

# Nova Scotia Early Childhood Development

2005–2008 Summary Progress Report

## Child Well-Being

2007 Summary Report



# Nova Scotia Early Childhood Development

## 2005–2008 Summary Progress Report

### Child Well-Being

#### 2007 Summary Report



This document is available on the Internet at <http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/>

For further information contact:  
Early Childhood Development Services  
Nova Scotia Department of Community Services  
PO Box 696  
Halifax, NS  
B3J 2T7

Phone: (902) 424-3430  
Fax: (902) 424-0708  
Email: [webcoms@gov.ns.ca](mailto:webcoms@gov.ns.ca)

Printed: August 2009

# Letter from the Minister

It is my pleasure to present Nova Scotia's 2005–2008 Early Childhood Development Progress Report and the 2007 Child Well-Being Report.

In September 2000, federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for Social Services established the Early Childhood Development Communiqué to improve and expand early childhood development programs and services. 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; and
- Strengthen community supports.

Fulfilling Nova Scotia's commitment as partners to the Communiqué, the province developed plans to implement the Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI). Investments from April 2005 to March 2008 include:

- \$10.5 million for Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting program;
- \$12.8 million for enhancements to the Child Care Stabilization Grant; and
- \$6.9 million for enhancements to the Employment Support and Income Assistance program.

The 2003 Multilateral Framework on Early Learning & Child Care (ELCC) builds on the commitments made as part of the 2000 Communiqué on Early Childhood Development. Investments from April 2005 to March 2008 include:

- \$2.8 million for enhancements to the Early Childhood Education Training Initiative;
- \$7.6 million for continued investments in the provision of portable subsidized child care spaces; and
- \$2.9 million in increases to Supported Child Care Grant funding.



In May 2006, Nova Scotia developed and began the implementation of a 10 year Early Learning and Child Care Plan. Investments made to enhance early learning and child care in the province as part of the Child Care Plan from April 2006 to March 2008 include:

- Approximately \$6.3 million in approved funding for the Child Care Operating Grant (CCOG) to provide operational funding for licensed child care centres;
- Approximately \$8.5 million for the Repair and Renovation Loan, Program Enhancement Grant and Outdoor Play Space Grant.

The 2007 Child Well-Being Report has also been included in this report, fulfilling our commitment to report to our citizens on the health and well-being of our children. Indicators of well-being for children (as provided by the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth) are provided in the following areas: physical health, early development, safety and security, family and community. Highlights of the report include:

- A slight decrease in the percentage of high birth weight and pre-term birth babies;
- More than 80% of Nova Scotia children scored average or advanced on the Motor and Social Development (MSD) Scale; and
- An increase in educational achievement among parents of young children.

Nova Scotia welcomes and values these federal funding initiatives as they enhance provincial programs and supports for our children and their families. This fourth report, for the year ending March 2008, provides a summary of continuing and expanded early childhood development programs and services within Nova Scotia.

Sincerely,



Hon. Chris d'Entremont  
Minister of Community Services





# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	7
<b>Overview of Early Childhood Development Action Areas</b> .....	9
Promote Healthy Pregnancy, Birth and Infancy .....	11
Enhanced Parenting and Family Supports .....	13
Stabilizing and Enhancing Child Care .....	17
Community Engagement and Infrastructure Support .....	23
<b>Nova Scotia's Early Learning and Child Care Plan</b> .....	26
<b>Conclusion—Enhancements to Early Childhood Development and Early Learning and Child Care</b> ....	30
<b>2007 Child Well-Being Report</b> .....	33
Committed to Our Children .....	34
<b>Appendix A: Overview of Nova Scotia's ECD Investments 2005 - 2008</b> .....	34





# Introduction

This summary report provides an overview of the main highlights of **Nova Scotia's 2005-2008 Early Childhood Development Progress Report/2007 Child-Well Being Report**. The Progress Report fulfills Nova Scotia's commitment to report to its' public on investments made as part of federal funding agreements.

In 2000, as part of the Communiqué on Early Childhood Development, federal/provincial/ territorial First Ministers agreed to improve and expand upon delivery of early childhood development programs and services. In 2001, Nova Scotia received federal funds as part of the Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI) to invest in four early childhood development areas for action: promote healthy pregnancy, birth and infancy; improve parenting and family supports; strengthen early childhood development, learning and care; and strengthen community supports.

In 2003, as part of the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC), First Ministers committed to improve access to affordable, provincially/territorially regulated early learning and child care programs and services for children less than six years of age. Federal indicators were developed to measure the quality, affordability, accessibility, inclusiveness and availability of ECDI/ ELCC programs and services.

In 2005, as part of the Early Learning and Child Care Agreement-in-Principle, Nova Scotia received federal funds to invest in enhancements and expansion of child care services and programs.

The Child Well-Being Report (2007) fulfills Nova Scotia's commitment to report to our citizens on the health and well-being of our children, by providing indicators of well-being for children (as provided by the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth) in the areas of: physical health, early development, safety and security, family and community.

## Link to NS Framework for Social Prosperity

The ECDI/ELCC initiatives, Early Learning and Child Care Plan and Child Well-Being Report are important threads which help weave together a vision for the 'fabric of our citizen's lives'. The vision of the Framework states that, "...every Nova Scotian has the opportunity to live well and contribute in a meaningful way within a province that is caring, safe and creative—now and into the future".

— *Government of Nova Scotia (2007) Weaving the Threads: A Lasting Social Fabric, p.5. Available at:*

[http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/departement/documents/Weaving\\_the\\_Threads.pdf](http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/departement/documents/Weaving_the_Threads.pdf)









## Overview of Early Childhood Development Action Areas

Since 2001, Nova Scotia has invested approximately \$135.2 million in early childhood programs and services in the province. This represents expenditures from all federal funding agreements from 2001–2008. For an overview of federal and provincial investments in the four ECD areas for action, please see Appendix A: Financial Expenditures 2005–2008. The action areas form the framework for our early childhood development system, and include: promote healthy pregnancy, birth and infancy; improve parenting and family supports; strengthen early childhood development, learning and care; and strengthen community supports. Nova Scotia's investments in early learning and child care demonstrate our commitment to providing supports for children and their families, in addition to the early childhood sector. The full 2005-08 ECD Progress Report/ 2007 Child Well-Being Report can be accessed at: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms>.

The following overview provides a brief snapshot of Nova Scotia's investment and progress in the action areas over the past three years (April 2005–March 2008).

Promote Healthy Pregnancy, Birth and Infancy



Early Childhood Development Initiative Funding is provided to the Department of Health Promotion and Protection for Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting. Funding is distributed to the District Health Authorities (Public Health Services) to implement this initiative at the local level. Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting builds on existing programs and services offered by Public Health Services and supports home visiting for families facing challenges for the first three years of their child’s life. The enhanced home-visiting program focuses on promoting healthy parent-child relationships, fostering healthy childhood development and linking families with community resources that further enhance opportunities for the healthy growth and development of the child and family as a whole.

<b>Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting</b>			
<b>Funding Source (\$)</b>	<b>2005/06</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>
<b>ECDI</b>	3,500,000	3,500,000	3,500,000

The Nova Scotia Department of Health Promotion and Protection delivers the Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting program through District Health Authorities (Public Health Services). Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting is a voluntary, strengths-based and family centered home visiting program. The program focuses on promoting healthy parent-child relationships; fostering healthy childhood development; and linking families with community resources that further enhance opportunities for the healthy growth and development of the family as a whole. Over the past three years, program activities have included: identifying program families; identification of core competencies for community home visitors; the launch of a provincial database in 2006; the development of a provincial evaluation framework; and the completion of Phase 1 (Implementation) evaluation and Phase 2 (Quality Assurance) evaluation.



# Enhanced Parenting and Family Supports



Nova Scotia has continued to support the growth and development of families through: initiatives that promote healthy childhood development; partnerships with communities; supporting parents; and increasing opportunities for all children to have stable home environments. Examples of programs/services include: Parent Education and Support Grant, Child Care Information and Support, Early Language and Learning and Enhanced Domestic Adoption.

<b>Parent Education and Support Grant</b>			
<b>Funding Source (\$)</b>	<b>2005/06</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>
<b>Provincial</b>	561,500	561,500	561,500
<b>ECDI</b>	340,000	226,000	206,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>901,500</b>	<b>787,500</b>	<b>767,500</b>

The Parent Education and Support Grant provides support to families in their efforts to raise healthy children. This program is delivered by the Department of Community Services through family resource centres. Fourteen family resource centres (FRCs) are funded across the province to enhance the delivery of quality parent education programs and support professional development opportunities for parent educators. Grant amounts range from \$5000 to \$30,000 per FRC; depending on existing capacity across the four Department of Community Services regions. Program activities include: parenting support groups, parent-child interactive programs such as Parent 'n Tot/Play groups, personal development programs and professional development opportunities.



## Child Care Information and Support

Funding Source (\$)	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
ECDI	650,000	650,000	550,000

Child Care Information and Support (CCIS) grants are provided to thirteen community-based non-profit agencies (inclusive of family resource centres) with a mandate related to early childhood development. CCIS programs provide parents, caregivers and members of the early childhood development sector with a variety of services to support quality child care for families. The goal of the program is to enhance and improve the quality and accessibility of a range of child care options for families. Program activities include: parent/caregiver education and support; parent/ caregiver-child interactive programming; public/community/professional educational activities; consultations and referrals.

## Early Language and Learning

Funding Source (\$)	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
ECDI	890,000	720,000	617,886

Early Language and Learning (ELL) grants are provided to 11 family resource centres across Nova Scotia; 40 sites and various outreach areas deliver ELL programs. ELL programs involve collaboration between speech-language pathologists, early childhood development practitioners, parents and communities to create innovative programs and strategies that promote children's early language and literacy. ELL programs offer a wide variety of services to both parents and early childhood development practitioners in order to encourage and support positive parent-child interactions; provide training, consultation and resources to parents and practitioners; and increase public awareness of the importance of language development in the early years.

## Moving Forward 2008/09...

In 2008, project dollars for the Parent Education and Support Grant, Child Care Information and Support and Early Language and Learning were converted into core funding for Family Resource Centres (FRC's) in receipt of these ECDI funds.

This will increase opportunities for FRC's to provide parenting and family support programs and services that are tailored to meet the needs of their respective communities. The following four core service areas were identified for this funding: parent education and learning, family support, child development, and early language and literacy.



## Enhanced Domestic Adoption

Funding Source (\$)	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
ECDI	831,899	928,310	775,090

The **Enhanced Domestic Adoption Program** is designed to increase the number of children in permanent care and custody placed for adoption and support their growth into healthy and strong adults. The Adoption program is delivered through 15 district offices and five agencies that deliver child welfare services. In addition, there is an office in each region (central, eastern, northern and western) of the province delivering regional resources. Over the past three years, program activities include amendments to the *Children and Family Services Act (CFSA)*; development of a Children in Care manual; the addition of nine social work staff in the four regions; and the launch of an Adoption Awareness and Recruitment Campaign during November 2005.



# Stabilizing and Enhancing Child Care



This section represents Nova Scotia’s investment in developing quality early learning and child care, enhancing the quality of licensed child care, supporting parents and early childhood educators, and promoting inclusion. Programs that promote the stabilization and enhancement of childcare include: Early Childhood Education Training Initiative, Nova Scotia Child Care Stabilization Grant, Child Care Subsidy Program, Supported Child Care, Partnerships for Inclusion, and Employment Support and Income Assistance Child Care.

Early Childhood Education Training Initiative			
Funding Source (\$)	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
ELCC	994,000	1,000,000	800,000
Child Care Plan	—	98,000	—
<b>Total</b>	<b>994,000</b>	<b>1,098,000</b>	<b>800,000</b>

The **Early Childhood Education Training Initiative** was launched in November 2002, and provides opportunities for early childhood education pre-service and in-service training to educational institutions and associated programs. Five training institutions have been funded to deliver training and services throughout the province to the early childhood sector. The programs funded to deliver training and services to the early childhood development sector are: Le Centre provincial de ressources prescolaires (CPRPS); Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU); the Institute for Human Services Education (IHSE); St. Joseph’s College of Early Childhood Education (as of 2009, Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education); and Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC – Burrigge, Kingstec and Cumberland campuses). Services include: maintenance and enhancement of six ECD support sites; professional development opportunities regionally; bursaries for early childhood students; and in-centre mentoring and program supports.

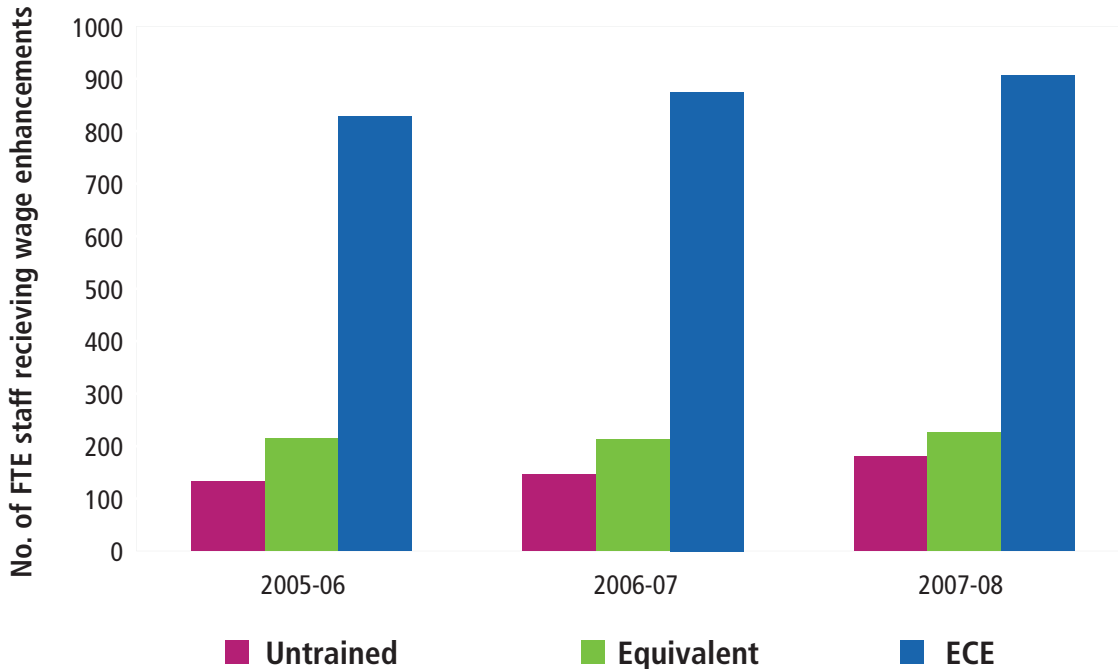


## Child Care Stabilization Grant

Funding Source (\$)	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
ECDI/ELCC	4,029,166	4,263,137	4,500,000
Child Care Plan	—	—	491,090
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,029,166</b>	<b>4,263,137</b>	<b>4,991,090</b>

The Nova Scotia Child Care Stabilization Grant provides funding to full-day licensed child care centres to support the wages, benefits and training of the child care sector. In January 2008, funding was enhanced in order to improve wages and assist in attracting and retaining quality staff. The funding amount retroactive to April 2007 is as follows: \$4500/yr/per ECE degree/diploma; \$4200/yr/per equivalent staff, and \$1200/yr/per untrained staff in accordance with regulated staff: child ratios. The number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff, categorized by level of training (early childhood education (ECE) diploma/degree, equivalent and untrained), receiving wage enhancements as part of the Stabilization Grant during past three years is illustrated below.

### NS Child Care Stabilization Grant

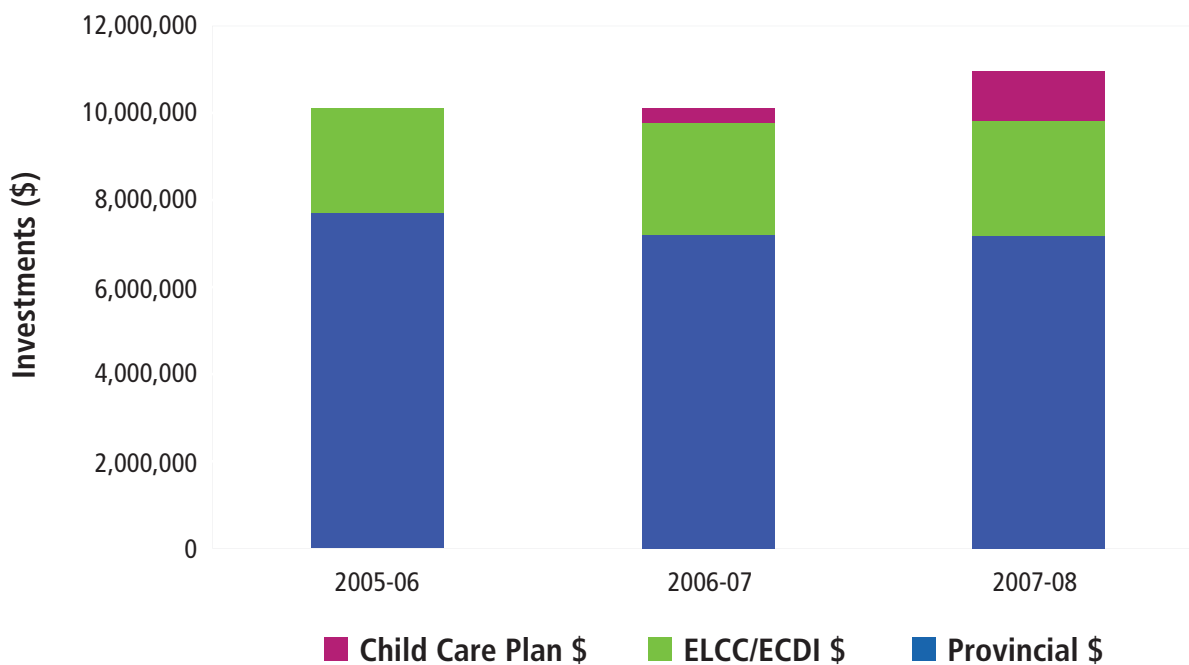


## Child Care Subsidy Program

Funding Source (\$)	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Provincial	7,713,525	7,201,572	7,174,308
ECDI/ELCC	2,395,366	2,577,935	2,634,992
Child Care Plan	—	342,713	1,142,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,108,891</b>	<b>10,122,220</b>	<b>10,951,300</b>

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Program was launched in the early 1970s; portable subsidies were launched in July 2000. The Child Care Subsidy program provides low-income families with financial assistance to aid in their self-sufficiency, through work, training or education. The CCS program also provides portable subsidies which are attached to the child; and may be transferred with the child to any centre that is eligible to receive a portable subsidy. Any licensed, full-day child care centre in the province that has signed the Portable Subsidized Child Care Spaces Funding Agreement may care for a child whose parent has a portable subsidy. During 2005-08, 380 new portable subsidies were added to the program, in addition to a review of income eligibility guidelines and the launch of program enhancements. During 2006/07 and 2007/08, additional Child Care Plan funding was invested in the program, as illustrated below.

### Child Care Subsidy Program

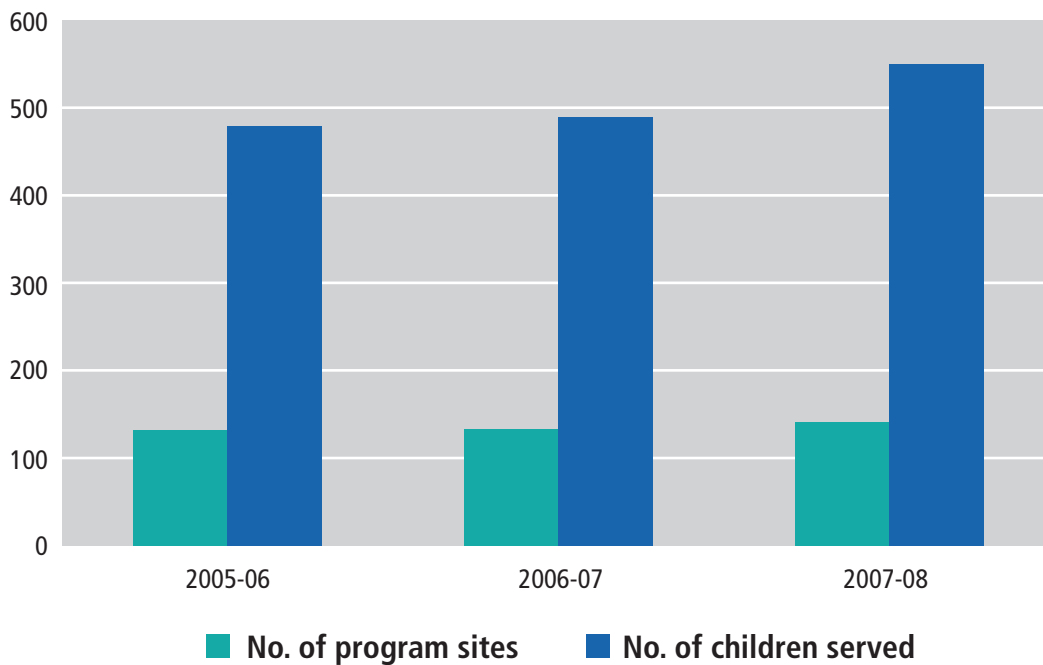


## Supported Child Care

Funding Source (\$)	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Provincial	1,452,092	1,452,092	1,452,092
ECDI/ELCC	880,861	903,695	1,091,899
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,332,953</b>	<b>2,355,787</b>	<b>2,543,991</b>

**Supported Child Care** funding assists licensed child care centres with developing the capacity to provide inclusive programs for children with special needs. Supported Child Care funding is available to all licensed, centre-based child care programs that are in compliance with the *Day Care Act and Regulations*. During 2007/08, in conjunction with the Early Learning and Child Care Plan, revisions to the funding process for supported child care were underway. Over the past three years, the number of program sites and number of children served has increased as illustrated below.

### Supported Child Care



## Partnerships for Inclusion

Funding Source (\$)	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
ELCC	350,079	350,079	350,079

**Partnerships for Inclusion (PFI)** was launched in January 2003; PFI is a project of the Early Intervention Association of Nova Scotia (EINS) in association with SpecialLink: The National Centre for Child Care Inclusion. The program aims to support the inclusion of children with special needs in licensed child care centres through a quality enhancement process. Program activities over the past three years have included the release of *'An Evaluation Based on the First Cohort of Child Care Centres'* (Lero, D.S., Irwin, S.H. & Daris, T.); development of a 'Special Literacy Project'; and a Leadership Forum. In April 2008, the five year PFI research project ended, and a final report was released: *'Improving Quality, Enhancing Inclusion: Partnerships for Inclusion – Nova Scotia'* (Lero, D.S. & Irwin, S.H.).

## Employment Support and Income Assistance Child Care

Funding Source (\$)	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Provincial	2,580,358	2,059,969	1,810,842
ECDI	2,300,000	2,300,000	2,300,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,880,358</b>	<b>4,359,969</b>	<b>4,110,842</b>

**Employment Support and Income Assistance (ESIA) Child Care** provides income assistance and employment supports to persons in need and assists in maximizing their level of self-sufficiency by helping families to increase their employability and level of independence. Program activities include the development of a multi-year Poverty Reduction Strategy to help reduce poverty and improve the standard of living for Nova Scotians.



# Community Engagement and Infrastructure Support



The Community Engagement and Infrastructure Support initiative aims to support the development of an integrated early childhood development system that builds on existing programs, seeks innovative opportunities for growth and supports sustainability. Programs that support community engagement and infrastructure include: Early Childhood Development Regional Collaboration Teams, Early Childhood Development Information System and Reporting, and Website Enhancements: Child Care Connections Nova Scotia.

<b>Early Childhood Development Regional Collaboration Teams</b>			
<b>Funding Source (\$)</b>	<b>2005/06</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>
<b>ECDI</b>	3,444	2,722	1,703

**ECD Regional Collaboration Teams** are groups of individuals representing a variety of government departments and community-based agencies with a mandate to serve children from birth to six years of age and their families. Program activities include: the establishment of priorities and action plans; organization of presentation and information sessions for regional partners; resource mapping and updating the project work plan (2007/08).

<b>Early Childhood Development Information System and Reporting</b>			
<b>Funding Source (\$)</b>	<b>2005/06</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>
<b>ECDI</b>	995,735	686,492	423,994
<b>Child Care Plan</b>	—	520,000	1,500,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>995,375</b>	<b>1,206,492</b>	<b>1,923,994</b>

The **Early Childhood Development Information System and Reporting** aims to provide an integrated system to enable staff to have cross-functional access to data, along with providing clients with an increased level of service delivery. Program activities over the past three years have included: modifications to program modules relating to Family Home Day Care, Outdoor Play Space Grant, Program Enhancement Grant, and the Child Care Operating Grant.



## Website Enhancements: Child Care Connections Nova Scotia

Funding Source (\$)	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
ECDI/ELCC	7,000	7,000	7,000

**Child Care Connections Nova Scotia (CCCNS)** is a non-profit community based development organization. CCCNS has developed infrastructure to provide support and resources to connect child care practitioners, organizations and other interested individuals with information, resources, support and promotion of quality child care. Program activities include: providing ongoing program support and enhancement to the CCCNS website ([www.cccns.org](http://www.cccns.org)).





# Nova Scotia's Early Learning and Child Care Plan

As part of the ECDI (2001) and the ELCC (2003) funding, the province has invested in enhancements to the quality, accessibility, inclusiveness and availability of early childhood development programs and services in Nova Scotia. In 2005, additional federal funding was committed as part of the Early Learning and Child Care Agreement-in-Principle to further support national strategic investments in early learning and childcare initiatives. As part of the ELCC Agreement-in-Principle Trust funding, Nova Scotia received \$39.1 million.

In May 2006, Nova Scotia released a comprehensive 10-year Early Learning and Child Care Plan that has increased the number of child care spaces and subsidies; and continues to provide support to children, families, and the child care sector. The Plan was developed based on consultations with stakeholders; written surveys (collected from the child care sector and parent groups); and comments received through a provincial toll-free child care line, email and surface mail. Over 2,600 participants informed the consultation process. Information gathered from these consultations helped form the framework of the ELCC plan.

Consultation themes that emerged from participant responses include: increase salaries for early childhood educators; decrease the cost of child care; recruitment and retention of a stable child care workforce; and increase the number of spaces in licensed child care facilities.

In 2007, the Agreement-in-Principle was replaced by the Child Care Spaces Initiative. In 2007/08, Nova Scotia received \$7.1 million as part of the Child Care Spaces Initiative. The priority areas identified by the Child Care Plan consultations and investments are highlighted in the pages to follow.



## Priority Area Checklist

The following priority areas were identified through consultations with stakeholders (in Fall 2005); actions taken by the province to address these priority areas as of March 31, 2008 are identified below.

Priority Area	Action
<b>Increase salaries for early childhood educators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancements to NS Child Care Stabilization Grant</li> <li>• Implementation of Child Care Operating Grant (CCOG)</li> </ul>
<b>Decrease the cost of child care for families</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased the number of portable child care subsidies</li> <li>• Undertook review of income eligibility guidelines for Child Care Subsidy. Program Enhancements included: increased income eligibility and decreased assessed daily parent fees (launched April 1, 2008).</li> </ul>
<b>Increase the operational grant funding to licensed facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased operational grant funding through implementation of the Child Care Operating Grant (CCOG); provided other funding inclusive of Program Enhancement Grant, Outdoor Play Space Grant, and Energy Upgrade Grant</li> </ul>
<b>Recruit and retain a stable child care workforce</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancements to NS Child Care Stabilization Grant</li> <li>• Implementation of Child Care Operating Grant (CCOG)</li> <li>• Development of the Early Childhood Education Assistance Program which provides financial assistance to the early childhood sector (launched April 1st, 2008)</li> <li>• Development of the Continuing Education Program for Child Care Staff which provides reimbursement for continuing education courses to eligible staff working in licensed child care centers or family home day care (FHDC) agencies (launched June 1st, 2008)</li> </ul>
<b>Increase opportunities for training/professional development in early childhood education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of early childhood pre- and in-service professional development workshops and increased access to early childhood development support sites</li> <li>• Provision of funding to the Nova Scotia Community College to enable the further development of the online delivery of the Early Childhood Studies diploma program</li> </ul>
<b>Provide more accessible child care choices for parents of children with special needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in Supported Child Care Funding, enhancing inclusive environments; and increases to the number of children served</li> </ul>
<b>Increase the number of child care spaces in licensed child care centres</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximately 500 new child care spaces were created via the Child Care Expansion and Replacement Loan</li> </ul>
<b>Increase information/education for parents about early childhood development and the benefits of child care for their children</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launched identity sticker symbols for licensed child care centres and approved family home day care homes</li> <li>• Directory of Licensed Child Care Facilities, <a href="http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/families/childcare/directories/FacilitySearch.aspx">http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/families/childcare/directories/FacilitySearch.aspx</a></li> <li>• ELCC Website Mailbox: <a href="mailto:ELCC@gov.ns.ca">ELCC@gov.ns.ca</a></li> <li>• Information posted on the Department of Community Services website: <a href="http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/families/index.html">http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/families/index.html</a></li> </ul>
<b>Increase the number of spaces in licensed family home child care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch of Family Home Day Care Program</li> </ul>
<b>Increase awareness of the Nova Scotia Day Care Act and Regulations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation on new Family Home Regulations</li> <li>• Consultation on the Amendments to the Day Care Regulations</li> </ul>

## **As of March 31, 2008, the following investments reflect the Early Learning and Child Care Plan priorities.**

**Priority Area** • Increase the number of spaces in Licensed Family Home Child Care

**Action** • [Development of Family Home Day Care](#)

The program provides parents with the option of a regulated child care service in a monitored home setting to ensure that children's health, safety and well-being are protected. As of March 31st, 2008 there are 3 FHDC agencies and 37 child care providers in the province.

**Priority Area** • Increase the operational grant funding to child care

**Action** • [Provided operational funding to child care facilities](#)

The Plan provides annual funding to child care centres in the form of a Child Care Operating Grant (CCOG), primarily used to promote salary and benefits and to provide a foundation for recruitment and retention of early childhood staff. In addition to ongoing operational funding in the form of the Stabilization Grant and the Salary Enhancement Grant, CCOG has supported the provision of quality child care in the province. Total approved funding from the ELCC Plan is \$8.1 million.

**Priority Area** • Increase salaries for early childhood educators  
• Recruit and retain a stable child care workforce  
• Increase opportunities for training/professional development in early childhood education

**Action** • [Development of an early childhood education workforce strategy to support the recruitment, retention, training and professional development of the child care sector](#)

The Plan funded the development of a Recruitment & Retention Strategy to respond to current and future requirements to recruit and retain staff to work in licensed child care. The strategy will lay the foundation of a quality early learning and child care system with qualified and dedicated child care staff as foundational components. As part of the plan, the following initiatives were developed: Early Childhood Education Assistance Program (launched April 1st, 2008); and Continuing Education Program for Child Care Staff (launched June 1st, 2008).

**Priority Area** • Increase the number of child care spaces in licensed child care centres

**Action** • [Creation of new licensed spaces](#)

The Plan provided financial assistance to both commercial and non-profit licensed child care centres as part of the Expansion and Replacement Loan program. This program was launched during 2007/08 to enable child care centres to expand their space capacity through access to low interest loans. The program received a total of \$4 million in approved funding.

- Priority Area** • Provide more accessible child care choices for parents of children with special needs
- Action** • Increased funding to support the inclusion of children with special needs in licensed child care facilities

The Plan funded an increase in Supported Child Care funding in order to facilitate the creation of inclusive child care programs for children with special needs and provide a stable base of funding to licensed child care centres.

- Priority Area** • Decrease the cost of child care for families
- Action** • Creation of Additional Child Care Subsidies

The Plan funded additional child care subsidies to further assist low income families with their child care expenses and to enable them to work, pursue employment, attend school, cope with family crisis and/or provide for their children who have special developmental needs. As part of the plan, fixed subsidies were converted to portable subsidies allowing families greater flexibility to move from one centre or region to another and access licensed child care. For the period April 1st, 2005 – March 31st, 2008:

- 380 new child care subsidies were added
- 389 fixed child care subsidies were converted to portable subsidies

- Priority Area** • Increase Information/Education for Parents about Early Childhood Development and the Benefits of Child Care for their Children
- Increase Awareness of the *Day Care Act and Regulation*

- Action**
- Launched Directory of Licensed Child Care Facilities
  - Launched Identity Sticker Symbols for Licensed Child Care Centres and Approved Family Day Care Homes
  - Launched ELCC Website Mailbox

The Plan funded the development of the Directory of Licensed Child Care Facilities; in addition to a website mailbox to receive feedback, comments and suggestions regarding licensed child care. Consultation on proposed amendments to the Day Care Regulations occurred in Spring 2008; a summary of responses was released in December 2008.

### **Additional Program Funding** Funding for Repair/Renovation and Program Grants

The Plan funded the:

- **Repair and Renovation Loan** which provides financial assistance to both commercial and non-profit licensed child care centres to improve or enhance the physical environment and grounds of the centres by doing repairs, renovations, and improvements. Total approved funding: \$1.9 million
- **Outdoor Play Space Grant** which provided one-time funding (2007/08) to licensed child care centres and licensed family home day care agencies for the creation and maintenance of natural, stimulating outdoor play spaces to encourage the healthy development and physical fitness of children. Total approved funding: \$5.1 million
- **Program Enhancement Grant** one-time funding was used to increase the capacity of child care centres to offer a high quality early learning environment for the development and/or enhancement of their child care program. Total approved funding: \$2.6 million

## Conclusion—Enhancements to Nova Scotia’s Early Childhood Development and Early Learning and Child Care System

Over the past seven years, the Province of Nova Scotia has worked to ensure investments in early learning and child care reflect the diverse needs of children and their families. The table below illustrates the federal portion of grant funding (2001–2008) to enhance child care services in five areas (stabilization and wage enhancement, supporting inclusive environments, expansion of licensed child care spaces, program grants and child care operating grants) in Nova Scotia.

### Federal Investment in Child Care in Nova Scotia: 2001 – 2008

Investment Area	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	TOTAL
<b>Stabilization Grant</b>	\$3.4 M	\$3.6 M	\$3.8 M	\$3.9 M	\$4 M	\$4.3 M	\$5 M	<b>\$28 M</b>
<b>Supported Child Care*</b>	\$278,556	\$1.2 M	\$791,000	\$976,671	\$1.2 M	\$1.3 M	\$1.4 M	<b>\$7.2 M</b>
<b>Expansion**</b>		\$1.7 M			\$93,018	\$2.3 M	\$1.3 M	<b>\$5.2 M</b>
<b>Program Grants***</b>		\$399,861	\$702,517				\$7.7 M	<b>\$8.8 M</b>
<b>Child Care Operating Grant</b>						\$900,000	\$5.4 M	<b>\$6.3 M</b>
<b>Investment of Federal Expenditures</b>								<b>\$55.5 M</b>

Overall, since baseline funding began in 2001 for early childhood development programs, investment in the quality, flexibility and inclusiveness of child care programming in Nova Scotia has continued to increase. Nova Scotia has continued to make the early childhood development system and the early childhood sector a priority, as evidenced not only by our investment, but through our commitment to implementing the Early Learning and Child Care Plan. The Plan is linked to the Nova Scotia Social Prosperity Framework, weaving together the factors affecting social prosperity such as the health, safety and inclusion of children and their families with factors affecting economic prosperity such as investments in workforce development and facility upgrades.

In keeping with the vision of the New Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Social Prosperity Framework, investments in early childhood development have been multi-faceted; continued integration, expansion and enhancements to the system will further build upon the foundation that has been created in the province while weaving together the needs of our youngest citizens and their families.

\* Supported Child Care was formerly reported as Inclusion/Differential

\*\* Expansion includes: New/Expanded Child Care Centres (2002-03, 2005-06, 2006-07, and 2007-08); Repair/Renovation Loan (2006-07, 2007-08)

\*\*\*Program Grants include: CDC Resources Grant (2002-03); Material and Resources Grant (2003 -04); Outdoor Play Space Grant and Program Enhancement Grant (2007-08)





# Child Well-Being • 2007 Summary Report



Families and children are the foundation of both social and economic prosperity. The combined efforts of parents, communities and government are needed to ensure that our children have the opportunity to develop to their full potential within safe and secure environments. In September 2000, First Ministers released a communiqué on early childhood development, in which they agreed to, “make regular public reports on outcome indicators of child well-being using an agreed upon set of common indicators...related to the objective established for early childhood development.” The indicators describe five aspects of child well-being: physical health and motor development, early development, safety and security, family context and community context; the indicators are not exhaustive.

The 2007 Child Well-Being Report fulfills Nova Scotia’s commitment to report to our citizens on the health and well-being of our children. This section provides information on children from birth to age five in Nova Scotia, for the years 1998 - 2005. Sources of information about young children and their families for this report include: the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY); the Nova Scotia Vital Statistics Registry, the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics and the Census.

The following section provides a summary of information on the five indicators of child well-being for the province of Nova Scotia.

### **Physical Health**

During the period 2000 – 2004, the percentage of babies born in Nova Scotia with a healthy birth weight (between 2500 and 4000) grams has remained relatively constant (79% average), as compared to the Canadian average (81 %); the proportion of babies born with high birth weight (more than 4000 grams) declined slightly over the same period (16 % to 14.7 % respectively); and the incidence of pre-term birth rate (before 37 weeks of gestational age) has fluctuated slightly (7.9 % to 7.5 %). Prevalence of breastfeeding among infants in Nova Scotia remains below the Canadian rate. In recent years, the number of infant deaths in Nova Scotia has ranged between four and six per 1000 live births. There were no reported cases of meningococcal group C disease or measles in Nova Scotia between 1998 and 2006; one single case of Hib was reported in 2002.

### **Early Development**

Children’s physical and social development is measured by the Motor and Social Development (MSD) scale, which consists of 15 questions that measure dimensions of the motor, social and cognitive development of young children from birth to age three. In Nova Scotia, more than 80 percent of children scored average or advanced on the MSD scale between 1998-99 and 2004-05. These indicators compare favourably with the Canadian data.

In addition, measures of children’s emotional health, social knowledge and competence compares favourably with the Canadian data; with respect to language skills, a consistently smaller proportion of Nova Scotia children exhibit delayed scores on the Peabody Picture and Vocabulary Test - Revised (PPVT-R) as compared to the Canadian data. (Data was not available for Nova Scotia in 2004–05).



### **Safety and Security**

The injury hospitalization rate has fluctuated between 1998 and 2005. Data on the injury mortality rate is not available beyond 2000; however during 1998 – 2000, the injury mortality rate in Nova Scotia was lower than the country as a whole.

### **Family Related Indicators**

Parents are the primary support for their children and have a critical role in shaping how a child develops, both mentally and physically. Family related indicators refer to measures of various aspects of parental health and behaviour that are known to impact on the health and well-being of their children. These indicators include: parental education, parental level of income, parental depression, tobacco use during pregnancy, family functioning, positive parenting and reading by an adult. Educational achievement among parents of young children has increased between 1998–99 and 2004–05 in both Nova Scotia and Canada. Indicators for Nova Scotia compare favourably with Canadian data; there has been some fluctuation in parental level of income between 1998 and 2005.

### **Community Related Indicators**

Families, in turn, are affected by the physical, social, economic, and community environments in which they live. Community indicators include neighbourhood cohesion and neighbourhood safety. In 2004/05, there were slightly fewer Nova Scotian parents who reported lower levels of neighbourhood cohesion (12%); while 30 percent of parents rated their neighbourhoods as low on the Neighbourhood Safety Score.

## **Committed to Our Children**

The information presented in this section provides an overview of child well-being in Nova Scotia. While challenges exist, there are also many opportunities for growth. Working together collaboratively, strategies can be developed to enable children to have the best possible start in life. The improvements to early childhood development initiatives and early learning and child care services are one of the diverse influences and factors which impact the lives of children and their families. The government of Nova Scotia is committed to working with federal and community partners to support the healthy development, well-being and child care of our children through affordable, accessible and inclusive programs and services.

Nova Scotia will continue to report to the public on progress toward enhancing and stabilizing child care, in addition to indicators of child well-being in order to inform future public policy decisions regarding the delivery of programs and services that affect children and their families.



# Appendix A Overview of Nova Scotia's ECD Investments (Federal/Provincial) 2005–2008

ECD ACTION AREA	2005-06 Actual Funding (\$)	2006-07 Actual Funding (\$)	2007-08 Actual Funding (\$)
<b>Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting</b>			
Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting	3,500,000	3,500,000	3,500,000
<b>Sub-total:</b>	<b>\$3,500,000</b>	<b>\$3,500,000</b>	<b>\$3,500,000</b>
<b>Enhanced Parenting and Family Supports</b>			
Parent Education and Support Grant	901,500	787,500	767,500
Child Care Information and Support	650,000	650,000	550,000
Early Language and Learning	890,000	720,000	617,886
Enhanced Domestic Adoption	831,899	928,310	775,090
<b>Sub-total:</b>	<b>\$3,273,399</b>	<b>\$3,085,810</b>	<b>\$2,710,476</b>
<b>Stabilizing and Enhancing Child Care</b>			
Child Care Stabilization Grant	4,029,166	4,263,137	4,991,090
Early Childhood Education Training Initiative	994,000	1,098,000	800,000
Supported Child Care (formerly Inclusion/Differential)	2,683,032	2,705,866	2,894,070
Subsidy and Equipment Grants	10,108,891	10,122,220	10,951,300
Capacity Initiative	23,000	—	—
Other Child Care (includes Salary Enhancement Grant, Child Care Operating Grant)	2,892,808	3,790,479	8,288,897
Child Development Centres	291,049	276,077	263,281
*New/ Expanded Child Care Centres	93,018	2,248,302	420,820
*Repair/Renovation Loan	—	46,939	839,097
Outdoor Play Space Grant	—	—	5,080,806
Program Enhancement Grant	—	—	2,621,057
Early Intervention	2,092,237	2,320,369	2,379,822
ECDS Administration	293,387	328,328	423,851
ESIA Child Care	4,880,358	4,329,969	4,110,842
<b>Sub-total:</b>	<b>\$28,380,946</b>	<b>\$31,559,686</b>	<b>\$44,064,933</b>
<b>Community Engagement and Infrastructure Support</b>			
ECD Regional Collaboration Teams	3,444	2,722	1,703
Early Childhood Development Information System and Reporting	995,735	1,206,492	1,923,994
Administration and Operations	1,668,132	1,629,234	1,727,222
<b>Sub-total:</b>	<b>2,667,311</b>	<b>2,838,448</b>	<b>3,652,919</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$37,821,656</b>	<b>\$40,983,994</b>	<b>\$53,928,328</b>

### \*New / Expanded Child Care Centres

In 2004, approximately \$3 million was approved for the expansion of licensed child care facilities to create additional child care spaces.

Portion reported reflects the remainder of forgivable loans paid in 2007-08, as issued to approved licensed non-profit facilities this fiscal year. Repayable loans issued are NOT reported as expenditures. Total 2004 – 05 Expansion funding for forgivable loans was \$2,762,140.

### \*\*Repair / Renovation Loans

In 2007, approximately \$1 million was announced for approved licensed commercial and non-profit child care centres to improve or enhance their centres. This will include funding for repairs, renovations, and improvements including energy upgrades and accessibility for children and families with identified special needs.

Portion reported reflects forgivable loans only, as issued to approved licensed non-profit facilities. Repayable loans issued are NOT reported as expenditures.

For detailed financial information please refer to Appendix A: Financial Expenditures of the 2005 – 2008 Early Childhood Development Progress Report/2007 Child Well-Being Report (<http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms>).











