

Early Learning and Child Care Quality Framework Action Plan

2024-2033







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Introduction

In June 2023, the Government of Nunavut approved the *Nunavut Early Learning and Child Care Quality Framework*. This framework presents a clear and accessible vision for early learning and child care (ELCC) in Nunavut that supports the development and delivery of high quality ELCC programs and services across the territory.

The framework recognizes that ELCC programs and services must be grounded in Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and be driven by the goals of revitalizing and retaining Inuit language and culture. The framework applies to ELCC programs delivered in a diversity of settings across Nunavut, including

those that take place in the home, licensed child care settings including family day homes, and community-based programs such as parents and tots groups.

With an aim to ensure that all children have access to rich, comprehensive early learning experiences, principles grounded in Inuit societal values, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, and inunnguiniq (“the making of a human being”) have been established to support the development and delivery of ELCC programs and services across the territory. The four guiding principles of the *Nunavut ELCC Quality Framework* are:



Children are curious, capable, and competent



Children have social, emotional, physical, spiritual, and intellectual dimensions



Children want to belong and contribute to their families and communities



Children need to play, experiment, and practice

This action plan outlines the actions that the Department of Education will take to support the implementation of *Nunavut ELCC Quality Framework*. The action plan was developed based on input and feedback provided by key partners and stakeholders, including:

- Licensed child care centre staff
- Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated
- Regional Inuit Associations
- Commission scolaire francophone du Nunavut
- District Education Authorities
- Municipalities in Nunavut
- Friends of The Iqaluit Centennial Library
- Association des francophones du Nunavut
- Representative for Children and Youth's Office
- Office of the Languages Commissioner of Nunavut
- Government of Nunavut, Departments of Education, Health, and Family Services

The Action Plan also aligns with existing ELCC strategies and action plans to ensure the Department of Education can build on the important steps taken to date and enhance the quality of ELCC in Nunavut.

The *Nunavut Early Learning and Child Care Quality Framework* can be accessed and downloaded from the Government of Nunavut page website

https://www.gov.nu.ca/sites/default/files/documents/2023-12/Nunavut%20Early%20Learning%20and%20Childcare%20Framework_EN.pdf



Dimensions of the Nunavut Early Learning and Child Care Quality Framework

The four dimensions of the *Nunavut Early Learning and Child Care Quality Framework* are reflected in this action plan. The child is the framework's primary focus and therefore is at the centre. All dimensions and guiding principles work to support the child.



The Family and Home

Home is where children begin to learn and grow with their parents and caregivers as their first teachers.



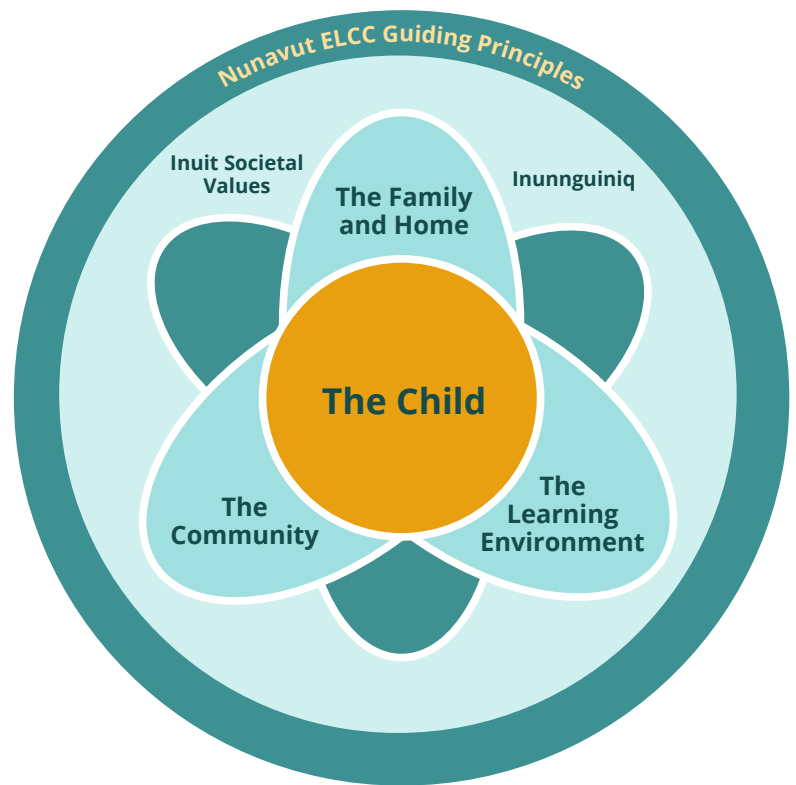
The Community

Children are also part of a wider community, which plays a role in supporting and nurturing their learning and development.



The Learning Environment

Early learning and child care in Nunavut is provided in formal and informal settings and is led by child care providers and early childhood educators.



Strategic Areas of Focus

This action plan includes seven strategic areas of focus that were identified through engagement with key stakeholders and partners.

These strategic areas of focus are:



Provide Supports for Parents and Caregivers



Create ELCC Program Guidance and Materials that Support Quality



Increase Elder Participation in ELCC Programs and Services



Promote Accessibility and Inclusion



Provide Ongoing ELCC Training



Enhance the ELCC Workforce



Support Knowledge Sharing and Collaboration



As this action plan is focused on achieving high-quality ELCC, it does not specify actions focused on providing basic needs, such as ensuring children have access to food, clothing, and shelter. While these necessities are not reflected in this action plan, the Department of Education acknowledges that these basic needs must be provided as a first step for Nunavummiut to engage in and deliver quality ELCC programming and services.

The identified strategic areas of focus align with the dimensions of the *Nunavut Early Learning and Child Care Quality Framework*. As the child is at the centre of the framework and is supported by all areas, the strategic areas of focus below indicate where alignment exists with the supportive three dimensions of family and home, community, and learning environment.



The Family and Home

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The Community

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The Learning Environment

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Provide Supports for Parents and Caregivers

Parents and caregivers play a fundamental role in a child’s development during the critical early years. By developing and making materials accessible, the Department of Education empowers parents and caregivers to support their child’s learning and growth at home. This can also help families whose children attend ELCC programs as learning can be supported at home with culturally and linguistically appropriate materials. Additionally, facilitating supports for parents to interact with one another and with Elders can promote building relationships between home and community, allowing for more comprehensive collaboration, support, and learning. Parents and caregivers can exchange ideas, strategies, and tips for supporting their child’s development through behavioural guidance, and educational activities. Investing in enhanced support for parents and caregivers not only benefits individual families but also contributes to the overall development and success of the community.



ELCC Program Guidance and Resources That Support Quality Learning

Creating early learning program guidance and resources that are inclusive ensures that children in Nunavut ELCC centres are receiving a similar learning experience. The process of developing program guidance and creating resources includes working collaboratively with partners and stakeholders, including Inuit organizations, to ensure the incorporation of traditional knowledge, practices, and Inuktitto help children maintain or develop a strong connection to Inuit culture. All program guidance and resources developed will be published in all official languages to ensure accessibility and inclusivity. Encouraging the use of resources and educational tools that promote inclusion, equity, and cross-cultural understanding is essential for supporting the holistic development of children in Nunavut.



Increase Elder Participation in Programs and Services

Elders are valued community members who carry knowledge and wisdom that build and sustain children’s connection with Inuit values, language, culture, practices, and traditions. Having Elders participate in ELCC programs and services can help to protect and promote Inuktitut and Inuit culture and can make ELCC programming more culturally relevant and responsive to meeting the needs of Nunavut families and the goals of the territorial government.



Promote Accessibility and Inclusion

Promoting accessibility and inclusion in Nunavut's ELCC spaces is crucial for fostering a supportive and equitable environment for all children and families. It is important to ensure that learning environments for children include spaces, resources, and staff that provide learning experiences for each child's social, emotional, physical, spiritual, and intellectual development. ELCC environments should employ universal design principles and be adaptable, flexible, and responsive to the needs of specific communities. Promoting accessibility and inclusion benefits individual children by fostering their development and well-being while contributing to building a more inclusive Nunavut that celebrates diversity.



Provide Ongoing Training

Providing ongoing training to licensed child care centre staff across Nunavut gives early childhood educators and child care providers the skills they need to effectively support and care for children. Ongoing training allows staff to: learn about the latest research and best practices in child development; acquire new skills and knowledge, such as cultural competency and inclusive practices; enhance the overall quality of learning and child care services; and achieve better outcomes in children's early development, well-being, and school readiness.



Enhance the Workforce

The workforce is the backbone of licensed child care: they ensure that centres can operate effectively. An enhanced workforce will mean that licensed child care centres are adequately staffed. The Department of Education's collaboration with Nunavut Arctic College to expand early childhood educator certification will create a skilled workforce that can provide children with high-quality care. Inuit language skills are a workforce priority to promote Inuit language protection and promotion through culturally relevant and responsive care to children.



Support Knowledge Sharing and Collaboration

Supporting knowledge sharing and collaboration within the ELCC sector in Nunavut is extremely important as it facilitates the exchange of best practices, innovative approaches and research findings among educators, policymakers, and stakeholders, leading to continuous improvement and enhanced quality. Secondly, it helps to foster a sense of community and interconnectedness within the ELCC sector, promoting networking, peer learning and the development of supportive partnerships within the community. By fostering a culture of knowledge-sharing and collaboration, the ELCC sector can achieve greater impact, effectiveness, and sustainability in promoting positive outcomes for children's learning, development and well-being.

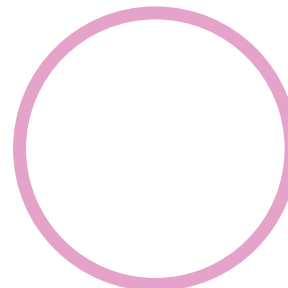
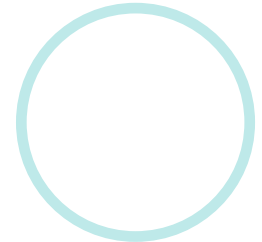
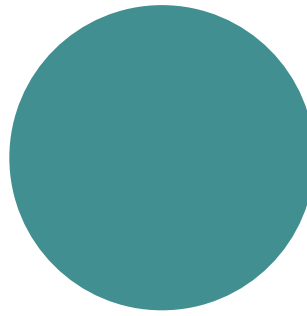
Reporting

To ensure that the public is aware of the progress on the implementation of this action plan, the Department of Education will publish public updates on the department's website. These updates will be published annually.

Action Items

Action items grouped by strategic area are presented below.

While the Department of Education is responsible for implementing each action item, high-quality ELCC is the result of collective work, dedication, and efforts of the entire community. As such, the Department of Education has identified key partners and stakeholders for applicable action items. To support implementation in our territory, ongoing, stable federal funding for the Canada-wide ELCC system is required, in addition to an increase in Government of Nunavut funding. Timelines have also been included below to indicate when action items will be implemented. The timelines are short-term (1-2 years), medium-term (3-5 years), and long-term (6-10 years).





Provide Supports for Parents and Caregivers

| Action Item | Short-Term | Medium-Term | Long-Term | Key Partners & Stakeholders |
|--|------------|-------------|-----------|---|
| Continue to provide funding for parents/caregivers and Elders to interact together. | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents and caregivers • Elders • Community organizations |
| Share available resources with parents/caregivers online in all official languages. Topics could include supporting the healthy development of the child through play-based learning and promoting Inuit language and culture. | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inuit organizations • Parents and caregivers • Licensed child care centre staff |
| Promote the availability of resources and supports to parents/caregivers and centres. This could include a variety of communication channels, such as the department website, social media, newsletters to centres, etc. | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inuit organizations • Parents and caregivers • Licensed child care centre staff |



Create ELCC Program Guidance and Materials That Support Quality

| Action Item | Short-Term | Medium-Term | Long-Term | Key Partners & Stakeholders |
|--|------------|-------------|-----------|---|
| Provide resources or funding for centres to purchase resources and educational tools that relate to quality programming, inclusion, equity, and intercultural understanding. | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Licensed child care centre staff• Community organizations |
| Research and develop program guidance resources, seeking input and feedback from partners, including Inuit organizations, and stakeholders. | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inuit organizations• Licensed child care centre staff• Parents and Caregivers• Community organizations |
| Publish and promote the program guidance resources in all official languages. This could include a variety of communication channels, such as the department website, social media, newsletters to centres, etc. | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inuit organizations• Licensed child care centre staff |



Increase Elder Participation in ELCC Programs and Services

| Action Item | Short-Term | Medium-Term | Long-Term | Key Partners & Stakeholders |
|--|------------|-------------|-----------|--|
| Continue to provide grants and contributions funding for ELCC providers to hire Elders. | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Licensed child care centre staff Elders District Education Authorities/ Commission scolaire francophone du Nunavut |
| Promote availability of funding for Elder participation in ELCC programs. This could include a variety of communication channels, such as social media, newsletters to centres, and District Education Authorities/Commission scolaire francophone du Nunavut. | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Licensed child care centre staff Elders |
| Expand criteria for existing funding for Elder participation in ELCC programs to include transportation for Elders to and from programs. | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Licensed child care centre staff Elders |



Promote Accessibility and Inclusion

| Action Item | Short-Term | Medium-Term | Long-Term | Key Partners & Stakeholders |
|--|------------|-------------|-----------|--|
| Maintain an inventory of available community spaces to support ELCC programming, and regularly share list with District Education Authorities, community partners, Regional Inuit associations, and licensed child care centres. | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inuit organizations• Licensed child care centre staff |
| Ensure equity and inclusion perspectives are reflected in ELCC requirements (e.g., Child Day Care Act) to guide the development and delivery of ELCC programming and services. | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inuit organizations• Licensed child care centre staff |
| Work with Inuit organizations to provide funding to improve the condition of existing licensed child care centres to provide accessibility upgrades. | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inuit organizations• Licensed child care centre staff |

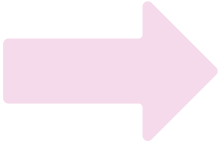






Provide Ongoing ELCC Training

| Action Item | Short-Term | Medium-Term | Long-Term | Key Partners & Stakeholders |
|--|------------|-------------|-----------|--|
| Update and promote existing training content on Inunnguiniq pedagogy and practice, cultural competency, cross-cultural ELCC, and Inuktitut for infants and preschoolers. | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inuit organizations • Licensed child care centre staff • Community experts |
| Partner with subject matter experts to develop and deliver specialized inclusion and equity training for early learning and child care in Nunavut. | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inuit organizations • Licensed child care centre staff • Community experts |
| Establish a team to deliver in-person and virtual training to centres (e.g., Elders, ECE). | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inuit organizations • Licensed child care centre staff • Community experts • Elders |
| Introduce an incentive program for early childhood training opportunities for licensed child care centre staff. | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensed child care centre staff |



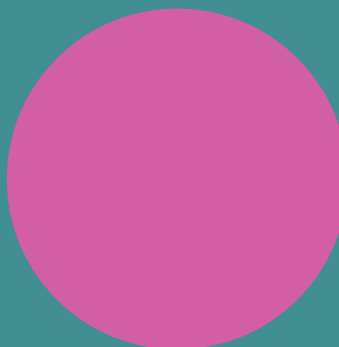
Enhance ELCC Workforce

| Action Item | Short-Term | Medium-Term | Long-Term | Key Partners & Stakeholders |
|---|--|-------------|-----------|---|
| Create an awareness campaign to promote licensed child care centre jobs. |  | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Licensed child care centre staff Inuit organizations |
| Continue to fund a Workforce Development Specialist position within the Department of Education to expand the ELCC workforce and to support licensed child care centre management in recruiting new staff, retaining existing staff, and increasing participation in training and professional development. |  | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Licensed child care centre staff |
| Work with Nunavut Arctic College to increase the delivery of Early Childhood Education certification training in Nunavut communities. |  | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nunavut Arctic College Licensed child care centre staff Inuit organizations |
| Explore opportunities to incentivize Nunavut Inuit enrollment in ECE programs. |  | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nunavut Arctic College Licensed child care centre staff Inuit organizations |
| Explore opportunities to incentivize Inuit language use in ELCC programs and services. |  | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inuit organizations Licensed child care centre staff |



Support Knowledge Sharing and Collaboration

| Action Item | Short-Term | Medium-Term | Long-Term | Key Partners & Stakeholders |
|--|------------|-------------|-----------|---|
| Create coordinated messaging to share information on training, streams of funding, and other opportunities. This could be through an ongoing newsletter or provided through an online community of practice. | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inuit organizations • Licensed child care centre staff |
| Leverage the annual ELCC system transformation meeting to exchange current issues and trends in ELCC settings. | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inuit organizations • Licensed child care centre staff |
| Explore opportunities with partners on how the ELCC system can further streamline funding and administrative processes for centres. | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inuit organizations • Licensed child care centre staff |
| Promote and encourage collaboration and knowledge-sharing with government departments and child care providers (e.g., Department of Health and Department of Family Services). | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Family Services • Department of Health • Licensed child care centre staff |
| Develop an online community of practice for ELCC staff to regularly connect. | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensed child care centre staff |



Canada

