

Backgrounder

CANADA–SASKATCHEWAN EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE AGREEMENT

On June 12, 2017, the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers Responsible for Early Learning and Child Care signed a Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework. This is a significant milestone in which governments agree to work together to address some of the key early learning and child care issues across the country.

Governments will work towards achieving the shared long-term vision of the Framework where all children across Canada can experience the enriching environment of quality early learning and child care. They have committed to increase the quality, accessibility, affordability, flexibility and inclusivity of early learning and child care with consideration for families that need child care the most.

The implementation of this framework, and a separate Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework to be co-developed with Indigenous peoples, is supported by federal investments announced in Budgets 2016 and 2017 totalling \$7.5 billion over 11 years. Through bilateral agreements, the Government of Canada will provide provinces and territories with \$1.2 billion over three years to address unique early learning and child care needs and allocate funding for each jurisdiction.

The governments of Canada and Saskatchewan have signed an early learning and child care bilateral agreement. Through this three-year bilateral agreement, the Government of Saskatchewan will receive just over \$41 million for investments towards accessibility, inclusivity and quality.

By the end of the three-year agreement, this funding will:

- improve access to quality child care for Saskatchewan families by creating 1,500 new group and family child care home spaces and 1,015 new licensed child care centre spaces;
- support inclusion in early learning programming for children who require intensive supports by creating early learning pilots for preschool aged children. It is expected that at least 220 preschool-aged children who experience significant disability will be provided new early learning opportunities;
- increase minority language inclusion by targeting 65 licensed child care centre spaces, of the 1,015, for Francophone children; and
- enhance early learning and child care experiences for children in licensed child care by increasing quality through:
 - training approximately 300 early childhood educators, 115 licensed family child care home providers and 188 child care centre directors to support the growth of the licensed child care sector;
 - enhancing the early learning environments of child care centres and licensed family child care homes by implementing *Play and Exploration: Early Learning Program Guide*, supporting 16,000 children across the licensed child care sector;
 - supporting young children to be more physically active by providing one time grant to provide play-based, developmentally appropriate programs in licensed child care centres and licensed child care homes; and
 - supporting improved literacy skills among preschool-aged children by targeting opportunities for children with limited access to early learning programs.