



## Meeting Summary: The Canada Wide Early Learning Child Care Engagement Table (ELCCET)

Meeting 8: April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 9:15 – 3:15 pm

### Background

The eighth meeting of the Minister’s Early Learning and Child Care Engagement Table (ELCCET) was held on April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The meeting focused on the following:

- Expansion: Updates on the Family Home Expansion Grant and Minor Infrastructure Funding Program, and input on draft program policy criteria for the Major Infrastructure Funding Program.
- Workforce: Update and feedback on the strategic approach to growing the early childhood educator workforce.
- Quality: Update on the revised Early Learning Curriculum Framework.
- General Updates: Operational initiatives and special projects.

### Agenda

1. Check in and Minister’s Remarks
2. Update and input on expansion funding programs
3. Update and input on workforce initiatives
4. Update on the Early Learning Curriculum Framework
5. Update on the early learning quality assessment tool (AQI) pilot
6. Standing project and operational updates

The **expansion** component of the day included updates on Family Home expansion and the Minor Infrastructure funding program. Most of the discussion was devoted to introducing the Major Infrastructure funding program and receiving feedback to inform its finalization. The Major Infrastructure program was recently announced and is now available for applications. Details about the program, and other funding programs available to create spaces in licensed child care and family homes can be found here: <https://childcarenovascotia.ca/creating-spaces>

Relating to **workforce**, the Department’s strategic approach to growing and retaining a high-quality workforce was perceived positively with two areas noted as being worthy of additional consideration: preparing ECEs for the diverse and complex needs of today’s children and families and improving the consistency of training delivery across ECE training institutions.

Relating to **quality**, table members received an update on the status of the revised Early Learning and Child Care Curriculum Framework. The update included rationale for revisions to the Framework and a summary of key changes. Table members noted their support for the revisions, discussing the impact of covid on young children and the need for evolving curriculum guidance that reflects the diverse and unique needs of today’s young learners. Members noted the need for the Framework to be readily available within centres, in digestible formats that can be quickly referenced and applied by educators. Communities of practice to support the application of the revised Framework were also suggested. The



Department looks forward to sharing more information about the roll-out of the revised Framework to the sector, shortly.

## Discussion Details: Expansion

The Department provided an update on plans to recruit more licensed Family Home Child Care providers, including a review of the grant funding available to assist new providers with home set-up costs. The Department then provided an update on the initial uptake of the Minor Infrastructure funding program, which launched in January 2024, including lessons learned from the program's launch.

Table members were briefed on the draft criteria for a pending expansion program. The program has since been launched under the brand 'Major Infrastructure Program' (launch date: May 2, 2024 – available for applications until June 13, 2024). Members were given a preview of key program criteria, including eligibility, funding amounts, allowable costs and the plan to announce the program publicly. Members gave suggestions on criteria, identified questions that applicants were likely to have, provided input on the announcement plan and gave feedback on key timelines.

The Minister and Department staff would like to extend a special thank you to Table members for their valuable feedback. The Major Infrastructure Program was finalized with the Table's feedback in mind and is now open for applications. Program details can be found here:

<https://childcarenovascotia.ca/creating-spaces#major>

## Discussion Details: Workforce

The Department shared updates on the pathways being created for individuals who are interested in joining the early learning and child care (ELCC) workforce, and the approach to further stabilizing and retaining the existing ECE workforce. The Table was asked if ECE training and upskilling initiatives are having the right impact, how impact could be enhanced, and what else the Department needs to consider as workforce recruitment and retention efforts continue. The guidance provided by members will inform future programming and workforce discussions at the Department.

## Discussion Details: Early Learning Curriculum Framework

An update on the rationale for revising the Early Learning Curriculum Framework was provided by the Department along with an explanation of the process followed to update the Framework. Staff reviewed the plan to launch the revised Framework, including how the sector will be supported to use the new document. Members were asked to share any questions they had and suggestions to help ensure a successful roll-out. Access to an online version of the Framework was suggested as an important way to improve easy access to the material.

Table members commented on the importance of reflective practice to support the Framework and noted that Family Home Providers should be included in the Framework in the future, or have a version adapted to their needs.



## Session wrap-up

The day concluded with emerging updates on other operational and strategic initiatives. The Department looks forward to sharing these updates more broadly as details are finalized.

The next in-person table meeting will take place on June 8, 2024.