

A Message from the Minister Responsible for Early Years and Child Care

Thank you for being a part of our important work to create a renewed framework for Ontario's early years and child care future.

This renewed framework is a bold step forward. It contains a ground-breaking set of initiatives that will help us continue to transform the early years and child care system in the province and make high – quality early years experiences possible for even more children and families.

I am excited to hear from you as we continue this conversation. Together, we can give our children the best possible start in life, and build a better future for Ontario.

– Indira Naidoo-Harris, Minister Responsible for Early Years and Child Care

Your Feedback

This renewed framework would not have been possible without your participation in our consultations. This blueprint reflects the feedback we heard from across the province, which gave us valuable advice and insight about better supporting children and families. **You told us that:**

- Families face challenges accessing and affording licensed child care, and more fee subsidies are needed.
- Parents are not aware of the programs available in their communities.
- Programs need to be more responsive to different cultures, languages, and work schedules.
- Families value high quality programs and the early childhood educators who care for our children.

6,044

Online survey responses

2,085

People attending in-person sessions

45

Discussion paper submissions

20

Communities across the province

You spoke, and we listened. Our framework is stronger because of your input.

Supporting Children and Families

Ontario's **renewed vision** has **seven areas of action** to build an accessible, affordable, responsive, and high quality early years and child care system for children aged 0-12. Read *Ontario's Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework* (2017) <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/eyccframework.html>

ACTION AREA 1: Increasing Access

Families will find it easier to access high-quality early years programs and licensed child care spaces in communities, homes and schools. To achieve this we are:

- ✓ Helping 100,000 more children aged 0-4 access licensed child care through significant operating and subsidy investments, and providing \$1.6B over the next five years in capital funding.
- ✓ Prioritizing the growth of not-for-profit child care.

- ✓ Launching an Innovation Fund to support unique solutions to increase access to licensed child care.
- ✓ Providing base-funding for the licensed home child care sector to give families more options for high-quality care.
- ✓ Increasing access to culturally relevant child and family programs and licensed child care in Indigenous communities, building on our *Journey Together* commitments.
- ✓ Integrating Ontario's existing child and family programs into a single suite of services.

ACTION AREA 2: Increased Affordability

Child care will be more affordable for families. To achieve this we are:

- ✓ Investing immediately so that more children can have more affordable access to high-quality licensed child care.
- ✓ Increasing funding for fee subsidies to help families who need them.
- ✓ Launching an expert-led Affordability Strategy that will look to transform the child care system to make it more affordable for Ontario families.

ACTION AREA 3: Early Years Workforce Strategy

Families will continue to benefit from high-quality child care and early years programming delivered by engaged and knowledgeable educators. To achieve this we are:

- ✓ Developing a workforce strategy, including a study to identify how we can better support ECEs and other child care staff in areas that include: compensation, hiring, retention, education, training and governance.
- ✓ Confirming ongoing funding for wage enhancement while exploring methods for improving the program.
- ✓ Providing ongoing support for professional development, including two provincially-funded professional learning days per year.

ACTION AREA 4: Defining Quality in the Early Years

Children and families will continue to benefit from a shared view of the role of the child, family and educator across early years settings. To achieve this we are:

- ✓ Engaging with early years partners to co-develop a definition of program quality by 2019.
- ✓ Embedding quality into all aspects of Ontario's early years and child care system to create meaningful environments for children, families and early childhood professionals.
- ✓ Conducting research and developing a mechanism for measuring program quality.

ACTION AREA 5: Promoting Inclusion in the Early Years

Families will find it easier to receive support for children with special needs. To achieve this we are:

- ✓ Reviewing current approaches to supporting all children in early years and child care settings.
- ✓ Engaging with stakeholders to develop a renewed approach for children with special needs in the early years.

ACTION AREA 6: Outcomes and Measurement Strategy

Families will have increased confidence in how Ontario's early years and child care system is working.

To achieve this we are:

- ✓ Developing and releasing an annual report beginning in September 2017.
- ✓ Developing a five-year outcomes and measurement strategy to track progress, measure quality and identify and respond to trends in Ontario's child care system.

ACTION AREA 7: Increasing Public Awareness

Families will be able to easily access information about programs and services, including licensed child care and child and family programs. We are committed to increasing public awareness by:

- ✓ Creating a one-stop online hub to make it easier to understand and participate in Ontario's early years and childcare programs and services.
- ✓ Providing a new visual identity for Ontario's child and family programs.