

Nova Scotia's Early Childhood Development Initiative & Multilateral Framework on Early Learning & Child Care

Annual Report 2003 - 2004



Our Children... Today's Investment, Tomorrow's Promise

Nova Scotia's Early Childhood Development Initiative & Multilateral Framework on Early Learning & Child Care

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Letter from the Minister

It is my pleasure to present the 2003 – 2004 report on Nova Scotia's Early Childhood Development Initiative and the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care.

In September 2000, federal, provincial and territorial First Ministers released a *Communiqué on Early Childhood Development*. As a signatory to the Communiqué and in recognition of the importance of the early years, Nova Scotia is committed to investing in an early childhood development system. The following four pillars were identified to the provinces as areas for investment:

- Promote healthy pregnancy, birth and infancy
- Improve parenting and family supports
- Strengthen early childhood development, learning and care
- Strengthen community supports

In response to the Communiqué, Nova Scotia developed *Our Children... Today's Investment, Tomorrow's Promise* (2001). This document detailed components that lay the foundation for the system of early childhood development.

Building upon the September 2000, *First Ministers Communiqué on Early Childhood Development, the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care* was announced in March 2003. This federal, provincial, territorial framework commits First Ministers to improving access to affordable, quality, provincially regulated early learning and child care programs and services and to also conducting evaluation in this area. Therefore, this annual report provides a picture of both the provincial and federal activities in the early childhood development system within Nova Scotia.

It is hoped that these and future early childhood initiatives will lead to the development of an integrated, quality early childhood system in Nova Scotia. This system will build on current services and weave together a range of new and existing services for children in the early years. Nova Scotia acknowledges the importance of the federal contribution as it moves forward in enhancing provincial programs and supports for our youngest citizens and their families.

This annual report, for the year ending March 2004, provides a summary of new and expanded early childhood development programs and services within Nova Scotia as compared to those detailed in *Nova Scotia ECD Baseline Report* of 2002. It shows the investments in early childhood development programs and services over the baseline year. Also included with the program descriptions are findings of some preliminary assessments.



Some of the federal investments of this past year have included:

- More than \$3.8 million to recruit and retain qualified early childhood educators working in licensed child care centres
- Over \$2.6 million in grants for inclusion of children with special needs in order to ensure that infants and young children with special needs are fully included in community-based child care programs
- \$1 million in grants to assist early childhood training institutions in creating additional professional development opportunities
- Over \$700,000 for Early Language and Learning initiatives, including hiring more speech-language pathologists and offering additional early language and learning supports.

By 2006, Nova Scotia will have received over \$78 million in investments inclusive of the initial Early Childhood Development Initiative and Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care in addition to already established provincial commitments. This funding will enable a strong and successful system of supports for Nova Scotia's children and their families.

Sincerely,



Hon. David M. Morse
Minister of Community Services



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Early Childhood Development Communiqué and Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care

The Early Childhood Development Agreements

The Government of Nova Scotia is pleased to present its 2003 – 2004 annual report on the Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI) and Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC). In the Early Childhood Development Communiqué, the Governments of Canada (federal, provincial and territorial), recognized the importance of early childhood development in young children's current and future health and wellness:

First Ministers affirm their commitment to the well-being of children by setting out their vision of early childhood development as an investment in the future of Canada. Canada's future, social vitality and economic prosperity depend on the opportunities that are provided to children today.

In support of the Agreement, the Government of Canada is transferring \$2.2 billion to provincial and territorial governments for investment in early childhood development (ECD) programs and services for children from birth to six years of age. Funding for ECDI began on April 1, 2001, with the planned allocation to Nova Scotia of \$66 million over the course of the five-year period. The financial allocation under this agreement for 2003 – 2004 was \$15.1 million, for a total investment of just over \$36 million since the agreement began.

In addition, the announcement of the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care will result in an allocation of \$30,497,000 to Nova Scotia, over the period of March 2003 – 2004 to March 2007 – 2008. These funds enhance already existing early childhood development child care priorities that address quality, accessibility and inclusion.



Nova Scotia's Early Childhood Development System

Together with combined federal/provincial resources and provincial programs and services, and in conjunction with families and members of the early childhood community, a system can be created that is:

- Comprehensive
- Integrated
- Accessible
- Inclusive
- High quality
- Accountable
- Community-based
- Respectful of diversity and regional variation

Infrastructure supports are required to facilitate the development of a comprehensive early childhood development system. These include:

- Formal mechanisms to facilitate stakeholder input in both the planning and implementation of programs, in fostering community ownership, and in the collaboration and integration of initiatives
- Information-systems development
- Development of monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes



Investing in the Early Years

A number of factors create the rationale for investing in the early years. First, substantial research exists confirming that the early years in a child's life are vital to their overall life experience. The early years lay the foundation for lifelong determinants of health and well-being, including learning readiness, secure attachment and identity, social engagement, competence and active living.

Second, meeting a growing and diverse economy's needs for a highly skilled and knowledgeable workforce necessitates investing in children during their early years to ensure that Nova Scotia is well-positioned to compete nationally and globally.

Third, our economies and communities are changing. An increase in part-time employment is changing family dynamics. We also know that 70 per cent of Nova Scotian mothers with young children work outside the home. Furthermore, family structures are also changing, with increasing numbers of single-parent families lacking support of extended families.

Parents are recognized as the primary caregivers of their children and play a vital role in their child's early development. Others outside the family also play important educating, nurturing and supporting roles. In fact, research indicates that community cohesiveness is a factor contributing to child health and well-being and thus the needs of young children can no longer be regarded solely as the private responsibility of their parents. New policies and programs targeted to families and children must provide children with opportunities to be as healthy and secure as possible. They must reflect the increasing pressures on families, and current realities of family life.

Program Implementation

The following sections of the annual report provide an overview of the progress made on Nova Scotia's ECDI from April 2003 to March 2004 in each area of priority:

- Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting Initiative
- Enhanced Parenting and Family Supports
- Stabilizing and Enhancing Child Care
- Community Engagement and Infrastructure Support

Fiscal year 2003 – 2004, is the first year of ELCC funding. All ELCC funding (total of \$747,800) was allotted in the area of Stabilizing and Enhancing Child Care and more specifically the Part-Day Child Care Centre – Material and Resources Grant to Promote Physical Activity and the Inclusion of Children with Special Needs. These funding choices reflect the principles of quality, inclusion and accessibility as outlined in the *Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care*.



Description of preliminary ECD findings are also included, as well as a summary of grant investments. In terms of program indicators, the province has outlined its evaluation framework in its document *Nova Scotia's Early Childhood Development Initiative Evaluation Framework 2004*.

The evaluation framework will accomplish the following objectives:

- Establish a common understanding of the vision and guiding principles under which Nova Scotia's ECDI and ELCC operate
- Identify the ECDI program components, associated objectives and expected impacts as a basis for measurement
- Identify the users and purposes of evaluation studies
- Identify the key evaluation questions
- Identify data collection requirements and responsibilities
- Provide an initial perspective on options for planning evaluation studies, accountability and reporting

To date, certain initiatives have begun the development and/or implementation of evaluation frameworks.



Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting Initiative

represents Nova Scotia's investment with respect
to pillar one of the *First Ministers' Meeting
Communiqué on Early Childhood Development:*
Promote Healthy Pregnancy, Birth & Infancy



Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting Initiative

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Launch date: June 2002 | • Funding: |
| • Target population: Families who may benefit from additional support | 2001 – 2002: \$417,340 (ECDI) |
| • Delivery agents: Public Health Services | 2002 – 2003: \$3,582,660 (ECDI) |
| • Lead Department:
Nova Scotia Department of Health | 2003 – 2004: \$3,000,000 (ECDI) |
| | • Funding for this initiative has fluctuated due to a delay in its original launch |

There is growing evidence of the importance of the early years. Experiences during these early days, months and years lay the foundation for lifelong health and well-being. The Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting Initiative is an enhancement to current Public Health Services postnatal programs and services. Public Health Services, through this ECD program, are providing home visiting supports to families facing challenges, for the first three years of their child's life. This may also include referrals to other health and community resources.

Research indicates that the majority of parents, including all economic groups and cultures, find parenting challenging and are open to additional parenting support. Many circumstances such as age, geographic isolation, level of education, limited family or community support and low income may place an additional burden on families. This has been shown to affect parents' confidence, parenting skills and ability to support their child's optimal health and development.

Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting Initiative Goals

The goals of Healthy Beginnings (in conjunction with existing Public Health Services prenatal and postnatal initiatives) are to:

- Enable pregnant women, their partners and their families to achieve a healthy pregnancy, optimal birth outcome and positive adaptation to parenting
- Promote the optimal level of physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development of all children in Nova Scotia
- Enhance the capacity of parents to support healthy child development
- Enhance the capacity of communities to support healthy child development
- Contribute to a coordinated, effective system of child development services and supports for children and their families



Strengthening Supports for Young Families in our Community

Public Health Services, in all Nova Scotia health districts, offer universal screening to families very early after birth, to identify families who may benefit from additional home visiting support.

Families identified through the screening process are offered a standardized, in-home, family centred assessment focusing on parent-child attachment, challenges facing the family (as identified by the family), current use of community resources and personal and professional support. The family assessment will help public health staff and families identify supportive interventions, such as enhanced home visiting.

The areas of focus for home visiting are promoting a healthy parent-child relationship, fostering healthy childhood development, and linking families with community resources that further enhance opportunities for the healthy growth and development of the baby and family as a whole.

Enhancing Quality of Service

There is growing evidence of the immediate and long-term benefits of secure parent-child attachment. As a result, there is a recognized need for public health staff to be able to assess and work with families to promote secure parent-child attachment. As a result, all Public Health Services staff working with families must be re-certified yearly to support this area. In addition, a provincial conference was held in November 2003, with a focus on caregiver characteristics associated with disorganized attachment and evidence-based intervention for attachment difficulties.

Additional professional development is offered at the local level to support identified staff competencies to support outcomes for this initiative. These include, but are not limited to competencies in screening/assessment, breast-feeding, mental health, growth and development, family violence and addictions.

Building Community Capacity to Support Healthy Child Development

A key component of Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting Initiative is the addition of community home visitors to support home visiting. Community home visitors will be selected based on their personal characteristics, skills, and interest in working with families facing challenges. Community home visitors provide emotional and practical family support, parenting information, general health information, referrals to partner organizations, assistance with family goal setting and achievement and parent role modeling. A comprehensive core training program and ongoing supervision/mentoring and education will support community home visitors as they support families in their communities.



Partnerships

To recognize unique community characteristics, strengths, and challenges, local implementation teams have been established to support the implementation and evaluation of Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting Initiative. Local implementation team members include family resource centres, maternity services, child protection and prevention services (Nova Scotia Department of Community Services), consumer representatives, mental health services, addiction services, child care centres and other community partners. Local implementation teams will be linked to Early Childhood Development Regional Collaboration Teams (see section “Community Engagement and Infrastructure Support,” p. 39).

Program Standards

Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting Initiative is an enhancement to current public-health programs for young families. Program standards have been developed for this initiative, building on existing standards and targets outlined in the document *Nova Scotia Health Standards*. Public Health Services, through District Health Authorities, are accountable to report on progress toward the provincially defined, population-based standards and targets annually.

Status Summary

Figure 1 provides a status summary of Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting Initiative activities from April 1, 2003 to March 31, 2004.



Figure 1:

Summary of Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting Initiative Activities from April 1, 2003 to March 31, 2004

Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting Initiative

Program Components	Status Summary
Recruitment	Recruitment of additional public health staff (professional and community home visitors) necessary to support the implementation of Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting Initiative has begun and District Health Authorities will continue to identify and recruit the complement of staff required over the next few years (phased-in funding).
Community Home Visitors	Implementation of the community home visitor component is planned for fall 2004. Provincial standards to support this component have been developed in collaboration with the Healthy Beginnings Provincial Steering Committee, local implementation teams and partners. The standards identify the role of the community home visitor, priority core training areas and the dimensions of effective support, supervision and coordination to support the community home visitor role (based on best and promising practice).
Implementation Teams	Many local implementation teams are entering into their second year of providing support for the implementation of Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting Initiative. Establishment of the remaining implementation teams is anticipated for fall 2004.
Information Technology	With the support of Information Technology Services, Nova Scotia Department of Health, Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting database is moving into the final stages of development. This database will provide information on the overall implementation of the initiative, and will assist Public Health Services with local planning and implementation.
Evaluation Framework	Development of the Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting Initiative evaluation framework has begun. The evaluation framework will be developed in collaboration with the Healthy Beginnings Provincial Steering Committee, Public Health Services, local implementation teams and partners. This will align with the overall evaluation framework for the Early Childhood Development Initiative.
Service Coordination and Referrals	The Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting Initiative will continue to contribute towards a coordinated system of early childhood development for Nova Scotia, through ongoing participation on the Provincial Early Childhood Development Project Management Committee.



Enhanced Parenting and Family Supports

represents Nova Scotia's investment with respect to pillar two of the *First Ministers' Meeting Communiqué on Early Childhood Development: Improve Parenting and Family Supports*



Enhanced Parenting and Family Supports

One of the priorities of early childhood development is to provide opportunities for parent education and create new support networks designed to meet the needs of both parents and caregivers in the community. This has been addressed by a number of different approaches, including enhanced Parent Education programs, Child Care Information and Support programs, Early Language and Learning initiatives and Enhanced Domestic Adoption services.

Enhanced Parenting and Family Supports Objectives

- To promote the development of healthy children
- To partner with communities in recognizing parents' roles in the healthy development of children
- To promote the early development of children's language and cognitive development by enhancing the capacities of parents and early childhood educators
- To increase the opportunity for children to have stable home environments through enhancements to adoption services



Parent Education

- Launch date: August 2003
- Target population: Parent Education is available in selected family resource centres to families who require additional support in raising healthy children
- Delivery agents: Family resource centres
- Lead Department: Nova Scotia Department of Community Services
- Program goal: To increase the capacity of family resource centres to deliver quality parent education programs
- Funding:
 - 2002 – 2003: \$261,000 (ECDI)
 - 2003 – 2004: \$10,000 (ECDI)

In Nova Scotia, family resource centres have been key partners in the delivery of prevention programs for families in need of additional support. In 2000 – 2001, the province provided funding to family resource centres in the amount of \$515,500. This funding increased in 2001 – 2002 to \$1,079,600. In 2002 – 2003, the province invested \$261,000 through the Early Childhood Development Initiative to build capacity in family resource centres to deliver quality parent education programming. Funding for Parent Education was disbursed in 2002 – 2003 and spent in 2003 – 2004. Note, Parent Education is referred in all budget summaries as “Family Resource and Parent Education” (see section “Summary of Grant Information” and “Appendices A to C”).

Parent Education is broadly defined as “programs, support services and resources offered to parents and caregivers that are designed to support them or increase their capacity and confidence in raising healthy children”¹. The support of community-based family resource centres is integral to the delivery of quality parent education programming. To date, 14 family resource centres in Nova Scotia received ECDI funding through the Parent Education and Support Grant.

Family resource centres have reported considerable increases in both the number of parent education programs offered and the number of parents participating in these programs. The funded centres have focused primarily on increasing/enhancing parent-child interactive programming, parenting support groups, parenting workshops and packaged parent education programs such as *Nobody’s Perfect* and *You Make the Difference*. Family resource centres have also used their funding to employ additional parent education program facilitators and to provide training in parent education program delivery to staff.



Child Care Information and Support

- Launch date: September 2002
- Target population: Parents, caregivers and members of the early childhood development sector
- Delivery agents: Non-profit, community-based resource programs who serve children from birth to six years of age
- Lead Department: Nova Scotia Department of Community Services
- Program goal: To enhance and improve the quality and accessibility of a range of child care options for families
- Funding:
 - 2002 – 2003: \$450,000 (ECDI)
 - 2003 – 2004: \$650,000 (ECDI)

Child Care Information and Support (formerly referred to as Child Care Resource and Referral) grants have been provided to non-profit community-based agencies with a focus on resource programming and a mandate related to early childhood development. In 2002 – 2003, *10 Child Care Information and Support (CCIS) sites were established and in 2003 – 2004, an additional four CCIS programs were established for a total of 14 CCIS sites. In total, 13 non-profit community-based agencies have received CCIS grants.

The purpose of Child Care Information and Support (CCIS) programs is to:

- Enhance and improve the quality and accessibility of a range of early learning and child care options for families
- Support the development of early learning and child care services that provide local solutions to the unique needs of communities
- Establish and sustain collaboration with parents, child care providers and their communities
- Provide education/training and support to parents, caregivers and communities
- Provide information to parents and caregivers regarding the array of services for children and their families available within their communities

In this model, an individual with a background in early childhood education and experience in community development is employed to work, as a CCIS program coordinator, within the community to help to build its capacity and to support a range of early learning and child care options that respond to local needs. The continuum of services created over time supports parents and caregivers in their efforts to care for and educate young children and ensures that services offered to families are coordinated. CCIS programs are key to the development of a comprehensive early childhood development system.

* Note in last year's annual report, it was indicated that there were nine sites. In fact, there were nine grants of \$50,000 each; one grant was divided between two sites for a total of ten sites.



A Provincial CCIS Advisory Committee consists of government and community representation. It was established in May 2003 to provide information, support, and advice to the Nova Scotia Child Care Information and Support Program. The Committee's primary tasks were to develop a project guide to support program implementation, to devise networking and provincial training plans for CCIS program coordinators, and to develop both a reporting structure and evaluation framework for the program.

The implementation of the Child Care Information and Support program is well underway. A program coordinator has been hired in each of the sites and two networking opportunities have been provided by the Provincial CCIS Advisory Committee. A project guide was developed by the Provincial CCIS Advisory Committee and distributed to the program sites in March 2004. The development of the reporting structure and evaluation framework for the program has begun.

Child Care Information and Support programs across the province have been engaged in learning about their communities' values and beliefs about early childhood development, identifying the early childhood development programs and services available to families in their communities, networking with other CCIS program coordinators, collaborating with other groups and organizations interested/involved in early learning and child care, and coordinating parent and caregiver workshops.



Early Language and Learning

- Launch date: September 2002
- Target population: Early Language and Learning is available in selected family resource centres to families who require additional support in raising healthy children
- Delivery agents: Family resource centres
- Lead Department: Nova Scotia Department of Community Services
- Program goal: To assist communities in developing innovative programs that promote children's early language, emergent literacy and cognitive development
- Funding:
 - 2002 – 2003: \$567,500 (ECDI)
 - 2003 – 2004: \$727,500 (ECDI)

The Early Language and Learning (ELL) program is offered in 10 community-based family resource centres across the province, as in 2002 – 2003. The purpose of this initiative is to help communities develop innovative programs that promote children's early language, emergent literacy and cognitive development.

The ELL program consists of both a regional and local service-delivery approach. In 2002 – 2003, one family resource centre in each of the four regions (Central, Eastern, Northern and Western) of Nova Scotia was responsible for acquiring the services of a speech-language pathologist whose key role is to provide consultation and training to the staff in child care centres, family resource centres and early intervention programs, as well as, others who provide children's services. In 2003 – 2004, ECDI funding has allowed for the addition of one speech-language pathologist, three local grants and enhanced community outreach in four locations.

Family resource centres, which have received local grants, work in collaboration with the regional speech-language pathologist. Together they develop and deliver staff training programs that draw upon and integrate the approaches and expertise of a variety of disciplines within the early childhood development field, and incorporate best practices in early language promotion. Programming can include parent-education, child-development and/or parent-child interactive programs.

A Provincial ELL Advisory Committee was established to provide support and advice on the implementation of the program. The Committee's primary tasks were to develop a project guide to support program implementation, to assist in the development of a recruitment strategy for speech-language pathologists, to coordinate training opportunities for ELL program staff and to develop an evaluation framework for the program.



The implementation of the ELL program is progressing. Regional speech-language pathologists have provided training in *Learning Language and Loving It* to 64 practitioners from child care centres, early intervention programs and family resource centres, among others.

In June 2003, a symposium was held to mark the commencement of the ELL program. The principal theme of the symposium was *Why Language?* The Provincial ELL Advisory Committee developed a project guide to support centres in implementing their program plans and coordinated provincial training for 24 participants in the *You Make the Difference* parenting program. The development of an evaluation framework for the program has begun.

In summary, local grants have been used to develop language and literacy enhanced programming, to provide programming in under-served communities, to provide professional development opportunities for program staff, and to purchase resources to assist parents and early childhood educators in facilitating language and literacy development in children.



Enhanced Domestic Adoption

- Launch date: October 2003
 - Target population: Children in permanent care and custody
 - Delivery agents: To be determined
 - Lead Department: Nova Scotia Department of Community Services
 - Program goal: Increase the number of children in permanent care and custody placed for adoption
 - Funding:
 - *2002 – 2003: \$24,998 (ECDI)
 - 2003 – 2004: \$174,411 (ECDI)
- * The period of 2002 to 2003 was spent on program review

The fourth strategy in parenting and family support is the strengthening of Nova Scotia's provincial domestic adoption services. In 2003, the Province conducted a review of internal reports, and inter-jurisdictional research of adoption services and legislation. Based on this research, consultations will be conducted in 2004 and will focus on five key areas requiring improvements; provincial standards, service delivery, information technology, legal and recruitment/awareness strategies. The consultations will involve service-delivery agencies, the legal sector and identified community stakeholders to gain input for solutions.

Status Summary

Figure 2 provides a summary of Enhanced Parenting and Family Supports activities from April 1, 2003 to March 31, 2004.



Figure 2:

Summary of Enhanced Parenting and Family Supports Activities from April 1, 2003 to March 31, 2004

Enhanced Parenting and Family Supports

Program Components	Status Summary
Parent Education	To date, 14 family resource centres in Nova Scotia received ECDI funding through the Parent Education and Support Grant.
Child Care Information and Support (CCIS)	<p>In 2003 – 2004, an additional four CCIS sites were established. To date, there are a total of 14 CCIS sites administered by 13 non-profit community-based agencies with a mandate related to early childhood development.</p> <p>Provincial CCIS Advisory Committee established and CCIS program co-ordinators are in place. Two networking meetings have taken place. Development of project guide complete. CCIS sites implementing key components of the program. Development of CCIS reporting structure and evaluation framework has begun.</p>
Early Language and Learning (ELL)	<p>Provincial ELL Advisory Committee established. ELL program is offered in 10 community-based family resource centres across the province. In 2003 – 2004, funding was provided to an additional speech-language pathologist (for a total of five speech-language pathologists). There were also three local grants and enhanced community outreach in four locations.</p> <p>Regional speech-language pathologists have provided training in <i>Learning Language and Loving It</i> to 64 practitioners from child care centres, early intervention programs and family resource centres, among others.</p> <p>Symposium held. Provincial ELL Advisory Committee developed a project guide to support centres in implementing their program plans and coordinated provincial training for 24 participants in the <i>You Make the Difference</i> parenting program.</p>
Enhanced Domestic Adoption	To date, the conducting of a review of internal reports, inter-jurisdictional research of domestic adoption services and legislation has been completed as foundation for future consultation with the sector and community.



Stabilizing and Enhancing Child Care

represents Nova Scotia's investment with respect to pillar three of the *First Ministers' Meeting*

Communiqué on Early Childhood Development:

Strengthen Early Childhood Development, Learning and Care



Stabilizing and Enhancing Child Care

Research indicates that the quality of child care does have an effect on children's current and future development². Quality early learning and child-care programs have been shown to promote the development of physical, language, motor, social, emotional and cognitive skills. Children learn and grow when they are cared for in respectful, nurturing, responsive, and developmentally appropriate environments where adults relate to them as important individuals in their own right.

Stabilizing and Enhancing Child Care Objectives

- To promote the healthy development of children under six years of age by supporting and developing quality early learning and child care programs in Nova Scotia
- To stabilize and enhance the quality of licensed child care
- To support parents who need child care while they work or attend school or training programs by providing subsidies to offset the cost of licensed child care
- To promote that infants and young children are fully included in community-based child care programs and that staff are trained to best meet the needs of children with varying abilities
- To enhance and improve the quality and accessibility of a range of child care options for families in both rural and urban areas of Nova Scotia
- To further assist early childhood educators with opportunities for training, and access to information and support on child-related matters



Nova Scotia Child Care Stabilization Grant

- Launch date: November 2001
- Target population: Early childhood staff working in full-day, licensed child care facilities
- Delivery agents: Full-day, licensed child care facilities
- Lead Department: Nova Scotia Department of Community Services
- Program goal: Increased recruitment and retention of early childhood educators
- Funding:
 - 2001 – 2002: \$3,448,122 (ECDI)
 - 2002 – 2003: \$3,646,647 (ECDI)
 - 2003 – 2004: \$3,839,403 (ECDI)

The most critical factor inhibiting quality in the child care sector in Nova Scotia and the rest of Canada may likely be the challenges in attracting and retaining adequate numbers of trained and highly skilled staff. The Nova Scotia Child Care Stabilization Grant has increased annually due to the increase in the number of centres and associated staff who apply for the grant and the increase in the training level of staff.

In 2003 – 2004, a stabilization grant serving as a wage enhancement has been paid to early childhood staff in our 217 full-day, licensed child care facilities to help retain qualified and caring staff. As illustrated in figure 3, the number has steadily increased since the Nova Scotia Child Care Stabilization Grant launch in 2001, as has the number of full-time employed staff that received the grant.

Figure 3:

Number of Full-Day Child Care Facilities and Full-Time Employed Staff that Received the Nova Scotia Child Care Stabilization Grant

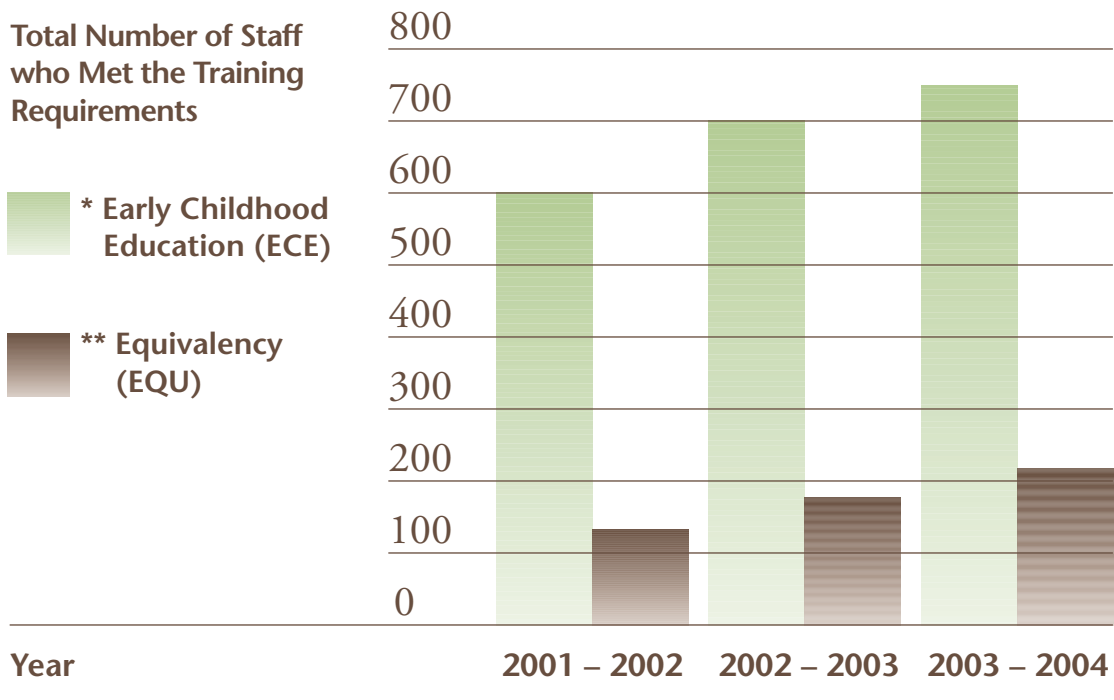
Year	2001 – 2002	2002 – 2003	2003 – 2004
Number of Full-Day Child Care Facilities that Received Nova Scotia Child Care Stabilization Grant	197	*210	217
Number of Full-Time Employed Staff that Received Nova Scotia Child Care Stabilization Grant	1,041	1,091	1,129

* Note: In the *Nova Scotia's Early Childhood Development Initiative Annual Report April 2003* a figure of 203 full-day, child care facilities was quoted. At the time of printing of this report not all of the full-day child care facilities had applied for funding for that fiscal year.



In March 2004, a Child Care Stabilization Grant Survey was distributed to child care facilities who had received the grant. Returns were at 85 per cent. Preliminary analysis demonstrates an increase in the level of training of early childhood staff from 2001 to 2004 (figure 4) and that the Nova Scotia Child Care Stabilization Grant has enhanced the salaries of early childhood educators.

Figure 4: Level of Training



As described in the *Early Childhood Education Training Requirements* (Nova Scotia Department of Community Services):

* “Training in early childhood education” refers to successful completion of an early childhood diploma or degree training program recognized by the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services.

** *Equivalency signifies that a person will be considered to have the equivalent of early childhood education if he or she completes all of the following requirements:*

- a. *Completion of Grade 12 or the equivalent (i.e., the General Education Development (GED) program);*
- b. *A minimum of two years’ full-time early childhood work experience in a licensed child care centre;*
- c. *Successful completion of a full credit course of two semesters from a university, community college or early childhood education training program in at least one of the following areas:*

- i. *human growth and development with an emphasis on the young child;*
- ii. *curriculum development and implementation of programs for young children in child care centres; and successful completion of 25 hours in training programs, seminars or workshops. The 25 hours of training programs, seminars, or workshops are completed in the area (either human growth or curriculum development) not completed in a course as noted above. Courses may be taken in both Human Growth and Development and Curriculum to meet requirements.*

Note: Workshops that are directly related to planning the child care curriculum are also offered at conferences. These workshops may be considered as meeting the requirements of equivalency (as stated above).



Early Childhood Education Training Initiative

- Launch date: November 2002
- Target population: Students studying for early childhood education and early childhood educators
- Delivery agents: Educational institutions and associated programs
- Lead Department: Nova Scotia Department of Community Services
- Program goal: To enhance knowledge/expertise of early childhood staff via the delivery of pre-service/in-service training in an accessible, affordable manner
- Funding:
 - 2002 – 2003: \$1,306,380 (ECDI)
 - 2003 – 2004: \$1,093,906 (ECDI)

The Early Childhood Development Initiative's Early Childhood Education Training Initiative began in 2002 and has provided opportunities for early childhood education pre-service and in-service training to educational institutions and associated programs. Additionally, bursaries were made available to students enrolled in a full-time or part-time two-year Early Childhood Education Diploma program.

In 2002 – 2003, seven educational institutions and two associated programs received an Early Childhood Education Training Initiative grant, and in 2003 – 2004, six educational institutions and one associated program received the grant. In 2002 – 2003, just over \$1.3 million enabled the provision of funds for capital expenditures in the development of early childhood development support sites/centres.

Grants were provided for in-service or professional development training of early childhood education staff currently working in the fields of child care, early intervention, family home child care, family resource centres and other related fields. Highlights of this Early Childhood Education Training Initiative are described below.

The Art Gallery of Nova Scotia created and delivered professional development art education activities for early childhood educators in conjunction with St. Joseph's College of Early Childhood Education. The goal was to support educators as they further developed and explored meaningful and informed art education curriculum in early childhood settings. Art curriculum resource kits were developed that can be borrowed from a number of locations throughout Nova Scotia. The text manual for the resource kits is also being translated into French. As well a thirty-hour course, entitled, *Art Education for Young Children*, has been made available for pre- and in-service students.

Le Centre provincial de ressources préscolaires (CPRPS) delivered two sets of workshops in Dartmouth. Participants attended from across the province. Workshop topics included examples such as: educational and practical tools to encourage French acquisition in an Acadian child care centre and relaxation techniques with young children.



Other CPRPS activities included several on-going early childhood education consultations and development of a newsletter. CPRPS also partnered with Université Sainte-Anne to create a new website (www.cprps.ca) that provided information on the organization's mission and history, and services and projects.

Université Sainte-Anne and Collège de l'Acadie collaborated on the development of six courses including: infant development; child development (preschool level); observation and evaluation; curriculum development; security in the child care setting; and health and nutrition. Early childhood education presentations were prepared along with public service announcements in local radio and newspapers. In addition, a website (www.ccfne.ns.ca/EPE) was created, providing information on admission to diploma programs and course descriptions.

The Institute for Human Services Education developed a flexible delivery model for part-time students completing the Early Childhood Education Diploma program in Cape Breton. Instructors from the Institute taught in Sydney. This eliminated the need for students to travel to Truro for 50 per cent of the classes. In addition, an Early Childhood Education Resource Centre in Cape Breton was established providing practitioners with a resource and support centre in their community that delivered a range of workshops and related programs.

Three Nova Scotia Community Colleges established Early Childhood Development Support Centres. This included Burridge Campus in Yarmouth; Kingstec Campus in Kentville; and Cumberland Campus in Springhill. These support centres have developed specialty libraries, a location for early childhood education workshops, plus an opportunity for various organizations and stakeholders in early childhood education to meet. A website for the support centres was also created (www.ecdsc.com). This includes resource library listings, newsletters, schedule of events, links and access to a community web forum.

In addition, in the fall of 2002, the Nova Scotia Community College, Burridge Campus launched the Early Childhood Studies Diploma through part-time evening studies to complement its day-time offering. With the inception of the Early Childhood Resource and Support Centres, the centre at Burridge has enhanced the evening part-time diploma that it offers. The success of this part-time program led Nova Scotia Community College to establish part-time offerings at Kingstec Campus and Cumberland Campus, and to develop a part-time and distance education online program to further ensure the accessibility of the Early Childhood Studies Diploma.

St. Joseph's College of Early Childhood Education developed a Student Support Service. This service provided academic and employment counselling support and community information and referral to students studying for the Early Childhood Education Diploma; creation and delivery of study skill workshops; along with the development of a number of customized early childhood education resources concerning academic and employment support. These were also made available on the College's website (www.stjosephsece.ns.ca).



The Resource Centre at St. Joseph’s College also provides an on-site service and an in-centre mentoring and professional development service. The specialized professional development activities included teacher discussion groups, in-centre staff development, individual consultation and specialized seminars. The latter included such topics as: becoming a reflective practitioner and supporting the learning of student teachers in your setting.

The Early Childhood Education Training Initiative allowed Mount Saint Vincent University’s Department of Child and Youth Study to provide a wide range of professional development opportunities for early childhood educators. Examples of workshops included: Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education and basic management development for early childhood educators. Further, required courses within the Bachelor of Applied Arts (Child and Youth Study) were delivered via distance education. Examples of these courses included: methods of teaching young children and play, recreation and development.

Additionally, in September 2003, a nine-month professional development program was initiated. Entitled, *Management Development for Early Childhood Education Administrators*, the course is designed as an alternative to a business degree for early childhood administrators, with or without prior university learning experience.

“If the program wasn't offered in Sydney, I wouldn't be able to do it. Travel to Truro with family and work commitments would make it very difficult to complete the program.”

Student registered in an Early Childhood Diploma Program, Extension Program, with the Institute for Human Services Education

“I enjoy talking with another professional who has a lot of experience, who gives another perspective on experiences, situations and feedback.”

Participant of an In-Centre Mentoring and Coaching Program, St. Joseph’s College of Early Childhood Education



Part-Day Child Care Centres – Material and Resources Grant to Promote Physical Activity

- Launch date: March 2004
- Target population: Part-day, licensed child care centres
- Delivery agents: Part-day, licensed child care centres
- Lead Department: Nova Scotia Department of Community Services
- Program goal: To enhance the level of physical activity programming in part-day, licensed child care centres
- Funding: (one time grant):
2003 – 2004: \$724,461 (ECDI: \$410,461; and ELCC: \$314,000)

A total of 126 part-day, licensed child care centres received one-time funding to purchase materials and resources that assist in the provision of increased physical activity programming. The grant was calculated based on a child care centre's licensed capacity for 2003 – 2004, in conjunction with their enrolment and attendance.

Early Childhood Development Services (Nova Scotia Department of Community Services) and the Sport and Recreation Division of the Nova Scotia Office of Health Promotion also developed a resource, *Active Living for Early Childhood*, for early childhood educators in conjunction with this grant. This resource encouraged child care staff to help young children lead an active lifestyle by providing suggestions and recommendations to assist staff in ensuring their programming incorporates physical activity.

The grant enabled centres to purchase equipment and resources that encouraged rapid movement, balance, coordination, reaction response, muscular strengthening, basic movement skills and fun. Examples included rhythm instruments, dance/movement videos, cushioned floor mats, streamer ribbons for rhythmic movement, velcro catch mitts and ball, wheeled toys, skipping ropes, and a variety of balls and beanbags.

“Thank you for all the toys and games you gave us. The money for the skipping ropes, the game twister, and the other games and toys, and ribbons.”

Eight-year-old child from a centre that received a Part-Day Child Care Centres – Material and Resources Grant to Promote Physical Activity



Child Care Subsidy Program and Portable Subsidy

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch dates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Child Care Subsidy Program</i>: Early 1970s - <i>Portable Subsidy</i>: July 2000 • Target population: Low-income families • Delivery agents: Nova Scotia Department of Community Services • Lead Department: Nova Scotia Department of Community Services • Program goal: To assist low-income families with their child care expenses to enable them to work, pursue employment, attend school, cope with family crisis, or families whose children have unique developmental needs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2000 – 2001 (baseline year): \$8,781,452 (provincial funds) 2001 – 2002: \$9,201,801 (provincial: \$9,055,141; and ECIDI: \$146,660) 2002 – 2003: \$9,030,522 (provincial: \$8,750,215; and ECIDI: \$280,307) 2003 – 2004: \$8,924,136 (provincial: \$8,468,775; and ECIDI: \$455,361) |
|--|---|

Child Care Subsidy Program and Portable Subsidy are referred in all the budget summaries as “Subsidy and Equipment Grants” (see section “Summary of Grant Information” and “Appendices A to C”). All provincial figures quoted above include the amount of funds expended for subsidy without the Equipment Grant. Funding for each year includes both the creation of additional subsidized child care spaces and the sustaining of previous year’s subsidized child care spaces.

The Child Care Subsidy Program has been in place in the Province of Nova Scotia since the early 1970s. Eligibility for the Child Care Subsidy Program is established by means of an application process that evaluates three primary areas of eligibility: social need, financial assets and family income.

In addition, the Child Care Subsidy Program also allows for portable subsidy. By definition, portable subsidy is attached to the child and may relocate with the family as needed. The primary stipulation is that the centre to which they wish to transfer is eligible to receive portable subsidy. Any licensed, full-day child care centre in the province that has signed the *Portable Subsidized Child Care Spaces Funding Agreement*, is eligible to receive a portable subsidy, if the family qualifies for the subsidy.

Figure 5 shows the number of portable subsidized child care spaces created from 2000 to 2004. A total of 50 portable subsidized child care spaces were created in 2003 – 2004. Though the total number of portable subsidized child care spaces created since July 2000 is 250 this figure, as of March 31, 2004, did increase to 280 portable subsidized child care spaces, due to the closure of child care centres where their allocated spaces became portable.



Figure 5:

Number of Portable Subsidized Child Care Spaces Created

Month and Year	Number of Portable Subsidized Child Care Spaces Created
July 2000	100
May 2001	50
June 2002	50
October 2003	50
Total Number of Portable Subsidized Child Care Spaces Created	250

Employment Support and Income Assistance Child Care

- Launch date: August 2001
- Target population: Employment Support and Income Assistance recipients
- Delivery agents: Nova Scotia Department of Community Services
- Lead Department: Nova Scotia Department of Community Services
- Program goal: To assist Employment Supports and Income Assistance recipients with child care expenses in their move towards employability and self-sufficiency
- Funding:
 - 2000 – 2001 (baseline year): \$899,591 (provincial funds)
 - 2001 – 2002: \$3,174,649 (provincial funds)
 - 2002 – 2003: \$5,013,506 (provincial: \$2,713,506; and ECIDI: \$2,300,000)
 - 2003 – 2004: \$5,177,950 (provincial: \$2,877,950; and ECIDI: \$2,300,000)

Child care costs have continued to increase in the Employment Support and Income Assistance (ESIA) program since 2000. The increase is a result of the implementation of the ESIA legislation that provides child care expenses to eligible recipients of ESIA to assist in their move towards self-sufficiency.

The ESIA program provided up to a maximum of \$400 for child care expenses under the ESIA special needs policy to an average of 1,630 cases (or families) per month in the fiscal year, 2003 – 2004.



Inclusion of Children with Special Needs

- Launch dates:
 - *Partnerships for Inclusion*: January 2003
 - *Building Blocks: Strategies for Inclusion Training Program*: September 2002
 - *Supported Child Care Funding (with enhanced federal funding)*: April 2001
- Target population: Licensed child care centres and early childhood educators
- Delivery agents for 2003 – 2004:
 - *Partnerships for Inclusion*: Early Intervention Association of Nova Scotia (EINS); SpecialLink: The National Centre for Child Care Inclusion; and University of Guelph
 - *Building Blocks: Strategies for Inclusion Training Program*: Progress Centre for Early Intervention
 - *Supported Child Care Funding*: Nova Scotia Department of Community Services
- Lead Department: Nova Scotia Department of Community Services
- Program goal: To build the capacity for licensed child care centres to be inclusive of children with special needs
- Funding:
 - 2000 – 2001 (baseline year): \$1,308,276 (provincial funds)
 - 2001 – 2002: \$1,865,388 (provincial: \$1,586,832; and ECDI: \$278,556)
 - 2002 – 2003: \$2,503,632 (provincial: \$1,308,276; and ECDI: \$1,195,356)
 - 2003 – 2004: \$2,602,829 (provincial: \$1,370,329; ECDI: \$798,700; and ELCC: \$433,800)

The overall objective of the initiatives funded under Inclusion of Children with Special Needs is to ensure that infants and young children with special needs are fully included in licensed community-based child care programs. There has been an incremental increase in funding for this program as we build on the foundation and include more children in more child care centres.

Funding provided under this Inclusion of Children with Special Needs is identified in all the budget summaries as “Inclusion/Differential” (see section “Summary of Grant Information” and “Appendices A to C”).

Three distinct approaches have been devised and implemented within this program area to provide comprehensive support to centres that include children with special needs. These are:

- Partnerships for Inclusion
- Building Blocks: Strategies for Inclusion Training Program
- Supported Child Care Funding



Including children with special needs in community-based child care programs is complex. Each of the children have different developmental needs, their families have different child care needs, the early childhood educators have needs specific to building their skill set, and the child care centres have needs specific to the administration of an inclusive child care program. Each of the three initiatives address these aspects of program delivery. Additionally, Partnerships for Inclusion and Building Blocks: Strategies for Inclusion Training Program have a research component to them.

Partnerships for Inclusion

ECDI and ELCC funds were provided in the form of a grant for Partnerships for Inclusion, a project in partnership with the Early Intervention Association of Nova Scotia (EINS) and Specialink: The National Centre for Child Care Inclusion. Data was collected and compiled through Specialink in collaboration with the University of Guelph.

The goal of the project is to promote high quality child care for all children in licensed early childhood environments, which would then provide the basis for successful inclusion for children with special needs. The premise is that high quality child care provides the foundation for high quality inclusive child care practice. This project is supported by a Provincial Advisory Committee and from 2002 to 2004, it has been offered in 44 licensed, child care centres throughout Nova Scotia (22 licensed child care centres in 2002 – 2003; and 22 licensed child care centres in 2003 – 2004).

Inclusion facilitators with early childhood education credentials were trained in the use of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R). Participating staff were also trained in ECERS-R as a part of the project. A baseline evaluation of the child care environment was completed by the facilitator using the ECERS-R. The facilitator worked with the centre staff to develop a collaborative action plan (CAP), which sets priorities and goals to improve or enhance the centre's environment, i.e., increase their score on the ECERS-R evaluation.

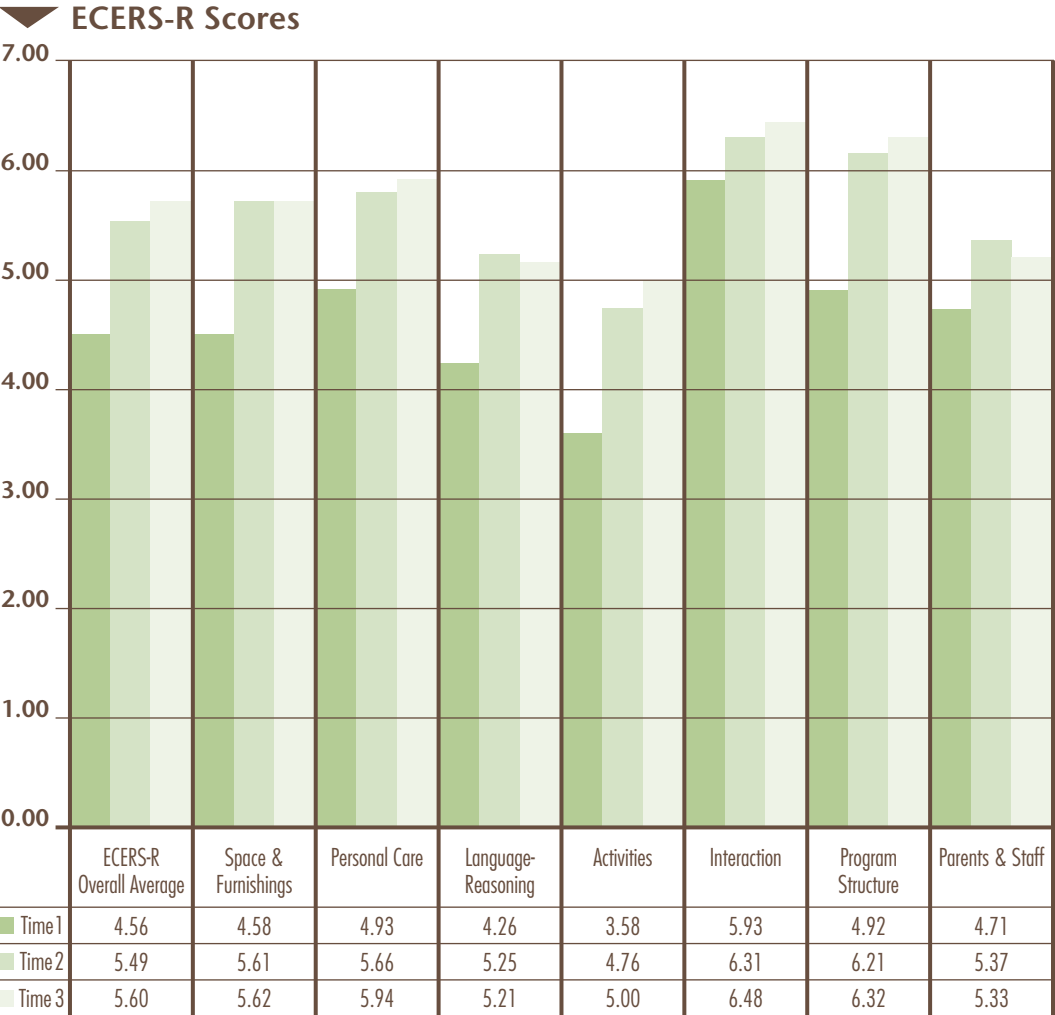
A second ECERS-R evaluation was conducted after approximately five months of on-site consultation to evaluate change. A third ECERS-R evaluation was conducted after a sustainability period (on-site consultation had ended) of approximately three to four months, to evaluate the centre's ability to sustain change.

Testing and retesting of the quality of child care using the assessment tool is conducted by Partnerships for Inclusion facilitators. The retesting that is conducted in this program assesses if program changes are sustained after the training is provided. Facilitators visited centres regularly to provide information and support through on-site consultation, workshops and resources.



Results to date have shown that this model of on-site consultation is effective in improving quality in early childhood environments. A total of 43 areas within the child care centre environment were scored from 1 to 7 (where 1 = inadequate; 3 = minimal; 5 = good; and 7 = excellent). Child care centres went from an average rating of “minimal to good” to a rating of “good to excellent”. This reflects that the on-site intervention model has supported beneficial changes within the child care centre environment. An example of these environmental changes in 22 of the child care centres is described in figure 6.

Figure 6:
Overall Average ECERS-R Scores for a Total of 22 Child Care Centres



- Time 1: Baseline evaluation
- Time 2: Evaluation completed to assess changes at the end of a support period (completed five months after baseline evaluation)
- Time 3: Evaluation completed to assess sustainability of changes (completed three to four months after Time 2)



Child care centres involved in the Partnership for Inclusion project looked at their environments and practice with greater scrutiny. Centres were willing to ask questions about what they do and why they do it to determine the extent to which their programs satisfy the needs of children, staff and families.

“As you know the goal of Partnerships for Inclusion is to help daycare centres enhance and enrich their learning environments in order to better support the inclusion and participation of children with special needs in their programs. The part that is really exciting about this process is that everyone benefits from a better environment. The tool the project has chosen to use, the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised, examines and highlights key quality indicators that pertain to everyone’s experience in the program, children, parents and staff.”

Executive Director and Assistant Director of a participating children’s centre of Partnerships for Inclusion

Building Blocks: Strategies for Inclusion Training Program

The Building Blocks: Strategies for Inclusion Training Program was created and published in Nova Scotia by the Progress Centre for Early Intervention. ECDI and ELCC grant funding provided the means to develop a complete set of training materials and a train-the-trainer workshop to promote inclusion in child care programs. The *Building Blocks: Strategies for Inclusion* text book is also available in both English and French. The focus of this training is to encourage early childhood educators to use their creative resources to solve problems and support the needs of all children in their child care programs.

A project coordinator and an evaluation consultant were hired to design, implement and assess the efficacy of the program. In keeping with the ECDI vision, the program was designed and built on existing assets and expertise in the early childhood education community. The findings from an evaluation indicate that the training program was a success on many different levels³. The response rate from workshop evaluations was at 95 per cent.

A facilitator training workshop trained 20 individuals to conduct regional workshops across Nova Scotia. These regional workshops then provided an ongoing professional-development opportunity for 346 early childhood educators and 38 community partners to enhance their existing expertise in implementing the inclusion of children with identified special needs in their neighbourhood child care centre. The master-trainer level workshop has ensured that 28 individuals are available to train facilitators in all Atlantic provinces.



This planned sharing of expertise has created a community of practice in the early childhood education sector, which has the potential to sustain itself well beyond the period of funding provided by the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services. When Building Blocks: Strategies for Inclusion Training Program was developed, participant outcomes were developed to assist in evaluating the efficacy of the program. These outcomes included:

- An increased understanding of issues surrounding inclusion in child care programs
- An increased confidence in their ability to work with children with special needs
- Tools to problem solve through daily challenges
- A framework for thinking about typical and atypical development
- Tools to recognize limitations and challenges that affect a child's development and ability to interact with his/her environment
- Tools to meet children's individual needs within a child care program
- Tools to build partnerships in the community around inclusion
- Tools to better utilize existing resources around inclusion

Evidence derived from the participants' comments in the workshop evaluations indicates that many participants developed new insights into the complexity of inclusion as well as increased awareness of the resources that do exist in their own communities, as a result the first outcome was achieved. The second anticipated outcome provided for an increased confidence amongst early childhood educators in their ability to work with children identified with special needs. The response from the post-test surveys demonstrated that there was a significant increase in self-confidence. A third anticipated outcome related to the provision of a framework for thinking about typical and atypical development is less measurable. Feedback from participants, facilitators and trainers points to the ongoing need for educational opportunities that continue to update knowledge and skills in child development.

The evidence from the pre- and post-training surveys provides confirmation that participants did gain knowledge and skills in the areas of problem solving, understanding the interaction between the child and the environment and developing resources to support inclusion. With respect to creating partnerships, most early childhood educators believed they had good knowledge and skills prior to attending the workshop. Feedback from participants with respect to the area of individual program planning indicated that they would have benefitted from more detailed explanations and more discussion on individual program planning.



Most revealing, however, is the evidence from the six-month, post-workshop evaluations. Early childhood educators who attended the workshops perceived that their knowledge, skills and confidence in making inclusion a reality in their child care centres increased significantly and in an enduring way. The Building Blocks: Strategies for Inclusion Training Program has demonstrated that ongoing professional development opportunities can positively affect early childhood educators' perceptions of their knowledge, skills and confidence in making inclusion a reality.

“...Excellent...awesome activities, very useful presentations. One of the best workshops I've been to!”

Participant of Building Blocks: Strategies for Inclusion Training Program

Supported Child Care Funding

Supported Child Care Funding is an existing provincial Early Childhood Development Services program that has been enhanced under the ECDI and ELCC. This funding enables licensed child care centres to have the necessary program supports required to deliver a fully inclusive daily program. Funds were provided to centres on behalf of a child identified with special needs. Throughout 2003 – 2004, there were 521 children participating in 127 licensed, full- and part-day, child-care programs.

The total number of children and the total number of licensed full- and part-day, child-care programs for 2001 – 2002 and 2002 – 2003 are not known as the information technology system to track this information was not operational until April 2003.

Status Summary

Figure 7 provides a status summary of Stabilizing and Enhancing Child Care activities from April 1, 2003 to March 31, 2004.



Figure 7:

Summary of Stabilizing and Enhancing Child Care Activities from April 1, 2003 to March 31, 2004

Stabilizing and Enhancing Child Care

Program Components	Status Summary
Nova Scotia Child Care Stabilization Grant	Provided to early childhood staff in 217 licensed, full-day, child care centres to enhance recruitment and retention.
Early Childhood Education Training Initiative	In 2003 – 2004, funds have been provided to six educational institutions and one associated program that offer early childhood education training opportunities for students entering the field or for in-service training of staff in the field. This also included bursaries for early childhood education students.
Part-Day Child Care Centres – Material and Resources Grant to Promote Physical Activity	A total of 126 part-day, licensed child care centres received funding to purchase materials and resources that assist in the provision of increased physical activity programming.
Child Care Subsidy Program and Portable Subsidy	<p>This programs' goal has been to assist low-income families with their child care expenses to enable them to work, pursue employment, attend school, and cope with family crisis or families whose children have unique developmental needs.</p> <p>Child Care Subsidy Program also allows for portable subsidy. By definition, portable subsidy is attached to the child and may relocate with the child and family as needed.</p> <p>Fifty portable subsidized child care spaces were created in 2003 – 2004. As of March 31, 2004, there are a total of 280 portable subsidized child care spaces.</p>
Employment Support and Income Assistance (ESIA) Child Care	ESIA program provided up to a maximum of \$400 for child care expenses under the ESIA special needs policy to an average of 1,630 cases (or families) per month in the fiscal year, 2003 – 2004.
Inclusion of Children with Special Needs	<p>Training initiatives and funding supported through:</p> <p><i>Partnerships for Inclusion:</i> In 2003 – 2004, program was offered to 22 licensed, child care centres.</p> <p><i>Building Blocks: Strategies for Inclusion Training Program:</i> In total, 28 individuals are available to train facilitators in all Atlantic provinces; facilitator-training workshop trained 20 individuals to conduct regional workshops across Nova Scotia. These workshops provided ongoing professional-development to 346 early childhood educators and 38 community partners.</p> <p><i>Supported Child Care Funding:</i> Throughout 2003 – 2004, there were 521 children participating in 127 licensed, full- and part-day, child-care programs.</p>



Community Engagement and Infrastructure Support

represents Nova Scotia's investment with respect
to pillar four of the *First Ministers' Meeting
Communiqué on Early Childhood Development:
Strengthen Community Supports*



Community Engagement and Infrastructure Support

The goal of the ECDI is to create an integrated system that builds on existing programs, identifies innovative opportunities and establishes the supports necessary for sustainability and growth. At the same time, it allows for creativity and flexibility at the regional and community levels to ensure a system that will best serve unique community needs while, simultaneously, ensuring integrated and seamless service delivery. Early Childhood Development Regional Collaboration Teams, information technology, and ongoing communications support the development of the ECD system.

Community Engagement and Infrastructure Support Objectives

- To promote the development of healthy children
- To engage communities in planning and to promote the collaboration and integration of existing and new early childhood development services at the local level
- To promote evidence-based decision-making through the development of accurate, timely information
- To engage communities in ownership and investment in early childhood development
- To report on early childhood development to ensure accountability



Early Childhood Development Regional Collaboration Teams

- Launch date: 2003
- Target population: Families with children from birth to six years of age
- Delivery agents: Community-based agencies and services, and government departments
- Lead Department: Nova Scotia Department of Community Services
- Program goal: Early Childhood Development Regional Collaboration Teams will develop strategic plans that will lead to a comprehensive system of supports for children from birth to six years of age
- Funding: 2002 – 2003: \$20,000 (ECDI)

The mandate of the Early Childhood Development Regional Collaboration Teams is to increase linkages between existing children's services and new ECD services, facilitate cooperation and collaboration amongst programs, establish referral protocols and to provide input into future directions. Though funding for the teams was disbursed in 2002 – 2003, funds were spent in 2003 – 2004.

Four Nova Scotia Department of Community Services' community-development workers have been employed, one per region (Central, Eastern, Northern and Western), to engage stakeholders and to support the process. Team membership will be 50 per cent government and 50 per cent community-based agencies and services. A standardized terms of reference, agenda and reporting template have been developed for the regional teams. The community development staff is in place for two years.

Throughout the last year, preliminary work has included standardizing processes, creating an advisory group and supporting and training staff. The teams are in the formation period and planning will begin this year. Ultimately, a planning process will result in a significant contribution to the development of a system of supports for young children and their families.



Early Childhood Development Information System and Reporting

- Launch date: October 2002
- Target population: Early childhood programs/facilities
- Delivery agents: Nova Scotia Department of Community Services staff
- Lead Department: Nova Scotia Department of Community Services
- Program goal: To provide an integrated information system that will enable staff to have cross-functional access to data, and will provide clients with a heightened level of efficiency in service delivery
- Funding:
 - 2002 – 2003: \$400,000 (ECDI)
 - 2003 – 2004: \$450,000 (ECDI)

To facilitate monitoring of progress, evaluation, and public-reporting, funds were allocated to develop an early childhood information system. The information system consists of five modules:

- Child Care Centre Licensing
- Child Care Subsidy/Supported Child Care Applications
- Child Care Centre Payments
- Grant Allocations/Payments
- System Administration

Development of these modules began in 2002 – 2003 and was completed by March 2004. Funds were increased in 2003 – 2004 to ensure that the ECD information system was completed within that fiscal year. Ongoing enhancements to this information system still continue. The ECD information system is an integrated system providing cross-functional access to data, ready and timely access to information, efficient processing, and the ability to respond to inquiries in an effective manner.

Status Summary

Figure 8 provides a summary of Community Engagement and Infrastructure Support activities from April 1, 2003 to March 31, 2004.



Figure 8:

**Summary of Community Engagement and Infrastructure Support
Activities from April 1, 2003 to March 31, 2004**

Community Engagement and Infrastructure Support

Program Components	Status Summary
Early Childhood Development Regional Collaboration Teams	Preliminary work has included standardizing processes, creating a provincial advisory group and supporting and training staff.
Early Childhood Development Information System and Reporting	Early childhood development information system consisting of five modules has been completed. This will facilitate monitoring of programs, evaluation and public-reporting.



In Conclusion

Quality early childhood development, learning and care programs have been shown to promote young children's healthy development, inclusive of their competencies in language, fine and gross motor skills and their social, emotional and cognitive development. Research has shown that the effects of high-quality early childhood programs last a life time.

As identified in this report, the comprehensive system of early childhood development envisioned for Nova Scotia brings together a range of services to children in the early years. Collaboration and referral protocols by service providers at the local level are the foundation of the ECD system. Entry into the system of services can occur at many points. The early childhood development system begins prenatally, supports the child from birth into their community by providing access to a range of required services and supporting the child's successful transition into the school system.

At the community level, universal screening will be offered to all families very early after birth through the Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting Initiative program. When families are identified as benefitting from additional supports they will be offered home visiting either by public health staff or trained community home visitors up to the child's third birthday. Home-visiting will be linked with enhanced parenting education and support through family resource centres, child care and health care services, such as speech/language assessments, developmental assessments, mental health services and early intervention.

It is evident from this document that, in Nova Scotia, there has been an improvement and expansion on early childhood development programs and services within the four pillars of investment as identified in the *Communiqué of Early Childhood Development*. These differences are apparent when programs and services in 2003 – 2004 are compared to those offered in the baseline year of 2000 – 2001.

Quality and accessibility to inclusive child care will continue to be a priority with ongoing efforts in recruitment and retention of early childhood educators, training opportunities and increased subsidy. Family resource centres will also provide Early Language and Learning programs and Child Care Information and Support programs. Child Care Information and Support programs will provide parents with information related to both licensed and informal care in their community. Parents will also be provided with information on available child care programs for children with special needs. Family resource centres will act as a hub for parents and caregivers to access education, toy and book lending, and will provide a directory of formal and informal caregivers in the community.

The system that Nova Scotia is establishing will offer children and their families a range of services and community supports that will provide children in their early years with increased opportunities to fulfill their potential. This system will provide the resources needed to lay the foundation for a healthy start in life, leading to an active lifestyle, and a commitment to life-long learning.



Summary of Grant Information

Figure 9 outlines actual provincial, Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI) and Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) expenditures in 2003 – 2004. Figure 10 provides an overview of total provincial and federal ECD expenditure from 2000 (baseline year) through to 2004. Appendices A to C provides expenditure summaries from 2000 – 2001 (baseline year), 2001 – 2002, and 2002 – 2003. All expenditure summaries are provided by the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services.

All the figures reference Nova Scotia's four priority areas. As indicated in this document these reflect the four pillars identified in the *First Ministers' Meeting Communiqué on Early Childhood Development*, that is:

- Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting Initiative represents pillar one: Promote healthy pregnancy, birth and infancy
- Enhanced Parenting and Family Supports represents pillar two: Improve parenting and family supports
- Stabilizing and Enhancing Child Care represents pillar three: Strengthen early childhood development, learning and care
- Community Engagement and Infrastructure Support represents pillar four: Strengthen community support



**Figure 9:
Provincial and Federal ECD Expenditure Summary 2003 – 2004**

Program	Provincial Funding (\$)	Federal Funding (\$)	Total Actual Funding (\$)
Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting Initiative			
Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting Initiative	Nova Scotia Department of Health funding of home visiting unknown due to multifaceted role of public health staff	ECDI: 3,000,000	3,000,000
Sub-Total		3,000,000	3,000,000
Enhanced Parenting and Family Supports			
Family Resource and Parent Education	561,500	ECDI: 10,000	571,500
Child Care Information and Support	ECDI only	ECDI: 650,000	650,000
Early Language and Learning	ECDI only	ECDI: 727,500	727,500
Adoption Redesign	ECDI only	ECDI: 174,411	174,411
Sub-Total	561,500	1,561,911	2,123,411
Stabilizing and Enhancing Child Care			
Stabilization Grant	ECDI only	ECDI: 3,839,403	3,839,403
Training Initiative	ECDI only	ECDI: 1,093,906	1,093,906
Material and Resources Grant	ECDI and ELCC only	ECDI: 410,461 ELCC: 314,000	724,461
Inclusion/Differential	1,370,329	*ECDI: 798,700 **ELCC: 433,800	2,602,829
Subsidy and Equipment Grants	8,781,193	ECDI: 455,361	9,236,554
Other Child Care	3,090,157	0	3,090,157
Child Development Centres	290,917	0	290,917
Early Intervention	1,901,383	0	1,901,383
ECDS Administration	359,395	0	359,395
ESIA Child Care	2,877,950	ECDI: 2,300,000	5,177,950
Sub-Total	18,671,324	9,645,631	28,316,955
Community Engagement and Infrastructure Support			
ECD Regional Collaboration Teams	0	0	0
Information Systems Development	ECDI only	ECDI: 450,000	450,000
Administration and Operations	ECDI only	ECDI: 1,190,258	1,190,258
Sub-Total	0	1,640,258	1,640,258
Total Expenditure	19,232,824	15,847,800	35,080,624

* ECDI includes \$498,700 for Supported Child Care Funding; and \$300,000 for Partnership for Inclusion.

** ELCC includes \$292,300 for Supported Child Care Funding; \$16,500 for Building Blocks: Strategies for Inclusion Training Program; and \$125,000 for Partnership for Inclusion.

Amounts are gross expenditure. Federal funds under National Child Benefit for Wards of \$1,551,190 are included.



**Figure 10: Total Provincial and Federal ECD Expenditure Summary
from 2000 (Baseline Year) to 2004**

Program	2000 – 2001 Actual Baseline Funding (\$)	2001 – 2002 Actual Funding (\$)	2002 – 2003 Actual Funding (\$)	2003 – 2004 Actual Funding (\$)
Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting Initiative				
Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting Initiative	Nova Scotia Department of Health funding of home visiting unknown due to multifaceted role of public health staff	417,340	3,582,660	3,000,000
Sub-Total		417,340	3,582,660	3,000,000
Enhancing Parenting and Family Supports				
Family Resource and Parent Education	515,500 family resource centres only	1,079,600	1,128,000	571,500
Child Care Information and Support	0	0	450,000	650,000
Early Language and Learning	0	0	567,500	727,500
Adoption Redesign	0	0	24,998	174,411
Sub-Total	515,500	1,079,600	2,170,498	2,123,411
Stabilizing and Enhancing Child Care				
Stabilization Grant	0	3,448,122	3,646,647	3,839,403
Training Initiative	0	0	1,306,380	1,093,906
New and Expanded Child Care	0	0	1,679,248	0
Material and Resources Grant	0	0	0	724,461
Inclusion/Differential	1,308,276	1,865,388	2,503,632	2,602,829
Subsidy and Equipment Grants	9,094,622	9,519,259	9,345,150	9,236,554
Other Child Care	2,871,569	2,854,720	2,910,897	3,090,157
Child Development Centres	285,216	286,301	684,605	290,917
Early Intervention	1,612,125	1,897,742	1,897,572	1,901,383
ECDS Administration	581,368	565,279	339,964	359,395
ESIA Child Care	899,591	3,174,649	5,013,506	5,177,950
French Translation of ECD Training Materials	0	15,000	0	0
Sub-Total	16,652,767	23,626,460	29,327,601	28,316,955
Community Engagement and Infrastructure Support				
ECD Regional Collaboration Teams	0	0	20,000	0
Information Systems Development	0	0	400,000	450,000
Administration and Operations	0	109,129	671,458	1,190,258
Sub-Total	0	109,129	1,091,458	1,640,258
Total Expenditure	17,168,267	25,232,529	36,172,217	35,080,624

Note: ECD carry forward of \$4,685,200 from 2001 – 2002 to 2002 – 2003. Amounts are gross expenditures.

References

1. Carter, N. (1996).

See how we grow: A report on the status of parenting education in the US.

Pew Charitable Trust

Available: <http://www.pewtrusts.com>

2. Doherty, G. (1997).

Zero to six: The basics for school readiness.

Applied Research Branch R-97 8E

Ottawa: HRDC Government of Canada

3. Versnel, J. and Monaghan, P. (2004).

Building Blocks: Strategies for inclusion evaluation report.

Canada: National Library of Canada



Appendix A:

Provincial ECD Expenditure Summary 2000 – 2001 (Baseline Year)

Program	Total Actual Funding (\$)
Child Care Subsidies and Equipment Grants	9,094,622
Inclusion/Differential	1,308,276
Other Child Care	2,871,569
Child Development Centres	285,216
Early Intervention	1,612,125
ECDS Administration	581,368
ESIA Child Care	899,591
Family Resource Centres	515,500
Total Expenditure	17,168,267

Note: *Nova Scotia ECD Baseline Report* (2002) (Error on page 19 – Base Provincial Expenditure).

Amounts are gross expenditures. Federal funds received under National Child Benefit for Wards of \$939,867 are included.



Appendix B:

Provincial and Federal ECD Expenditure Summary 2001 – 2002

Program	Provincial Funding (\$)	Federal Funding (\$)	Total Actual Funding (\$)
Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting Initiative			
Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting Initiative	Nova Scotia Department of Health funding of home visiting unknown due to multifaceted role of public health staff	417,340	417,340
Sub-Total		417,340	417,340
Enhancing Parenting and Family Supports			
Family Resource and Parent Education	1,079,600	0	1,079,600
Sub-Total	1,079,600	0	1,079,600
Stabilizing and Enhancing Child Care			
Stabilization Grant	ECDI only	3,448,122	3,448,122
Inclusion/Differential	1,586,832	278,556	1,865,388
Subsidy and Equipment Grants	9,372,599	146,660	9,519,259
Other Child Care	2,854,720	0	2,854,720
Child Development Centres	286,301	0	286,301
Early Intervention	1,897,742	0	1,897,742
ECDS Administration	565,279	0	565,279
ESIA Child Care	3,174,649	0	3,174,649
French Translation of ECD Training Materials	ECDI only	15,000	15,000
Sub-Total	19,738,122	3,888,338	23,626,460
Community Engagement and Infrastructure Support			
Administration and Operations	ECDI only	109,129	109,129
Sub-Total		109,129	109,129
Total Expenditure	20,817,722	*4,414,807	25,232,529

* ECD carry-forward of \$4,685,200 from 2001 – 2002 to 2002 – 2003.

Amounts are gross expenditures. Federal funds received under National Child Benefit for Wards of \$1,235,898 are included.



Appendix C:

Provincial and Federal ECD Expenditure Summary 2002 – 2003

Program	Provincial Funding (\$)	Federal Funding (\$)	Total Actual Funding (\$)
Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting Initiative			
Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting Initiative	Nova Scotia Department of Health funding of home visiting unknown due to multifaceted role of public health staff	3,582,660	3,582,660
Sub-Total		3,582,660	3,582,660
Enhancing Parenting and Family Supports			
Family Resource and Parent Education	867,000	261,000	1,128,000
Child Care Resource and Referrals	ECDI only	450,000	450,000
Early Language and Learning	ECDI only	567,500	567,500
Adoption Redesign	ECDI only	24,998	24,998
Sub-Total	867,000	1,303,498	2,170,498
Stabilizing and Enhancing Child Care			
Stabilization Grant	ECDI only	3,646,647	3,646,647
Training Initiative	ECDI only	1,306,380	1,306,380
New and Expanded Child Care	ECDI only	1,679,248	1,679,248
Inclusion/Differential	1,308,276	1,195,356	2,503,632
Subsidy and Equipment Grants	9,064,843	280,307	9,345,150
Other Child Care	2,910,897	0	2,910,897
Child Development Centres	284,744	399,861	684,605
Early Intervention	1,897,572	0	1,897,572
ECDS Administration	339,964	0	339,964
ESIA Child Care	2,713,506	2,300,000	5,013,506
Sub-Total	18,519,802	10,807,799	29,327,601
Community Engagement and Infrastructure Support			
ECD Regional Collaboration Teams	ECDI only	20,000	20,000
Information Systems Development	ECDI only	400,000	400,000
Administration and Operations	ECDI only	671,458	671,458
Sub-Total	0	1,091,458	1,091,458
Total Expenditure	19,386,802	*16,785,415	36,172,217

* Includes carry forward of unspent federal/provincial/territorial ECD funds from 2001 - 2002.

Amounts are gross expenditures. Federal funds received under National Child Benefit for Wards of \$1,385,662 are included.

Note: *Nova Scotia's Early Childhood Development Initiative Annual Report April 2003* (Error page 27: figures showed total allocation forecast and not actual); and *Nova Scotia's Early Learning and Childcare Baseline Report 2003* (Error page 17: figures showed forecast and not actual).

Recommended Early Childhood Development Websites

Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development
<http://www.excellence-earlychildhood.ca/>

Canadian Language and Literacy Research Network
<http://www.cllrnet.ca/>

Childcare Resource and Research Unit
<http://www.childcarecanada.org>

National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth
<http://www.statcan.ca/english/sdds/4450.htm>

Nova Scotia Department of Community Services
<http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/>

Nova Scotia Department of Education
<http://www.ednet.ns.ca/>

Nova Scotia Department of Health
<http://www.gov.ns.ca/health/>

The National Child Benefit
<http://www.nationalchildbenefit.ca/>

Social Union Framework Agreement
<http://www.socialunion.gc.ca>

Understanding the Early Years
http://www11.sdc.gc.ca/en/cs/sp/commun/ar_6_6_7.shtml



