolment
Designated	For Profit	Full-time Centre	297	1,611	8,485	10,096	1,283	6,804	8,088
		Part-time Centre	8	0	126	126	0	15	15
	Non Profit	Full-time Centre	102	526	3,494	4,020	337	2,289	2,627
		Part-time Centre	17	0	324	324	0	10	10
		Home	94	163	294	457	79	285	364
Total Designated			518	2,300	12,723	15,023	1,699	9,403	11,104

The table below provides the current status of preschool child care spaces in New Brunswick.

Data as of Sept 1st, 2021				Spaces in Centres			Enrolment		
Designation	Business Type	Facility Type	Facility Count	Infant (0-24 months)	Preschool (2-5 year old)	Total Spaces	Infant (0-24 months)	Preschool (2-5 year old)	Total Enrolment
Non Designated	For Profit	Full-time Centre	20	23	395	418	17	219	236
		Part-time Centre	14	0	245	245	0	13	13
	Non Profit	Full-time Centre	11	9	271	280	2	73	75
		Part-time Centre	6	0	121	121	0	15	15
		Home	29	38	102	140	18	67	84
Total Non-Designated			80	70	1,134	1,204	37	387	423

³ Some preschool aged children are 5 years old depending on if their birthdates fall before the beginning of the school year in September, at which point they would become Kindergarten children and be classified as "school aged".

⁴ *Licensing Regulation – Early Childhood Services Act*. New Brunswick. January 2018. [Licensing Early Childhood Services Act \(gnb.ca\)](http://www.gnb.ca)

The table below provides the current breakdown of preschool child care facilities and spaces in New Brunswick (Data as of September 1, 2021).

Business Type	Facility Type	Facility Count	Infant (0-24 months)	Preschool (2-5 year old)	Total Spaces
Designated For-Profit	Centres	305	1,611	8,611	10,222
Designated Not-For-Profit	Centres and Homes	213	689	4,112	4,801
Not Designated Licensed For-Profit	Centres	34	23	640	663
Not Designated Licensed Not-For-Profit	Centres and Homes	46	47	494	541

The legislated adult to child ratios determines the number of ECEs required in the facility. In 2008, the *Be Ready for Success* 10-year strategy announced the implementation of *New Brunswick's Early Learning and Care Curriculum Framework* and the *Curriculum éducatif Services de garde francophone du Nouveau-Brunswick*. Through guidelines, all regulated preschool services are required to fully implement the curriculum. Through legislation, all educators working with preschool age children must complete training on one of the two provincial curricula.

NEW BRUNSWICK'S EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE FUNDING MODEL

New Brunswick offers operational funding in four (4) main envelopes: subsidies for parents, wage enhancements for educators, the Inclusion Support Program, and the designated facilities operational grants. New Brunswick only provides this funding to licensed facilities.

- 1 The Parent Subsidy Program provides financial relief to eligible parents on an income tested sliding scale. It has two components. The first is the Daycare Assistance Program (DAP) for children birth to age twelve (12) who are registered in a non-designated facility. The Daycare Assistance Program is available for families with a net annual family income of \$55,000 or less in licensed, undesignated early learning and child care. The second component is the Designated Facilities Parent Subsidy Program for children birth to age five (5) who are enrolled in a designated facility. The Parent Subsidy Program is available for families who are either working, in a training or education program or have a special circumstance with a gross annual household income of \$80,000 or less or whose expenses for child care services are more than 20% of their gross annual household income.
- 2 The Wage Enhancement Program provides funding to operators to help offset the salaries of ECEs. It currently provides a top up of \$3.15/hour for an educator without recognized formal training and \$7.25/hour for an educator with college or university training. This program is offered to all licensed facilities who must provide this wage top up over and above the minimum wage which is currently at \$11.75/hour.
- 3 The Inclusion Support Program funds the salary of an inclusion support worker to an operator for children with a disability or complex needs who require one-on-one supervision to fully participate in the early learning and child care program. The child's abilities and autonomy level along with pertinent medical details help to determine the eligibility for this funding. A preschool aged child accepted the program has an Inclusion Support Worker for 35 hours per week. This Inclusion Support Worker is not included in the adult to child ratio in the program.
- 4 The Designated Facilities Operational Grants help to offset the costs of quality and affordable child care. The details are described in the following section.

MANAGEMENT OF THE EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE SYSTEM IN NEW BRUNSWICK

Over the last four (4) years, New Brunswick has moved toward a more publicly managed and privately delivered early learning and child care system through the New Brunswick Early Learning facility Designation Program and the Child Care Registry.

SUMMARY OF THE DESIGNATION OF NEW BRUNSWICK EARLY LEARNING CENTRES AND HOMES

The New Brunswick Early Learning Centre or New Brunswick Early Learning Home is a designation that is given to licensed early learning and child care facilities that offer services to children aged five (5) and under, prior to school entry through a voluntary application process. The designated New Brunswick Early Learning Centres and Early Learning Homes commit to work in collaboration with government to offer equitable and affordable access to higher quality early learning and child care services by removing barriers linked to family income, children's ability and needs, language, and minority settings. This is accompanied by on-going operational funding for preschool services and improved parent subsidies.

The New Brunswick Early Learning Centres Program focuses on the four goals of the Action Plan, which are to improve quality, accessibility, affordability and inclusion. 518 of 598 facilities are currently designated. The provincial goal is having all eligible centres and homes designated by December 2022.

In creating a quality system as opposed to multiple programs, New Brunswick's Designation Program ensures that children, parents and operators all benefit. Children benefit from overall improved quality services, including inclusive practices for children with additional needs and social inclusion of cultural minority groups. Parents benefit from a low-fee policy that makes child care more affordable and accessible. The Designation Program further includes a Market Fee Threshold which controls the fees that an operator can charge parents. The New Brunswick Early Learning Centres benefit from greater support for educators in delivering higher quality programming.

The designated New Brunswick Early Learning facilities are obligated to follow the low-fee-policy to ensure affordable services for all New Brunswick families accessing these centres. This is established through a subsidized fee grid, with particular attention to families with an annual family income of less than \$80,000. Families with an annual family income of less than \$37,500 receive free child care. These subsidy levels are based on a sliding scale (between \$37,501 and \$80,000 gross family income), which considers child care fees, number of children aged five and under, prior to school entry and annual gross family income. Families do not pay more than 20% of gross annual family income for all child care costs.

In order to be eligible for designation as a New Brunswick Early Learning Centre or home, licensed facility must meet the following eligibility criteria: 1) be in compliance with legislation and program policy of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development that are conditions of their licensing; 2) offer services for preschool children prior to school entry; and 3) choose and implement one of the curriculum frameworks: the *New Brunswick Curriculum Framework for Early Learning and Child Care* (English) or *Curriculum éducatif - Services de garde francophones du Nouveau-Brunswick* (French). Facilities are required to deliver services in the language of the chosen curriculum framework and ensure that their staff is trained in that curriculum framework.

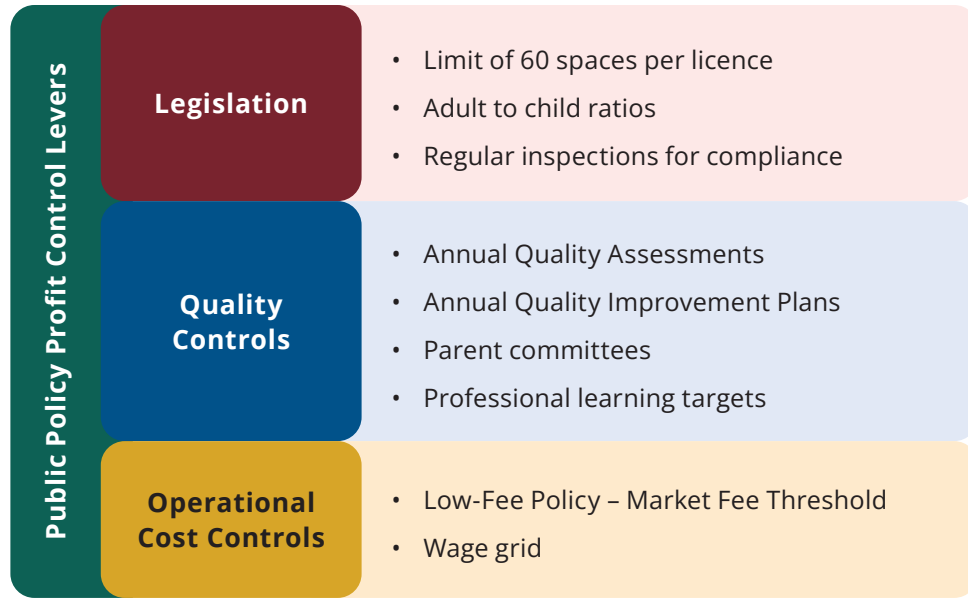
The designated New Brunswick Early Learning Centres and Homes must commit to work in collaboration with government to offer equitable and affordable access to higher quality early learning and child care services by removing barriers linked to family income, children's ability and needs, language, and minority settings. In return, on-going monthly operational funding is provided for each occupied preschool space. In addition, low- and middle-income parents who have enrolled their child in a designated facility have access to an improved parent subsidy program.

New Brunswick has successfully increased its public management of early learning and child care with policy levers to limit profit making and increase quality learning investment.

The New Brunswick Early Learning facilities are required to meet the following quality criteria:

- Commit to implementing the low-fee policy through a subsidized fee grid, with particular attention to low- and middle-income families.

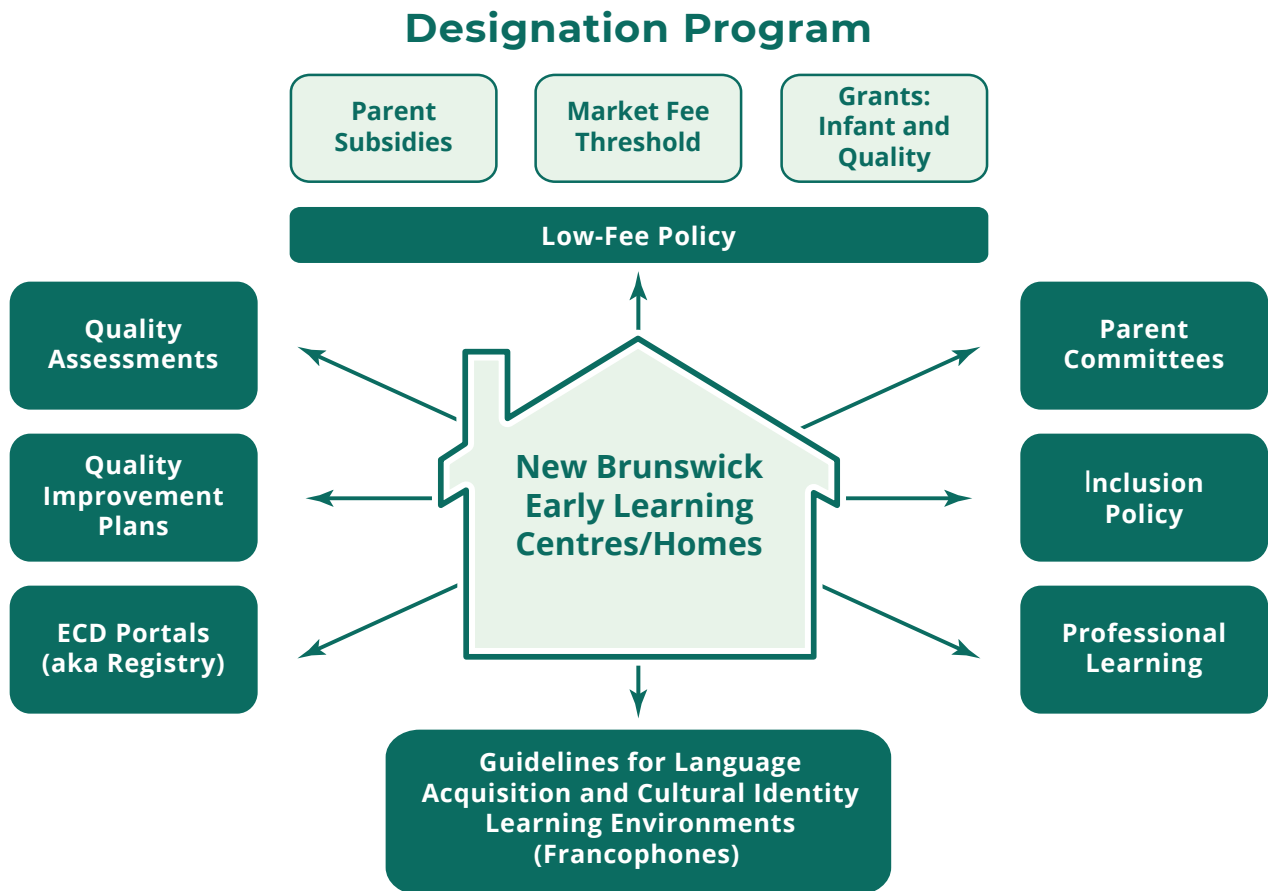
- Agree to operate within the Market Fee Threshold policy.
- Work with the department to investigate ways to provide more infant and toddler spaces.
- Improve their capacity to serve all children including those with disabilities and diverse needs through the implementation of inclusive policy and practices.
- Create annual quality improvement plans.
- Actively participate in communities of practice and engage in on-going professional learning.
- Work with government on data sharing to inform public policy.



LOW-FEE-POLICY

A key element to the low-fee policy is to ensure that parents can afford the early learning and child care they need to contribute to the economy of the province while ensuring the viability of services. There are three components under the Low-Fee-Policy: 1) Operational funding; 2) Market Fee Threshold and 3) Parent subsidies.

5 Operational Funding



Designated New Brunswick Early Learning Facilities must meet quality requirements beyond the legislation. The **operational funding** is provided to these facilities to offset associated costs of designation, support their quality improvement plan and to maintain infant spaces. This monthly operational grant is intended to increase the quality of care without driving up the cost to parents.

All designated facilities receive an operational grant of \$2.50 per enrolled preschool space each day. However, to help offset the higher cost of providing infant care in centres, the New Brunswick Early Learning Centres receive an operational grant of \$10.00 per enrolled infant space (0-24 months) per day.

6 Market Fee Threshold policy

The **Market Fee Threshold** is a tool that limits fee increases for Designated Facilities. The fee grid is based on the average fees charged by facilities and includes the impacts of the cost of living. It is a predictable fee grid for families, and it brings greater consistency across the province in the management of child care fees.

The Market Fee Threshold sets a provincial fee grid within which operators can manage their fees. When a new facility opens, they cannot set their fees above the Market Fee Threshold. Operators of existing facilities are not permitted to increase their fees to parents if their current fees are at or above the Market Fee Threshold.

7 Parent Subsidy

The **Designated Centre – Parent subsidy** is a financial support program provided by the Government of New Brunswick for low and middle-income families to help offset the costs of child care.

The New Brunswick Early Learning Centre - Parent Subsidy results in three outcomes: 1) No family in New Brunswick will pay more than 20% of their gross annual household income to cover early learning child care costs while their child attends a New Brunswick Early Learning Centre or Home; 2) Free child care for preschool aged children for eligible families with a gross annual household income under \$37,500, regardless of the location and fee charged by the operator, and 3) a sliding scale for families with gross annual income between \$37,501 and \$80,000. The maximum subsidy is \$36.90/day for infant spaces and \$31.20/day for preschool spaces and the minimum subsidy is approximately \$5/day for infant spaces and \$4.25/day for preschool spaces.

INCLUSION

In 2021, New Brunswick enshrined inclusion in early learning and child care by amending its *Early Childhood Services Act*. All New Brunswick Early Learning Centres are required to implement an inclusion policy as part of the designation requirements. As such, a designated centre must describe how inclusive practices are implemented within the centre and ensure it is included in the Parent and Personnel Manuals.

For the purpose of the designated New Brunswick Early Learning Centres, inclusion means that facilities are fully accessible and welcoming to all children and their families, regardless of race, religion, age, linguistic heritage, social and economic status, gender or ability. Children are entitled to inclusion in everyday activities and routines within the facility.

Inclusive early learning and child care facilities must promote the access (all children are welcome; nothing hinders the enrolment of a child in any program); ensure meaningful participation (all children can fully participate; relationships are fostered); and provide support (services, training and supports are provided to meet the needs of all children).

In addition, the province provides additional funding on a case by case basis for the wages of an Inclusion Support Worker to provide one-on-one supports for children who otherwise would not be able to fully participate in early learning and child care.

QUALITY ASSESSMENTS AND IMPROVEMENT PLANS

As part of the Designation Program, New Brunswick Early Learning Facilities must participate in annual quality assessments conducted by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. This assessment is used by the operator to develop their annual quality improvement plan. The goal is to drive the culture of continuously quality improvement of services offered to preschool age children and their families. If the quality assessment is not deemed satisfactory, the province can withhold operational funding. If the non-compliance continues, a facility's designation status can be removed.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Professional learning opportunities for ECEs and operators is provided in the form of seminars, workshops, communities of practice support, mentoring, resource sharing and on-site demonstrations of leading practices.

Early Childhood Educators are required to complete a minimum of 30 hours of professional development on pedagogical practices and standards of care over a three-year period as part of the Designation Program requirements.

GUIDELINES FOR LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND CULTURAL IDENTITY IN LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

The guidelines for language acquisition and cultural identity in learning environments are tools for educators to provide proven teaching practices in language development and cultural identity for preschool aged children living in linguistic minority communities. The designated francophone New Brunswick Early Learning Centres and Homes are required to implement these guidelines to help protect and promote the francophone and Acadian language and culture. This initiative supports the commitments made by francophone community leaders through the *Linguistic and Cultural Development Policy (Politique d'aménagement linguistique et culturel)*.

PARENT COMMITTEE

All New Brunswick Early Learning Centre operators are required to establish and maintain a Parent Committee within the first year of operation. The New Brunswick Early Learning Centre Parent Committees provide parents, operators and educators an opportunity to build collaborative partnerships to enhance positive learning experiences for all children and families. The Parent Committee consists of parents/guardians or family members who have children attending the designated centre.

The engagement of parents is an important component of the Designation Program as they have a primary role in ensuring the well-being and positive development of their children. The purpose of the committee is to extend and deepen the relationship between parents and centres, and to enhance the experience of each child by providing continuity between centre and family experiences.

DATA SHARING

As a designated facility, an operator must commit to provide relevant data to the province under the *Early Childhood Services Act*. To enable this process, New Brunswick has created an online Operator Portal which is set up to facilitate the exchange of information between designated facility operators and the province as part of the Child Care Registry. The data provided by the operator, such as enrollment and space availability, is used for the purposes of processing funding allocations to facilities by the province, providing parents with access to space availability and to inform public policy.

SUMMARY OF THE CHILD CARE REGISTRY

New Brunswick has designed a digital tool to facilitate the public management of its early learning and child care system. The components of the Registry which are currently active are as follows:

- An Operator Portal as a digital solution to facilitate the interactions between operators and government and used to manage funding to operators. Operators report monthly on the occupancy and vacancy of their spaces. This information is used to inform parents of availability of spaces.

- A Parent Portal designed to support parents in accessing child care services that best meet their family needs. The portal is a search engine that provides information on all regulated services including inspection reports and space availability. Soon, parents will be able to enroll their child in a facility or be added to a wait list.
- An Educator Portal is a tool where educators register their credentials for both their formal training and professional development hours. This is used to determine the wage enhancement for each individual educator based on their credentials.

The use of the Child Care Registry by operators is prescribed in legislation, and it is the only method for operators to receive the funding offered by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Through the Registry, New Brunswick will further develop a strategic approach to space creation and will be able to identify the communities with the greatest needs to ensure greater public management of child care services.

Investments from the Canada-Wide Agreement will be building on the transformation of the child care system and success New Brunswick has had in the last four (4) years with the designation program. The New Brunswick Early Learning Centres and Homes designation showcases higher quality early learning and greater access for all families with children aged five (5) and under, prior to school entry. It is a key initiative that supports parents' workforce participation, particularly that of women and provides quality early learning experiences for young children.

New Brunswick's priorities and investments – Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement in FY 2021-2022 and FY 2022-2023⁵

This Action Plan outlines New Brunswick's commitments and targets. Its implementation will require consultations across the province with parents, partners, and stakeholders. The outcomes of the consultations may result in required adjustments to the Action Plan to ensure it meets the needs of New Brunswick families. Discussions with the Government of Canada Implementation Committee will be held if the implementation needs to be adjusted to reflect the realities of the system over the course of the 2021-2026 Canada-Wide ELCC Agreement.

All designated facilities are eligible for funding under the Canada-Wide Agreement. The Designation Program is voluntary, and operator driven. Existing facilities that are not designated can choose to become designated. Only designated facilities are eligible for the funding for reduction in parent fees and for new space creation. Funding for professional development will be prioritized for educators in designated facilities. New Brunswick will support all licensed facilities in the development of their inclusion policies, but support will be prioritized for designated facilities.

ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

The key elements of quality child care services include a knowledgeable, experienced and caring workforce with training in early childhood development; a stable workforce by providing adequate wages and working conditions for child care staff which will avoid disruption for children; well designed programs capable of meeting the needs of all children; and strong partnerships with parents.

While parents have the ultimate responsibility for their children, community groups, volunteer organizations and employers can make an important contribution in creating supportive environments for families and young children through early learning and child care. Communities must continue to play an important role in identifying and addressing the unique needs of their families and young children.

To facilitate and drive key strategic initiatives, New Brunswick will engage its partners, key stakeholders, and Indigenous government and communities in critical dialogue to strengthen collective actions towards a common goal. The results of the ongoing engagement will provide guidance on the transformation of the early learning and child care system in New Brunswick to better meet the needs of children and their families. This will guide collaborative transformation of the system through capacity building and systemic change to ensure success.

PRIORITY #1: AFFORDABILITY

2022-2023: \$55,000,000

In 2017, New Brunswick set out to transform its early learning and child care system to increase quality and become more accessible and affordable over time, for all families and children, through a robust public policy framework. Providing access to quality early childhood education improves social and cognitive skills of children and contributes to their future success. Reducing out of pocket parent fees for early learning and child care will allow more parents to return to the workforce and will increase female labour participation. This leads to a reduction of income inequality and an improvement in children's educational opportunities.

⁵ A summary of the indicators and targets for the 2021-2023 Action Plan is outlined in Appendix A

The Market Fee Threshold is a tool that provides the limits allowed for fee increases for designated facilities. The fee grid is based on the average fees charged by facilities and factors in the cost of living. It is a predictable fee grid for families and creates greater consistency across the province in the management of child care fees.

The Market Fee Threshold sets a provincial fee grid within which operators can manage their fees. However, when fees in a facility are at or above the Market Fee Threshold, the operator is not permitted to increase their fees to parents. A new facility opening cannot set their fees above the Market Fee Threshold.

The table below provides the current Market Fee Threshold (May 2021 - April 2024) and represents a provincial average of \$35.66 for daily parent fees for full time equivalent spaces (the provincial average for 2019 was \$33.25).

		Infant	Two-year-old	Preschool
Large Urban	Full Day	\$41.30	\$36.70	\$35.00
	Part Day	\$31.00	\$27.50	\$26.30
Small Urban and Rural⁶	Full Day	\$37.10	\$32.60	\$31.30
	Part Day	\$27.80	\$24.50	\$23.50

New Brunswick supports low- and middle-income families with the Daycare Assistance Program and the designated facility Parent Subsidy Program. The Parent Subsidy Program is available for families with a gross annual household income of \$80,000 or less or whose expenses for child care services are more than 20% of their gross annual household income. As of September 2021, 3,628 children were enrolled in the subsidy programs. Fifty-six per cent of these children (2,014) were receiving free child care. New Brunswick will continue to support low- to middle-income families with these subsidy programs.

New Brunswick commits to making early learning and child care more affordable by reducing the out of pocket fees for families enrolled in designated facilities by an average of 50% by December 2022. New Brunswick is in the process of finalizing a funding model that will enable more families to access quality child care. It will build on the current Low-Fee Policy for designated facilities which includes the Market Fee Threshold (guide for fee setting for Operators) and the Parent Subsidy Program which provides free child care for lower income families and a sliding scale subsidy for families with annual income between \$37,501 and \$80,000. By December 2022, average daily parent fees will be reduced by 50%. Over 11,000 New Brunswick families will see a reduction of approximately \$3,000 per year in their early learning and child care fees.

Table 1: Reduction in Parent Fees

	Indicators	Targets
2021-2022	Average daily parental out-of-pocket fee for designated child care spaces in March 2022.	No fee reduction
2022-2023	Average daily parental out-of-pocket fee for designated child care spaces in December 2022	50% reduction in average parent fees

New Brunswick’s model will be finalized following consultations with parents, partners, and key stakeholders. New Brunswick commits to reaching an average of \$10/day child care fees by March 2026 with a particular focus for low- and middle-income families.

By December 2022, a standardized provincial parent fee grid will guide the fees charged to parents by operators. The reduction of the out of pocket expenses for parents will be financially supported by two methods: 1) low- and

⁶ Small Urban is defined as an area consisting of one or more neighbouring municipalities situated around a core with a total population of at least 10,000. The surrounding area for urban small is defined as 25km from the core in all directions. Rural includes all territory lying outside population centres (large urban and small urban). This is the area that remains after the delineation of population centres using current census population data.

middle-income families will continue to benefit from additional financial aid through the incomes tested parent program, with some parents getting free child care and adjusted, partial subsidy, and 2) grants to operators to offset the reduction of out of pocket funding from parents.

PRIORITY #2: ACCESS

2021-2022 \$4,000,000/2022-2023 \$17,200,000

The New Brunswick *Early Childhood Services Act* has two (2) classes of licences. These are the Early Learning Centre and the New Brunswick Early Learning Home. These two (2) classes of licences can apply for a voluntary designation status if they offer a higher quality of services to preschool children aged five (5) and under prior to school entry. New Brunswick has laid the foundation through this Designation Program to drive quality results for children’s optimal development and for parents’ labour force participation. To that end, New Brunswick established a public policy framework that focuses on enhancing quality of services, better supporting, and better informing parents through affordable early learning and child care and supporting a more qualified workforce.

New Brunswick’s early learning and child care system is, and has traditionally been, composed of 68 % for-profit spaces and 32% not for-profit spaces. Based on recommendations from national and international research on quality early learning, New Brunswick created a Designation Program to ensure the application of best practices across all facility types. The approach is to instill a culture of continuous quality improvement ensuring early childhood education for young children and bringing greater consistency across the province.

All designated facilities must adhere to the following quality criteria no matter their business type:

- Apply the low-fee-policy which includes a parent fee control
- Implement an inclusive policy
- Have a parent committee focused on working together to support children’s learning
- Ensure their educators commit to ongoing professional learning
- Undergo annual quality assessments
- Develop SMART goals to guide their annual Quality Improvement Plans
- Work with government on data sharing to inform public policy



Through this comprehensive approach to early learning, New Brunswick has been successful in transforming its early learning and child care system in both the not-for-profit and for-profit facilities with a focus on improving quality. Typically, research points to lower educator wages and higher cost to parents in for-profit services. However, this is not the reality in New Brunswick. When comparing not-for-profit and for-profit facilities, the differences between the average educator wage and the average parent fee is negligible. This demonstrates a shift in the for-profit facilities that aligns with the social entrepreneurship mindset and focuses on the importance of social objectives. The Designation Program has also supported the for-profit facilities and enabled them to strike a balance between affordable access and to high-quality early learning and profitable business.

Early Learning and Child Care preschool spaces coverage in New Brunswick is currently 47%. The largest gaps are spaces in rural communities and infant spaces. 16% of New Brunswick communities have less than 25% coverage for children ages five (5) years and under, prior to school entry. The majority of these low coverage areas are rural communities. Many rural communities in New Brunswick have a higher level of seasonal employment which can have an impact on the demand for services. New Brunswick is committed to creating new spaces in rural communities and will consult on ways to best serve these communities’ unique needs.

Investments will support the creation of spaces for vulnerable children and children from diverse populations, including but not limited to children living in low income; Indigenous children; Black and other racialized children; children of newcomers to Canada, and official language minorities.

New Brunswick is taking a multi-pronged approach to meet the objectives of increasing quality and to ensure the responsible management of public funds. To achieve this, New Brunswick will create an additional 3,400 new child care spaces in the designated system over the five (5) years of this agreement, including 500 spaces in the first two years of this agreement. In creating these spaces, New Brunswick commits that:

- 2,400 of these spaces will be created in not-for-profit and home-based child care providers within the New Brunswick Early Learning facility designation.
- 1,000 of these spaces will be created in for-profit child care centers within the New Brunswick Early Learning facility designation.

While creating these spaces, the province commits to:

- Look at ways of supporting the voluntary transition of for-profit facilities into the not-for-profit model.
- Conduct a research study in 2022-2023 to identify barriers and potential strategies to foster greater not-for-profit participation in the publicly managed system and include potential options in the next Action Plan.
- Have regular discussions with the Government of Canada on the evolution of the designation process in ensuring the responsible management of public funds.

In addition, New Brunswick will aim to maximize the utilization of current existing child care spaces, by providing adequate funding to fill at least 2,000 currently unoccupied spaces in designated centres and homes.

Notwithstanding efforts to focus space creation predominantly in not-for-profit and home-based child care providers, should New Brunswick see a demonstrated need to create more than 1,000 spaces in the for-profit sector to better meet the needs of New Brunswick families, New Brunswick will bring forward a plan to create additional spaces in the for-profit sector to the Implementation Committee for discussion, for Canada and New Brunswick to agree on a path forward.

New Brunswick will create 3,400 new spaces for the population of children ages five (5) years and under, prior to school entry by 2025-2026. The creation of these new spaces will have a particular focus on the greatest areas of needs such as infant spaces, rural communities, and vulnerable children, as determined by the results of the engagement process. New Brunswick will increase access to high-quality, affordable child care spaces by:

- Focusing on leveraging existing vacant spaces and will engage parents and stakeholders in identifying areas of greatest need for growth and establish a space creation strategy.
- Exploring leveraging the flexibility within Early Learning Homes.
- Exploring innovative solutions to modernize space creation, which meets the unique needs of New Brunswick.
- Exploring options on how to support a network of New Brunswick Early Learning Centres and Homes and expand the delivery of quality child care for infants, flexible hours, access in rural New Brunswick and other needs identified in the engagement process.



- Providing an operational grant to operators in 2021-2022 to support the efforts of operators in maximizing quality measures within the New Brunswick Designation Program.
- Using capital funding to provide start-up grants to support not-for-profit space creation.

Table 2: Space Creation

	Indicators	Targets
2021-2022	Capital Funding and Operational Grants	518 operational grants
2022-2023	Number of net new spaces created Capital Funding	Filling 2,000 currently unoccupied spaces Creating 500 new spaces Providing 10 start-up grants to support not-for-profit creation

PRIORITY #3: INCLUSION

2022-2023: \$2,900,000

New Brunswick is a leader when it comes to inclusive practices in its public-school systems and has received national recognition and international accolades. Legislated requirements ensure all early learning and child care facilities provide all children and families with an inclusive environment that is respectful of diversity in regard to race, colour, religion, national origin, ancestry, place of origin, age, disability, real or perceived sexual orientation and/or gender identity, sex, social condition or political belief or activity.

New Brunswick’s legislation requires that operators develop and implement an inclusion policy. The policy must indicate how the operator will create an environment at the facility that supports, reflects and promotes equitable and inclusive practices to ensure that services are responsive to the needs, values and cultural beliefs of the families using the services. Inclusive early learning and child care centres must promote the access, meaningful participation, and support for all children throughout their policy. The process of developing a policy allows operators and educators to continually reflect and consider practices that demonstrate value for inclusion and diversity. Once completed, the inclusion policy must be signed by the operator and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development’s representative. A centre’s inclusion plan is to be reviewed regularly and revised if necessary.

The basic criteria for inclusion policy requirements are:

- Review background information on inclusion and diversity
- Written inclusion policy details how the designated centre promotes access, meaningful participation, and support
- Inclusion policy is articulated in the Parent Handbook
- Inclusion policy is articulated in personnel policy documents (all staff know the policy and how it is being implemented)
- The *Inclusion Support Program Guide* has been completed and is available for review by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development’s representative
- The *Supporting All Children* document has been completed, and is referenced in the Parent Handbook and personnel policy documents

A facility’s inclusion policy is required in the parent manual and the personnel manual in order to obtain the designation status. These same facilities also access monthly operational funding for their preschool spaces to help offset the cost associated with the increase quality requirement of the Designation Program.

New Brunswick continues to support inclusion for children with disabilities through its Inclusion Support Program which provides funding to operators for the salary of an Inclusion Support Worker who works one-on-one with children. The eligibility of children is determined based on an assessment of the child’s abilities, complex needs and mobility challenges.

New Brunswick will continue to build upon the actions outlined in the 2021-2025 Bilateral Agreement which includes implementing a provincial early years’ inclusion policy and supporting designated facilities to incorporate inclusive practices into their early learning environments.⁷ These initiatives were built in collaboration with New Brunswick Association for Community Living (NBACL), a not for profit organization. Over the last ten (10) years, NBACL was contracted to deliver professional learning on inclusion with ECEs. More recently, NBACL was retained to support all designated facilities in creating their inclusion policy and the creation of webinars to support educators and inclusion support staff.

Inclusion includes individualized and targeted support for the child. The principles of inclusion and diversity in early learning and child care are embedded within the province’s anglophone and francophone distinct early learning and child care curriculum frameworks. New Brunswick is building capacity within its early learning and child care sector to ensure that ECEs have the inclusion support training and tools they need for building inclusive practices for all children. Inclusion support workers and ECEs are trained via a series of three online webinars. This training includes a more comprehensive definition of inclusion, core concepts and best practices. In addition, early childhood teams within school districts coach the staff in Early Learning and Child Care Centres in the field to identify solutions and implement best practices for inclusion in their facilities.

New Brunswick will explore ways to continue to further remove barriers to an equitable access for vulnerable children and children from diverse populations to high quality affordable early learning as an equalizer to create engaged and well-prepared young learners. Vulnerable children and children from diverse populations include, but are not limited to, lower-income families, Indigenous families, lone-parent families, and families in underserved communities, including Black and racialized families; families of children with disabilities and children needing enhanced or individual supports; and families with caregivers who are working non-standard hours.

New Brunswick will do this by developing and funding a plan to enhance or improve inclusion of children with disabilities and children needing enhanced or individual supports by:

- Exploring funding for full-time quality early learning and child care for four (4) year old children from low income families or families who would not otherwise have access. In this prototype New Brunswick will fund 100 spaces annually for children starting in 2022-2023. This may include children’s tuition fees, transportation and additional ECEs.
- Improving access to enhanced or individual supports for children with complex needs, with mobility and self-care limits, where warranted, who are participating in early learning and child care. New Brunswick will increase the number of available seats for children who need one-on-one care by 31 additional spaces in 2022-2023, bringing the total number of spaces up to 140 across the province. New Brunswick will add an additional 32 spaces under the 2023-2026 Action Plan to bring the total number of spaces up to 172 by 2025-2026.
- Addressing the challenges for the recruitment and retention of the inclusion support workers.
- New Brunswick will collaborate with First Nations organizations and communities to better understand their needs and establish a plan for early learning and child care services for Indigenous children.

Table 3 : Enhancing Inclusion

	Indicators	Targets
2021-2022	-	-
2022-2023	Number of children participating in the low-income prototype Number of additional children in the Inclusion Support Program	100 four (4) year old children from low-income families or families who would not otherwise have access 31 new children in the Inclusion Support Program. This includes the cost of hiring additional Inclusion Support Workers.

⁷ Additional information on inclusion and diversity in early learning and child care in New Brunswick is outlined in Appendix B.

PRIORITY #4: QUALITY
2022-2023: \$23,000,000

STRENGTHENING OUR WORKFORCE

Over the last decade, the work of ECEs has shifted significantly from a care and safety role to an educational role. Responsibilities related to the development and learning of young children are framed in the early learning and child care curriculum frameworks and require an increased knowledge of child development and special needs, as well as the behavioural and teaching skills to support all children in their development and educational journey.

It is critical that New Brunswick has trained staff to deliver the services necessary to achieve the targets outlined in the priority areas of investment. New Brunswick will focus on building upon the training and leadership pathways set out in the 2021 *ECE Workforce Strategy Action Plan*, as outlined in the Canada-New Brunswick Early Childhood Workforce Funding Agreement (2021-2022) as part of the Canada-New Brunswick Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (2021-2025). New Brunswick commits to enhancing recruitment, retention and training of the ECE workforce.

Recruitment and Retention:

It is imperative that New Brunswick has a strong workforce to provide high quality and accessible services to families. The recruitment and retention of ECEs in New Brunswick is a significant challenge and the workforce turnover rate is trending up. The pandemic has added to this challenge placing the turnover rate in early learning and child care at almost 40% over the last year, up from 27% in 2019-2020. Results of an operator survey on recruitment and retention of ECEs in late October 2021 revealed that by the end of November 2021, this sector was expected to lose around 25% of its workforce. The majority of educators have left the sector for higher paying jobs and/or jobs with less demand on their personal time. Furthermore, operators have indicated the need to close groups within their licensed facility and send the children from these groups home due to staffing shortages.



Operators indicated that it would take more than four (4) weeks to hire an educator.

Wages play an important role in the recruitment and retention of qualified staff. The 2020 *Early Childhood Education Report*⁸ includes 21 benchmarks used to evaluate the quality of early learning and child care in Canada. This report indicates that salaries of ECEs should be at least 2/3 of teachers' salary as a quality benchmark in the learning environment. While wages are an important component of the recruitment and retention of ECEs in New Brunswick, other factors, such as, professional recognition, working conditions, health and pension benefits, and hours of work contribute to a positive working environment for educators. This was confirmed during a consultation with educators earlier in 2021.

The current wage baseline (including any wage enhancements, top-ups and/or supplements) for ECEs in New Brunswick is:

	Minimum Base Wage	Average Wage September 2021
Trained Primary ECE - preschool	\$19.00/hr	\$19.92/hr
Entry Level Primary ECE - preschool	\$14.90/hr	\$15.60/hr

New Brunswick will continue to provide this minimum base hourly wage until the implementation of the ECE wage grid.

⁸ Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development. (2020). *Early Childhood Education Report*. Retrieved from: [Home | Early Childhood Education Report \(ecereport.ca\)](https://www.ecereport.ca)

New Brunswick will explore ways to improve ECE recruitment and retention by:

- Developing and implementing an ECE wage grid that will support the recruitment and retention of qualified educators and attract others to the profession no later than 2022-2023. This wage grid will be based on levels of training and steps and recognizes years of experience. This grid will be regularly updated.
- Increasing operational funding to assist with the daily costs associated with running an early learning child care facility and increasing the wages of ECEs in facilities participating in the Designation Program.
- Exploring an ECE retention strategy in consultation with the early learning and child care sector.
- Building upon the mechanism for recognition of qualifications for ECEs who completed their training outside of Canada to facilitate recruitment of new Canadians ensuring that they can fully benefit from the wage supports and contribute to the ECE workforce gap.
- Exploring ways to fast track immigration for individuals wanting to work in the early learning and child care sector.
- Expanding the access to more high school students to the *Introduction to Early Childhood Education* online course offered as part of the Experiential Learning Program in anglophone and francophone public high schools as a method to recruit ECEs.

Training:

The quality of early childhood education is highly dependent on the level of training of the educator. As an educator, understanding how children develop and learn is critical to supporting children's overall development and well-being. Educators with more formal education and specialised early childhood education training provide more stimulating, purposeful, and supportive interactions with children that are age appropriate. Additionally, on-going professional learning has been identified as one of the strongest predictors of process quality, which in turn has been demonstrated to positively influence children's emerging literacy and numeracy skills, as well as their behavioral and social skills.

As a result of the Early Childhood Educator Workforce Strategy, New Brunswick provides training opportunities for educators. By the end of 2023, EECD will support 500 educators in their completion of their one-year Early Childhood Education Certificate through the micro credentialling program and the work-study integrated program. Educators in designated facilities are also required to complete 30 hours of professional development every three (3) years. New Brunswick invests \$500,000 annually on professional development for educators.

New Brunswick commits to improving training for ECEs by:

- Developing and implementing a robust, comprehensive professional learning plan that will support ECE in upgrading their skills, knowledge, and practices. To achieve this, New Brunswick will continue to build on the 2021-2025 Early Learning and Child Care Bilateral Agreement and the 2021 ECE Workforce Strategy and support ECE through the innovative training models, the ECE Career Growth and Development Program and the Emergent Leaders Institute.
- Annual spending for training and professional development will increase in proportion to the increase in regulated child care spaces and the number of ECEs.
- Building on the ECE Workforce Strategy, New Brunswick commits to increasing the percentage of trained educators to 60% from the current level of 49% by 2025-2026. This represents 376 educators and home operators receiving training by 2025-2026.
- Committing to working with the ECE workforce to identify pedagogical tools and supports needed to deliver high quality, inclusive early education and maximizing learning and care for vulnerable children.
- Exploring standards of practice for ECEs on pedagogical approaches and practices to deliver high quality, inclusive early learning.
- Extending access to the innovative "Early Childhood Education" training for ECEs in collaboration with the New Brunswick Community College and the College Communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick.

Table 4: Recruitment, Retention and Training

	Indicators	Targets
2021-2022	-	-
2022-2023	Number of ECEs receiving wage increases in accordance with the new wage grid operational funding to operators	2,600 ECEs receive wage increase

PRIORITY #5: REPORTING

2021-2022: \$1,600,000/ 2022-2023: \$8,200,000

New Brunswick has modernized its data collection and management framework through its Operator, Parent and Educator Portals (Registry) in the legislative framework. These Portals have become the cornerstone of interactions between the child care operations and government. The *Early Childhood Services Act* was amended in the Spring of 2021 to allow the province to collect specific information from parents and operators. The expansion of the data collected will require legislative amendments.

New Brunswick commits to providing relevant and accessible data on an annual basis and report publicly. New Brunswick currently collects data from operators and parents through the Registry.⁹

New Brunswick commits to further exploring data collection methods leveraging the Registry with New Brunswick Institute for Research Data and Training (NBIRD) and the ability to conduct an annual census. New Brunswick will also hold consultations with key stakeholders, and partners, including parents and early learning and child care operators to identify data that can be collected and the preferred methods for collecting the requested data. New Brunswick collects data on provincially licensed facilities and spaces located in Indigenous communities, however no additional data will be collected on Indigenous children without consultation and approval from the Indigenous community.



⁹ Additional information on data collected from operators and parents through the Registry is outlined in Appendix C.

Funding

ADMINISTRATIVE FUNDING

The Canada-Wide ELCC Agreement provides for administrative funding of up to 10% of the maximum annual allocation to support costs incurred by New Brunswick to support the growth, expansion, implementation, and administration of the Canada Wide-ELCC Agreement. Administrative Funding for fiscal year 2021-2022 will be identified as follows: 46% in addressing staffing costs to deliver on the commitments, and 54% for engagement of stakeholders. For 2022-2023, approximately 50% for exploring innovative solutions to modernize space creation and support a network of New Brunswick Early Learning Centres and Homes, 40% of funding in addressing staffing costs and 10% for program and policy development, system enhancements, program implementation and development, engagement with partners and development of a communications strategy.



Table 5: Administrative Funding

	Investments
2021-2022	\$1,600,000
2022-2023	\$8,242,605
Total	\$9,842,605

FEDERAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND PROPOSED ALLOCATIONS

Year	National allocation
2021-2022	\$ 55,832,325
2022-2023	\$ 82,426,051
2023-2024	\$ 100,457,038
2024-2025	\$ 116,347,013
2025-2026	\$ 136,814,840
Total	\$ 491,877,267

The federal contribution will be allocated to the following priorities:

Federal Allocation (millions)	55.8	82.4	5-year Total: 491,8
Affordability			
Reduce out of pocket expenses for parents on average by 50% by December 2022	50.2	31.1	Parents will see an annual saving close to \$3,000
Further reduce parent fees to an average of \$10/ day by 2025-2026	-	-	TBD
Access			
Increase number of licensed child care spaces to reach 59% coverage (target of 3,475 new spaces)	-	8.8	Provides a net new 3,400 preschool spaces (90% occupancy) - 3,060 funded spaces
Provide greater access for parents to funded child care by bolstering enrollment in existing licensed, unoccupied spaces	-	7.4	Fund an additional 2,349 spaces
Inclusion			
Fund a plan to enhance inclusion of children with disabilities –self-care and mobility challenges	-	1.7	Add seats for one-on-one supports
Fund access for vulnerable children to quality early learning	-	1.2	Fund the access for 100 4-y.o. who would not have access to child care otherwise
Quality			
Increase % of educators who meet training requirements	-	-	Provide 395 seats for ECE working in a licensed preschool centre
Implement a wage grid for ECE	-	23.0	Increase wages for trained ECE from \$19/ hour to \$23.47hour – untrained ECE from \$14.90 to \$16.79
Create capital funding and operating grants	4.0	1.0	Provide operational grants and start-up grants
Administration Costs	1.6	8.2	
TOTAL	55.8	82.4	

Appendix A: Summary of indicators and targets 2021-2023

Indicators	Baseline					TARGETS	
						2021-2022	2022-2023
Total number of ELCC spaces available during the Fiscal Year - broken down by age groups of child and type of setting	Infant spaces: 2,370 Preschool spaces: 13,857 816 part-time spaces (2-5-year olds) For-profit Infant spaces: 1,634 For-profit preschool spaces: 8,880 For-profit PT preschool spaces: 371 Not-for-profit infant spaces: 535 Not-for-profit preschool spaces: 3,765 Not-for-profit PT preschool spaces: 445 Home Infant spaces: 201 Home preschool spaces: 396					No change	Fill 2000 unoccupied spaces Create 500 new spaces
Total number of inclusive (as defined in Section 2.1.1) spaces created/converted – broken down by age group of child and type of setting	109 preschool aged children in the program					No change	144 preschool aged children in the program
Average daily parental out-of-pocket fee for regulated child care spaces at the end of each Fiscal Year, including at the beginning of 2021-22 and at the end of 2022			Infant	Two-year-old	Preschool	No change	To be determined – 50% reduction
	Large Urban	Full Day	\$41.30	\$36.70	\$35.00		
		Part Day	\$31.00	\$27.50	\$26.30		
	Small Urban and Rural	Full Day	\$37.10	\$32.60	\$31.30		
		Part Day	\$27.80	\$24.50	\$23.50		
Number of children under age six receiving fee subsidies, broken down by families receiving partial and full subsidies	Total 3,628 children: 2,014 receiving free child care and 1,614 partially subsidized					No change	4,000 total: 2,250 free 1,750 partially subsidized
Number and proportion of children under age six in flexible regulated ELCC arrangements and 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)	20 facilities (14 centres and 6 homes) – 124 infant spaces – 395 preschool spaces Large urban – 87 infants – 278 preschool Small urban/ Rural – 37 infants – 117 preschool					Not available	Not available
Number of children under age six with disabilities and children needing enhanced or individual supports that are in regulated ELCC spaces	Identified children – 109 children in the program					No change	31 additional children receiving support taking the total number of spaces up to 140
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	27% (142/518)					35% (182/518)	47% (244/518)

Indicators	Baseline			TARGETS	
				2021-2022	2022-2023
Number of provincially licensed facilities and spaces located in indigenous communities	Facilities: 6 Infant spaces: 9 Preschool spaces: 182			No change	No change
Number of racialized children, including Black children under age six in regulated ELCC spaces;	Not collected			Not collected	Not collected
Number and percentage of staff working in regulated child care programs in NB who fully meet the NB certification/educational requirements	As of September 1st, 2021			No change	No change
	Training Status	Count	%		
	Trained Educators	1730	49		
	Untrained Educators	1780	51		
Annual public expenditure on training and professional development of the early childhood workforce	\$500,000 annual spending on professional development \$900,000 tuition reimbursement for college certificate in early childhood education			No change	No change
Wages of the early childhood workforce according to the categories of certification, including any wage enhancements, top-ups and/or supplements		Base Wage	September 2021	No change	To be determined
	Trained Primary ECE - preschool	\$19/hr	\$19.92/hr		
	Entry Level Primary ECE - preschool	\$14.90/hr	\$15.60/hr		

Appendix B: Inclusion and diversity in early learning and child care in New Brunswick

New Brunswick is a leader when it comes to inclusive practices in its public-school systems and has received national recognition and international accolades. The New Brunswick school system values inclusion through a philosophy and set of educational practices that enable each student to feel valued, confident, supported and secure so that they can reach their full potential. This is achieved in school communities that support diversity and ensure the well-being and quality of learning of each of their members for their best interest. The implementation of inclusion with trained teachers, educational aids, and other interveners to meet the unique needs of children whether it be physical, psychological, language, cultural, etc. is crucial. Collaborative practices between parents, community and school are those that have been successful and allow the system to foster a quality education for every child regardless of ability, race, gender, religion, socio-economic status.



In the spirit of this movement, there has been a long-standing collaboration between government and the New Brunswick Association for Community Living (NBACL) in supporting inclusion practices in child care. Over the last ten (10) years, NBACL was contracted to deliver professional learning on inclusion with ECEs. More recently, NBACL was retained to support all designated facilities in creating their inclusion policy.

In 2021, New Brunswick began the course to moving inclusion and diversity from policy to practice. To that end, the *Early Childhood Services Act* was amended to include inclusion and diversity in legislation (Section 18.1). Legislated requirements ensure all early learning and child care facilities provide all children and families with an inclusive environment that is respectful of diversity in regard to race, colour, religion, national origin, ancestry, place of origin, age, disability, real or perceived sexual orientation and/or gender identity, sex, social condition or political belief or activity. In addition, the legislation requires that operators develop and implement an inclusion policy. The policy must indicate how the operator will create an environment at the facility that supports, reflects, and promotes equitable and inclusive practices to ensure that services are responsive to the needs, values and cultural beliefs of the families using the services. Inclusion policies are required in the parent manual and the personnel manual in order to obtain the designation status. These same facilities also access monthly operational funding for their preschool spaces to help offset the cost associated with the increased quality requirements of designation.

The intent of inclusion and diversity in early learning and child care facilities is embedded within the two early learning and child care curriculum frameworks as described in the following paragraphs:

In 2009, New Brunswick launched its world class early learning and child care curriculum frameworks anchored in the vision that “all children will grow to their fullest potential with dignity, a sense of self-worth, and a zest for living and learning.” The holistic vision of diversity embedded in the anglophone curriculum honours the right of every child to participate fully regardless of language, culture, race, religion, socioeconomic status, gender, or ability. It is a natural step to expand inclusion to our youngest citizens so that it becomes inherent on how they see the world and building a stronger, more inclusive province, for all our children to live in.

The francophone curriculum framework promotes the holistic, dynamic, and harmonious development of children from birth to five years of age, taking into account both their needs as unique beings and as social beings. The use of an eclectic pedagogical approach is designed to meet the needs of all children from birth to age five, including children with different abilities and children needing enhanced or individual supports. This approach includes five main components: an environment that is conducive to the holistic, dynamic, and harmonious development of young children, the role of the educator, supportive strategies, cultural and linguistic identity building, and respect and diversity.

In addition, the province continues to support inclusion for children with disabilities through its *Inclusion Support Program* which provides funding to operators for the salary of an Inclusion Support Worker who works one-on-one with children. The eligibility of children is determined based on an assessment of the child's abilities, complex needs, and mobility challenges.

Appendix C: Data collected through the registry

From operators:

- Name of the facility
- Name of the operator, the administrator or both
- Whether the operator is an individual, corporation, unincorporated association, partnership, or limited partnership
- Email address of the operator
- The physical and mailing address of the facility
- Language in which services are provided
- License number or facility identification number and the expiry date of the license
- School district within which the facility is located
- Age groups of children who may receive services
- Days and months of operation
- Extended hour services and overnight services offered, if applicable
- The curriculum framework in use, if applicable
- Whether meals are provided
- Whether transportation is provided
- Maximum number of children who may receive services and the number of available spaces by age group
- The designation status

From parents:

- The names of the child and the child's parents or guardians
- The gender and date of birth of the child
- The addresses of the child and the child's parents or guardians and the living arrangements of the child
- The e-mail address and telephone number of the child's parents or guardians
- The preferred official language of communication of the child's parents or guardians
- The places of work of the child's parents or guardians
- The names of individuals authorized by the child's parents or guardians to pick up the child
- The number of days per week that services are required
- Emergency contacts for the child, including names, addresses and telephone numbers
- Special requirements of the child, including activity and dietary restrictions, if applicable
- The school that the child attends, if applicable
- Allergies of the child, if applicable
- The name, address, and telephone number of the medical practitioner of the child, if applicable
- The medical history of the child
- Ongoing medical treatment of the child, if applicable
- Child care history
- Child development details
- Likes and dislikes of the child and suggestions to facilitate the transition to the facility

