

## CANADA-SASKATCHEWAN CANADA-WIDE EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE AGREEMENT

BETWEEN: **HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN IN RIGHT OF CANADA** (hereinafter referred to as “Canada” or “Government of Canada”) as represented by the Minister of Employment and Social Development Canada (“Canada”) and as represented by the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (herein referred to as “the Federal Minister”)

- and -

**HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN IN RIGHT OF THE PROVINCE OF SASKATCHEWAN** (hereinafter referred to as “Saskatchewan” or “Government of Saskatchewan”) as represented by the Minister of Education (herein referred to as “the Provincial Minister”)

REFERRED to collectively as the “Parties”

### PREAMBLE

**WHEREAS**, Canada and Saskatchewan agreed to a Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework on June 12, 2017 which articulated their shared vision for early learning and child care and describes their approach to achieve this vision;

**WHEREAS**, Canada and Saskatchewan will work together to build a community-based system of quality, regulated early learning and child care, aiming for all families to have access to high-quality, affordable, flexible and inclusive early learning and child care no matter where they live;

**WHEREAS**, Building on the 2020 Fall Economic Statement (FES), Budget 2021 commits almost \$30 billion over five years and provides permanent ongoing funding to work with provincial and territorial, and Indigenous partners to support quality, not-for-profit child care, and ensure early childhood educators are at the heart of the system. Combined with previous investments announced since 2015, approximately \$9.2 billion per year ongoing will be invested in child care, including Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care, starting in 2025-26;

**WHEREAS**, Canada’s spending in early learning and child care (hereinafter “ELCC”) is intended to increase until it is roughly shared with provinces and territories by 2025-26;

**WHEREAS**, To further support a lasting federal commitment, Canada is committed to tabling Early Learning and Child Care Legislation in fall 2021, following consultations with stakeholders, provincial, territorial, and Indigenous partners—to enshrine the principles of a Canada-wide ELCC system into law;

**WHEREAS**, the *Department of Employment and Social Development Act* (DESDA) authorizes the Federal Minister to enter into agreements with the provinces and territories,

for the purpose of facilitating the formulation, coordination and implementation of any program or policy falling within DESDA;

**WHEREAS**, the *Executive Government Administration Act* authorizes the Saskatchewan Minister to enter in agreements with the Government of Canada under which Canada undertakes to provide funding toward costs incurred by the Government of Saskatchewan for the provision of early learning and child care;

**WHEREAS**, Canada has, pursuant to its Policy on Transfer Payments, established a transfer payment program to provide funds to the provincial and territorial governments for the development and delivery of regulated child care programs and services;

**WHEREAS**, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada has called “upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Indigenous governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families”;

**WHEREAS**, Canada and the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the Métis National Council jointly released the co-developed Indigenous ELCC Framework in September 2018, which establishes overarching principles and sets a vision for happy and safe Indigenous children and families, strong cultural identity, and a comprehensive and coordinated system that is anchored in self-determination and centered on children and grounded in culture, and can be used as a guide for all actors involved in Indigenous ELCC; and,

**WHEREAS**, Saskatchewan invests in early learning and child care for Indigenous children and Canada and Saskatchewan agree to work collaboratively with Indigenous governing bodies and organizations to achieve a Canada-wide ELCC system.

**NOW THEREFORE**, Canada and Saskatchewan agree as follows:

## **1.0 VISION FOR CANADA-WIDE EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE**

- 1.1 Canada will be guided by the long-term vision and objectives set out in the Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework (hereinafter the “Framework”) that is attached as Annex 1 in making investments in ELCC committed in Budget 2021 across jurisdictions. Canada and Saskatchewan agree that the long-term vision and objectives for Canada-wide ELCC system set out in the Framework will guide the investment of funds provided under this Agreement. This includes the vision that all families in Canada have access to high-quality, affordable, flexible and inclusive early learning and child care no matter where they live.
- 1.2 Canada and Saskatchewan aspire to the following objectives:
  - a) Providing a 50% reduction in average parent fees for regulated ELCC by the end of 2022 and reaching an average of \$10 a day by 2025-26 for all regulated child care spaces;

- b) Creating more high-quality, affordable regulated child care spaces, primarily through not-for-profit and public child care, and family home-based child care providers;
- c) Addressing barriers to provide inclusive and flexible child care; and,
- d) Valuing the early childhood workforce and providing them with training and development opportunities.

1.3 Canada and Saskatchewan agree that progress toward this vision will be undertaken by prioritizing federal investments in support of regulated early learning and child care and for children under age six.

## **2.0 CANADA-WIDE EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE OBJECTIVES AND AREAS OF INVESTMENT**

2.1.1 Canada and Saskatchewan commit to the following objectives, with “regulated” as defined in s. 2.2.1(a):

### *Affordability:*

Saskatchewan commits to using federal funding to reduce out-of-pocket parent fees for regulated ELCC spaces for children under age six by an average of 50% from 2019 levels by the end of 2022.

Saskatchewan commits to using federal funding to reduce out-of-pocket parent fees for full-time regulated ELCC spaces for children under age six to an average of \$10/day by the end of fiscal year 2025-26.

### *Access:*

Saskatchewan commits to using federal funding to increase the net number of regulated child care spaces for children under age six to achieve a coverage rate of 59% by 2025-2026.

In creating these child care spaces, Saskatchewan commits that:

- Federal funding will be used exclusively to support not-for-profit, public child care providers/operations, as well as family-based child care; and
- Federal funding will be exclusively used to support regulated child care delivery by licensed providers.

### *Quality:*

Saskatchewan commits to use federal funds to demonstrate meaningful progress on improving quality, including:

- Developing and implementing evidence based quality frameworks, standards, and tools for early learning and child care;
- Developing a wage grid for Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) and committing to its implementation; and,
- Increasing the percentage of child care workers providing regulated child care in Saskatchewan who fully meet the province’s certification requirements by 15 percentage points by 2025-26.

*Inclusive:*

Saskatchewan commits to develop and fund a plan to ensure that new space creation ensures diverse and/or vulnerable children and families – including children with disabilities and children needing enhanced or individual supports, Indigenous children, Black and other racialized children, children of newcomers, and official language minorities – have spaces equivalent to or greater than their share of the population in Saskatchewan.

In supporting inclusive child care, Saskatchewan commits:

- To track the number of inclusive spaces with inclusive programming created/converted as well as the annual public expenditures on child care programming dedicated to children from diverse and/or vulnerable families.

*Data Sharing and Reporting*

- Saskatchewan commits to share financial and administrative data (including micro data) needed to monitor progress in establishing the Canada-wide system.

2.1.2 Saskatchewan’s policy and approach to achieving these objectives is set out in its Action Plan attached as Annex 2.

2.2 Eligible Areas of Investment

2.2.1 Saskatchewan agrees to use funds provided by Canada under this Agreement to support the expansion of regulated child care, and prioritize not-for-profit (including publically delivered and family home child care) early learning and child care programs and services, for children under the age of six, where:

- a) Regulated programs and services are defined as those that meet standards that are established and/or monitored by provincial/territorial governments and Indigenous governing bodies and authorities.

- b) Not-for-profit providers/operations, which includes publically delivered operations, are defined as those that provide child care services to a community for a purpose other than generating a profit, typically improving family and/or child well being and/or development. Providers may generate a profit, but the surplus earnings, or other resources, are directed towards improving child care services rather than distributed for the personal benefit of owners, members, investors or to enhance asset growth. Early learning and child care programs and services are defined as those supporting direct care and early learning for children in settings including, but not limited to, regulated child care centres, regulated family child care homes, early learning centres, preschools and nursery schools.

2.2.2 In developing and delivering its ELCC programs and services, Saskatchewan agrees to take into account the needs of official language minority communities in its jurisdiction.

2.2.3 Acceptable investments under this Agreement may include, but are not limited to: capital and operating funding for regulated ELCC; fee subsidies; training, professional development and support for the early childhood workforce; quality assurance; parent information and referrals; and certain administration costs incurred by Saskatchewan to support the growth and expansion of the child care system, and the implementation and administration of this Agreement.

2.2.4 Canada and Saskatchewan also agree to promote, define, and deliver innovative approaches to enhance the quality, access, affordability, flexibility, and inclusivity of ELCC systems, with consideration for those more in need.

2.2.5 Canada and Saskatchewan agree that funding will be targeted toward regulated programs and activities, as described in section 2.2.1 to 2.2.4 for children under age six, that will have an impact on families, including families more in need such as lower-income families, Indigenous families, lone-parent families, and families in underserved communities, including Black and racialized families; families of children with disabilities and children needing enhanced or individual supports; and families with caregivers who are working non-standard hours. Needs also include having limited or no access to ELCC programs and services in the children's official language.

### **3.0 PERIOD OF AGREEMENT**

3.1 This Agreement shall come into effect upon the last signature being affixed and will remain in effect until March 31, 2026, unless earlier terminated in writing by Canada or Saskatchewan in accordance with the terms hereof in section 10. Funding provided under this Agreement, in accordance with section 4, will cover the period from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2026 (hereinafter the "Term").

3.2 Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Bilateral Agreements

- 3.2.1 In the event this Agreement is extended in accordance with the terms of sections 3.2.2 and 9.0, Saskatchewan may continue to use funding provided to cover the same eligible areas of investment as those covered through funding received for the period 2021-2026 subject to the terms and conditions of that extended agreement.
- 3.2.2 Extension of this Agreement beyond March 31, 2026 will provide Saskatchewan and Canada the opportunity to review and course correct, if required, and realign new priorities in future Agreements based on progress made to date.

**4.0 FINANCIAL PROVISIONS**

4.1 These contributions are in addition to and not in lieu of those that Canada currently pays to Saskatchewan through the Canada Social Transfer in order to support early childhood development and ELCC within Saskatchewan.

4.2 Allocation to Saskatchewan

4.2.1 Subject to Parliamentary approval of appropriations, Canada has designated the following maximum amounts to be transferred in total to all provinces and territories under this initiative with a fixed base rate of \$2 million per year for each province and territory and the balance of the funding on a per child (0-12) basis for the period starting on April 1, 2021 and ending on March 31, 2026. This funding includes financial commitments made as part of the 2021-2022 to 2025-2026 Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreements.

- a) 2,948,082,433 for the Fiscal Year beginning on April 1, 2021
- b) 4,489,349,839 for the Fiscal Year beginning on April 1, 2022
- c) 5,538,345,183 for the Fiscal Year beginning on April 1, 2023
- d) 6,492,201,954 for the Fiscal Year beginning on April 1, 2024
- e) 7,718,943,823 for the Fiscal Year beginning on April 1, 2025

4.2.2 Subject to annual adjustment based on the formula described in section 4.2.3, Saskatchewan's estimated projected share of the amounts described in section 4.2.1 will be:

Fiscal Year	Estimated amount to be paid to Saskatchewan* (subject to annual adjustment for population change)
2021-2022	\$114,410,468
2022-2023	\$179,850,668
2023-2024	\$223,996,682
2024-2025	\$264,633,193
2025-2026	\$316,567,960

\* The notional allocations for 2021-2022 use Statistics Canada's population estimates as at July 1st 2020. Notional allocations for years 2022-2023 to 2025-2026 are calculated based on Statistics Canada's longer-term population growth models using the Medium Growth M1 Population Growth Scenario from the previous Fiscal Year.

4.2.3 The final amount to be paid to Saskatchewan for the Fiscal Year will be calculated using the formula  $F \times K/L$  plus \$2 million, where:

F is the annual total funding amount transferred to provinces and territories for the Fiscal Year minus the base funding from all provinces and territories;

K is the total population of children aged 0-12 in Saskatchewan on July 1 of that Fiscal Year, as determined using population estimates from Statistics Canada;

L is the total population of children aged 0-12 in all provinces and territories on July 1 of that Fiscal Year, as determined using population estimates from Statistics Canada.

4.2.4 For the purposes of the formula in section 4.2.3, the population of children aged 0-12 for Saskatchewan for each Fiscal Year and the total population of children aged 0-12 in all provinces and territories for that fiscal year are the respective populations as determined on the basis of the preliminary estimates of the respective populations on July 1 of that Fiscal Year. These estimates are released by Statistics Canada in September of each Fiscal Year.

4.3 In this Agreement, "Fiscal Year" means the period commencing on April 1 of any calendar year and terminating on March 31 of the immediately following calendar year.

4.4 Payment

4.4.1 Subject to Parliamentary approval of appropriations, Canada's contribution will be paid in approximately equal semi-annual installments as follows:

In 2021-2022, the first installment will be paid within 60 days after the signatures from both Parties are affixed to the Agreement. The second installment will be paid on or about November 15.

Beginning in 2022-2023, the first installment will be paid on or about June 15 of each Fiscal Year. The second installment will be paid on or about November 15 of each Fiscal Year once conditions in 5.2 are satisfied.

4.4.2 The amount of the first installment will be an amount equal to 50% of the total amount of Canada's maximum contribution to Saskatchewan for the Fiscal Year, which will be calculated using Statistics Canada 0-12 population estimates from the previous year.

- 4.4.3 The amount of the second installment will be an amount equal to the balance of Canada's contribution to Saskatchewan for the Fiscal Year based on the actual amount of the contribution determined under sections 4.2.3 and 4.2.4 for the Fiscal Year.
- 4.4.4 Canada will notify Saskatchewan at the beginning of the Fiscal Year of their notional amount. The actual amount will be based on the Statistics Canada preliminary children (0-12) population estimates on July 1 of the preceding Fiscal Year.
- 4.4.5 In 2023-2024, Canada shall withhold payment of its first installment if Canada has not received from Saskatchewan its Action Plan for 2023-2024 to 2025-2026, in accordance with requirements outlined in section 5.1 until such time as the Action Plan is provided.
- 4.4.6 Starting in 2022-2023, Canada shall withhold payment of its first installment of a Fiscal Year if Canada has not received from Saskatchewan all information requested under section 4.4.7 for the payment of its second installment from the previous Fiscal Year.
- 4.4.7 Starting in 2022-2023, Canada shall withhold payment of its second installment for that Fiscal Year until Saskatchewan provides an annual progress report outlining data and results achieved from the previous Fiscal Year in accordance with section 5.2.2 (a) and its annual audited financial statement of the previous Fiscal Year in accordance with section 5.2.2 (c).
- 4.4.8 Starting in 2022-2023, Canada may withhold amounts payable in respect of Fiscal Year if Saskatchewan is unable to meet the objectives of the Agreement, in accordance with section 2. In such an event, Canada will provide Saskatchewan with no less than 30 days' written notice of its intention to withhold amounts payable, and procedures for dispute resolution will be followed in accordance with Section 8.0.
- 4.4.9 The sum of both semi-annual installments constitutes a final payment and is not subject to any further adjustment once the second installment of that Fiscal Year has been paid, unless there is a debt due to Canada, which requires repayment in accordance with section 4.7.
- 4.4.10 Payment of Canada's funding for each Fiscal Year of this Agreement is subject to an annual appropriation by the Parliament of Canada for this purpose. Likewise, use of the funding by Saskatchewan is subject to an annual appropriation by Saskatchewan's Legislature.
- 4.5 Maximum annual contribution in respect of administration costs
- 4.5.1 Canada's contribution in respect of Saskatchewan's administration costs referred to in section 2.2.3 shall not exceed:

In the Fiscal Years covered under this Agreement an amount up to 10% of the maximum amount payable for those Fiscal Years.

#### 4.6 Carry Forward

- 4.6.1 In 2021-2022, at the request of Saskatchewan, and subject to approval of Canada's Treasury Board, Saskatchewan may retain and carry forward to the following Fiscal Year any unexpended funds remaining from Saskatchewan's annual contribution payable under section 4.2., up to a maximum of 60% of the contribution payable. Any unexpended funds in excess of 60% of the contribution payable represents an overpayment subject to section 4.7.
- 4.6.2 In 2022-2023, at the request of Saskatchewan, and subject to approval of Canada's Treasury Board, Saskatchewan may retain and carry forward to the following Fiscal Year any unexpended funds remaining from Saskatchewan's annual contribution payable under section 4.2., up to a maximum of 30% of the contribution payable. Any unexpended funds in excess of 30% of the contribution payable represents an overpayment subject to section 4.7.
- 4.6.3 Starting in 2023-2024 and for each subsequent Fiscal Year remaining in the Term of the Agreement, at the request of Saskatchewan, and subject to approval of Canada's Treasury Board, Saskatchewan may retain and carry forward to the following Fiscal Year any unexpended funds remaining from Saskatchewan's annual contribution payable under section 4.2., up to a maximum of 10% of the contribution payable. Any unexpended funds in excess of 10% of the contribution payable represents an overpayment subject to section 4.7.
- 4.6.4 Saskatchewan may only use the amount carried forward to the following Fiscal Year for expenditures on eligible areas of investment made under section 2.2 incurred that Fiscal Year.
- 4.6.5 For greater certainty, any amount carried forward under section 4.6.1 through 4.6.3 is supplementary to the maximum amount payable to Saskatchewan under section 4.2 of this Agreement during the Fiscal Year in which the funding is carried forward.
- 4.6.6 All amounts carried forward to the next Fiscal Year, pursuant to section 4.6.1 through 4.6.3 must be spent by the end of that Fiscal Year. Saskatchewan is not entitled to retain any such carried forward amounts that remain unexpended after the end of that Fiscal Year, nor is it entitled to retain any balance of Canada's contribution payable pursuant to section 4.2. that remains unexpended at the end of that Fiscal Year and is not carried forward in accordance with section 4.6.1. Such amounts are considered debts due to Canada and shall be repaid in accordance with section 4.7.

#### 4.7 Repayment of overpayment and underpayment

- 4.7.1 In the event payments made to Saskatchewan exceed the amount to which Saskatchewan is entitled under the Agreement and/or unexpended funding is in

excess of the carry forward allowance, the amount of the excess is a debt due to Canada and shall be repaid to Canada upon receipt of notice to do so and within the period specified in the notice, which will be not be less than 30 days.

- 4.7.2 In the event that a payment made to Saskatchewan is determined to be less than the amount to which Saskatchewan is owed under the terms of section 4, Canada agrees to pay to Saskatchewan the amount determined to be outstanding upon receipt of written notice to do so and within the period specified in the notice, which will not be less than 30 days.
- 4.7.3 Canada shall, in addition to any other remedies available, have the right to recover the debt by deducting or setting-off the amount of the debt from any future contribution payable to Saskatchewan under this Agreement.

#### 4.8 Use of Funds

- 4.8.1 Canada and Saskatchewan agree that funds provided under this Agreement will only be used by Saskatchewan in accordance with the areas for investment outlined in section 2.2 of this Agreement.
- 4.8.2 Canada and Saskatchewan agree that, within each Fiscal Year of the Term of this Agreement, Saskatchewan may move funding between the individual programming categories outlined in its Action Plan in Annex 2 to ensure the maximum use of funding. Saskatchewan agrees to notify Canada in writing of any such change in funding allocation, including the rationale for the change. The change will be implemented upon agreement between Canada and Saskatchewan.
- 4.8.3 Canada and Saskatchewan agree that funds provided under this Agreement will be used to ensure improvements in ELCC as outlined in 2.1.1 and will not displace existing provincial or municipal spending in place on or before March 31, 2021.

### 5.0 ACCOUNTABILITY

#### 5.1 Action Plan

- 5.1.1 Saskatchewan has completed and shared its Action Plan for 2021-22 and 2022-23 (Annex 2). Subsequently, Saskatchewan will provide an Action Plan for Fiscal Years 2023-2024 to 2025-2026 by the beginning of Fiscal Year 2023-2024. Saskatchewan will publicly release their Action Plan which:
  - a) Outlines an implementation plan towards achieving objectives set out in Section 1, including priority areas for investment, and targets by indicator, within the Framework's parameters.;
  - b) Identifies specific targets for each indicator that will be reported on annually for tracking progress in relation to the objectives set out under section 2.1.1, and as outlined in its Action Plan in Annex 2 which may include the following indicators

below. The following indicators should be used where data is available; for the indicators that Saskatchewan is unable to report, it should indicate in its Action Plan in Annex 2 how it plans to investigate the production of these indicators over the course of the Agreement:

- i. Total number of ELCC spaces available during the Fiscal Year - broken down by age groups of child and type of setting (e.g., for profit/not-for-profit/public regulated child care centres, regulated family child care homes, etc.);
  - ii. The number of net new spaces created during the Fiscal Year - broken down by age groups of child and type of setting (e.g., for profit/not-for-profit/public regulated child care centres, regulated family child care homes, etc.);
  - iii. Total number of inclusive (as defined in Section 2.1.1) spaces created/converted – broken down by age group of child and type of setting;
  - iv. Average daily parental out-of-pocket fee for regulated child care spaces at the end of each Fiscal Year, including at the beginning of 2021-22 and at the end of 2022;
  - v. Number of children under age six and 6-12 years receiving fee subsidies, broken down by families receiving partial and full subsidies;
  - vi. Number and proportion of children under age six and 6-12 years in flexible regulated ELCC arrangements and number and proportion of centers/providers that provide flexible arrangements (i.e. non-traditional arrangements such as flexible/irregular hours, weekend and emergency services; and geographic distribution of spaces);
  - vii. Number of children under age six and 6-12 years with disabilities and children needing enhanced or individual supports that are in regulated ELCC spaces;
  - viii. Number or proportion of child care service providers who provide services that are adapted to the needs of children with disabilities and children needing enhanced or individual supports;
  - ix. Number of Indigenous children under age six years in regulated ELCC spaces, distinction-based (First Nations, Inuit, Metis) where possible;
  - x. Number of racialized children, including Black children under age six in regulated ELCC spaces;
  - xi. Number and percentage of staff working in regulated child care programs in Saskatchewan who fully meet the province's certification/educational requirements;
  - xii. Annual public expenditure on training and professional development of the early childhood workforce; and
  - xiii. Wages of the early childhood workforce according to the categories of certification, including any wage enhancements, top-ups and/or supplements.
- c) Identifies additional jurisdiction-specific indicators for tracking progress in relation to the objectives of the Agreement;

- d) Describes how Saskatchewan plans to address the ELCC needs of its children/families more in need, as described in section 2.2.5;
  - i. If available, number and proportion of children under age six and 6-12 years from families more in need that are in regulated ELCC spaces.
- e) Outline any additional available information to be reported annually that would be useful to demonstrate progress, including:
  - i. Information about waiting lists to access regulated ELCC spaces.
  - ii. Total child care subsidies provided by parents' income level;
  - iii. Average child-to-staff ratio among licensed child care service providers; and
  - iv. Total annual investment in ELCC.
- f) A description of consultation processes referred to in section 5.1.2, the type of groups consulted and annual priorities related to stakeholder feedback.

5.1.2 Saskatchewan will consult with parents, child care providers, experts, Indigenous peoples, official language minority communities and other interested parties as an important step in developing and revising its Action Plan. Saskatchewan will outline the results of consultations in its Action Plan as well as through its annual reporting.

5.1.3 The Parties agree that, where they appear in this Agreement, the words “consult”, “consulted” and “consultation” are not used for the purposes of fulfilling the Crown’s duty to consult and accommodate with First Nation and Métis communities and that nothing in this Agreement is intended to derogate or abrogate from the Crown’s legal duty to consult and accommodate.

5.1.4 By the beginning of Fiscal Year 2023-24, Saskatchewan commits to share with Canada its 2023-2024 to 2025-2026 Action Plan. The Action Plan shall include the elements described in section 5.1.1 a) – f). Once the Parties agree that the annual Action Plan is final, the action plan may be published by one or both of the Parties and Canada will be able to provide Saskatchewan with its first payment for the Fiscal Year 2023-24 according to section 4.4.

## 5.2 Reporting

5.2.1 In the first Fiscal Year, Saskatchewan agrees to provide baseline data on indicators set out in their Action Plan as soon as possible after the Parties sign this Agreement.

5.2.2 Starting in 2022-2023, by no later than October 1 of each Fiscal Year during the Term of this Agreement, Saskatchewan agrees to:

- a) Provide to Canada an Annual Report in the format and manner decided jointly by Canada and Saskatchewan. The report shall show separately the results attributable to the funding provided by Canada under this Agreement and shall include:
  - i. Description of the activities, expenditures and results of the Agreement as set out in Annex 2;

- ii. Results achieved in working towards the vision for Canada-wide ELCC set out in this Agreement, including average child care fees and progress toward the average 50% reduction in fees by the end of 2022 and reaching an average fee of \$10/day by 2025-2026;
  - iii. Results achieved according to the indicators and targets referred to in Annex 2;
  - iv. The impact on families more in need, as described in section 2.2.5, including progress toward specific Saskatchewan targets as described in Annex 2, such as the numbers of inclusive spaces supported by federal funding and by category. For the elements that Saskatchewan is unable to report, it should indicate in its Action Plan in Annex 2 how it plans to investigate the production of these elements over the course of the Agreement;
  - v. Additional available information to be reported annually that would be useful to demonstrate progress;
  - vi. Description of any relevant consultation processes, the type of groups consulted and annual priorities related to stakeholder feedback referred to in Annex 2; and,
  - vii. Any additional results of an annual child care census as per section 5.2.2 (f) and any evaluation activities undertaken in the Fiscal Year, as available.
- b) Continue to provide to Canada additional data required for the publication of the annual National Progress Report.
- c) Provide to Canada an audited financial statement of revenues received from Canada under this Agreement during each Fiscal Year, indicating:
- i. The revenue section of the statement shall show the amount received from Canada under this Agreement during the Fiscal Year.
  - ii. The total amount of funding used for ELCC programs and services under section 2.2.
  - iii. The administration costs incurred by Saskatchewan in developing and administering ELCC programs under section 2.2.3.
  - iv. If applicable, the amount of any amount carried forward by Saskatchewan under section 4.6; and,
  - v. If applicable, the amount of any surplus funds that are to be repaid to Canada under section 4.7.

The financial statement shall be prepared in accordance with Canadian Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and the audit shall be performed by the Saskatchewan Auditor General or his/her delegate, or by an independent public accounting firm registered under the laws of Saskatchewan and shall be conducted in accordance with Canadian Generally Accepted Auditing Standards.

- d) Provide financial and administrative information, as required, to demonstrate progress in meeting the requirements in this Agreement.

- e) Canada and Saskatchewan recognize the importance of reporting to the public on results achieved under this Agreement. Within 365 days of the end of each Fiscal Year during the Term of this Agreement, Saskatchewan agrees to report to the people of Saskatchewan and Canada on the results and expenditures of ELCC programs and services. The report shall show separately the results attributable to the funding provided by Canada under this Agreement and be consistent with the Annual Report outlined under section 5.2.2 (a).
- f) To inform reporting on results related to Saskatchewan's Action Plan, Saskatchewan agrees to undertake, and share results with Canada from, an annual census of child care providers and other participants in the sector in Saskatchewan to collect information, including: number of children enrolled, capacity (number of spaces), number of ECEs, ECE wages and qualifications, fee charged to parents, subsidies, number of First Nations, Inuit or Metis child care spaces supported, etc.. Costs of undertaking such a census would be eligible expenses under this Agreement, to the maximum set out in section 4.5.1.

5.2.3 Canada, with 10 days prior notice to Saskatchewan, may incorporate all or any part or parts of the Annual Report described under section 5.2.2 (a) into any public report that Canada may prepare for its own purposes, including any reports to the Parliament of Canada or reports that may be made public.

### 5.3 Audit

- i. Saskatchewan will ensure that expenditure information presented in the annual report is, in accordance with Saskatchewan's standard accounting practices, complete and accurate.

### 5.4 Evaluation

- i. As per established policies and processes with respect to program effectiveness, Saskatchewan will evaluate programs and services receiving funds provided under this Agreement and may decide to make public some or all of the results of any such evaluations.
- ii. Saskatchewan may be asked to participate in the evaluation by Canada of the initiatives under this Agreement and agrees to provide information as requested by Canada in accordance with relevant legislation during and following the Agreement in order for Canada to evaluate relevant initiatives under this Agreement. Evaluation results may be made available to the public.

## 6.0 LONG-TERM COLLABORATION

- 6.1 Understanding that building a new social program is complex, and that both governments are committed to achieving \$10 a day child care, Canada and Saskatchewan will create an officials-level Implementation Committee that will

monitor progress towards this goal in consultation with stakeholders. Saskatchewan will provide data to support the work of the Implementation Committee.

- 6.2 Canada and Saskatchewan, through the Implementation Committee and/or Designated Officials, agree to meet at least twice annually, timed to coincide with the planning and reporting cycles, or as agreed to by the Parties to discuss and exchange on issues related to this Agreement, including:
- i. Administration and management of the Agreement, including providing a forum for the exchange of information on annual planning priorities and reporting;
  - ii. Exchanging information on local challenges and priorities and the results of engagement with relevant stakeholders, including official language minority communities;
  - iii. Providing a forum to exchange information on best practices and have discussions related to the implementation of the Agreement, for example, status of data collection, results, expenditures and approach to licensing;
  - iv. Improving data collection and dissemination on key ELCC information, including culturally oriented ELCC information for indigenous children, Black and other racialized children, newcomer children, and other groups of children that may require additional consideration for accessing programs and services;
  - v. Review and provide direction to resolve any issues arising from the implementation and management of this Agreement, and from the evaluation of provincial programs supported under this Agreement;
  - vi. Monitor progress towards the shared goal of \$10/day child care, in consultation with stakeholders; and
  - vii. In December 2022, report to the Governments of Canada and Saskatchewan on progress towards Canada and Saskatchewan's shared goals to date and for the remaining Term of the Agreement.
- 6.3 Canada and Saskatchewan agree to share and release data as available, and share knowledge, research and information on effective and innovative practices in ELCC, to further support the development of and reporting on quality and outcomes. Canada and Saskatchewan agree to work together, and with stakeholders, towards the development of additional measures and indicators that could be included in bilateral agreements in the future that could reinforce the vision for Canada-wide ELCC.

## **7.0 COMMUNICATIONS**

- 7.1 Canada and Saskatchewan agree on the importance of communicating with citizens about the objectives of this Agreement in an open, transparent, effective and proactive manner through appropriate public information activities.
- 7.2 Canada and Saskatchewan recognize the importance of ensuring that the public is informed of Canada's financial contributions to Saskatchewan's ELCC programs and services, funded under this Agreement.
- 7.3 Saskatchewan agrees to acknowledge Canada's contribution by including federal identification in all public communications and marketing products, promotional

material and advertising. Each government will receive the appropriate credit and visibility when investments financed through funds granted under this Agreement are announced to the public.

- 7.4 For the proposed visual identity, Canada's identification are to be determined by Canada, and Saskatchewan's identification is to be determined by Saskatchewan. The mutually agreed upon visual identity decided by the Parties through their Designated Officials will be applied to all communications materials going forward.
- 7.5 Canada reserves the right to conduct public communications, announcements, events, outreach and promotional activities about the Framework and bilateral agreements. Canada agrees to give Saskatchewan 10 days' advance notice and advanced copies of public communications related to the Framework, bilateral agreements, and results of the investments of this Agreement.
- 7.6 Saskatchewan reserves the right to conduct public communications, announcements, events, outreach and promotional activities about the Framework and bilateral agreements. Saskatchewan agrees to give Canada 10 days' advance notice and advance copies of public communications related to the Framework, bilateral agreements, and results of the investments of this Agreement.
- 7.7 Canada and Saskatchewan agree to participate in a joint announcement upon signing of this Agreement.
- 7.8 Canada and Saskatchewan agree to work together to identify opportunities for joint announcements relating to programs funded under this Agreement.
- 7.9 Saskatchewan will make best efforts to require service providers, funded under this Agreement to display federal identification to recognize that the programs and services provided receive Canada's financial assistance.
- 7.10 Saskatchewan agrees that promotional communications to all groups receiving funding through this Agreement (i.e., child care centres, regulated family child care homes, early learning centres, preschools and nursery schools, before-and after-school programming, businesses, associations, unions, training institutions, universities, colleges, and career colleges) will include federal identification and recognize Canada's financial assistance.
- 7.11 Canada will provide a mutually agreed upon standard letter to Saskatchewan for use in notifying all recipients of funding from this Agreement, to include federal and Saskatchewan identification and recognize Canada's financial assistance. Parties may collectively agree on an alternate version that appropriately identifies and recognizes both Parties.

## **8.0 DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

- 8.1 Canada and Saskatchewan are committed to working together and avoiding disputes through government-to-government information exchange, advance notice, early consultation, and discussion, clarification, and resolution of issues, as they arise.
- 8.2 If at any time either Canada or Saskatchewan is of the opinion that the other Party has failed to comply with any of its obligations or undertakings under this Agreement or is in breach of any term or condition of the Agreement, Canada or Saskatchewan, as the case may be, may notify the other party in writing of the failure or breach. Upon such notice, Canada and Saskatchewan will endeavour to resolve the issue in dispute bilaterally through their Designated Officials.
- 8.3 If a dispute cannot be resolved by Designated Officials, then the dispute will be referred to the Deputy Ministers most responsible for ELCC, and if it cannot be resolved by them, then the Federal Minister and Saskatchewan Minister shall endeavour to resolve the dispute.
- 8.4 If either Party has failed to comply with its obligations or undertakings and where Saskatchewan and Federal Ministers are unable to resolve related disputes, a termination of the Agreement may be pursued in accordance with Section 10.

## **9.0 AMENDMENTS TO THE AGREEMENT**

- 9.1 This Agreement, including all attached annexes, except Annex 1, may be amended at any time by mutual consent of the Parties. To be valid, any amendments shall be in writing and signed by the Parties.
- 9.2 Waiver
- 9.3 Failure by any Party to exercise any of its rights, powers, or remedies under this Agreement or its delay to do so does not constitute a waiver of those rights, powers, or remedies. Any waiver by either Party of any of its rights, powers, or remedies under this Agreement must be in writing; and, such a waiver does not constitute a continuing waiver unless it is so explicitly stated.

## **10.0 TERMINATION**

- 10.1 Canada may terminate this Agreement at any time if the terms of this Agreement are breached by Saskatchewan by giving at least 6 months' written notice of Canada's intention to terminate the Agreement. Saskatchewan may terminate this Agreement at any time if the terms of this Agreement are breached by Canada by giving at least 6 months written notice of Saskatchewan's intention to terminate the Agreement.
- 10.2 As of the effective date of termination of this Agreement under section 10.1, Canada shall have no obligation to make any further payments to Saskatchewan after the

date of effective termination.

## **11.0 NOTICE**

- 11.1 Any notice, information or document provided under this Agreement will be effectively delivered or sent by letter, postage or other charges prepaid. Any notice that is delivered will have been received in delivery; and, except in periods of postal disruption, any notice mailed will be deemed to have been received eight calendar days after being mailed.

The address for notice or communication to Canada shall be:

Social Policy Directorate  
140 Promenade du Portage  
Gatineau, Québec K1A 0J9  
NC-SSP-ELCC-GD@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca

The address for notice or communication to Saskatchewan shall be:

Ministry of Education  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor 2220 College Ave  
Regina, Saskatchewan  
S4P 4V9

Donna.Johnson@gov.sk.ca

## **12.0 GENERAL**

- 12.1 This Agreement, including Annexes 1 and 2, comprise the entire Agreement entered into by the Parties with respect to the subject matter hereof;
- 12.2 This Agreement does not displace federal investments in ELCC, based on the Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework, Annex 1, concluded on June 12, 2017.
- 12.3 This Agreement shall be interpreted according to the laws of Canada and Saskatchewan.
- 12.4 No member of the House of Commons or of the Senate of Canada or of the Legislature of Saskatchewan shall be admitted to any share or part of this Agreement, or to any benefit arising therefrom.
- 12.5 If for any reason a provision of this Agreement that is not a fundamental term is found by a court of competent jurisdiction to be or to have become invalid or unenforceable, in whole or in part, it will be deemed to be severable and will be deleted from this Agreement, but all the other provisions of this Agreement will continue to be valid and enforceable.

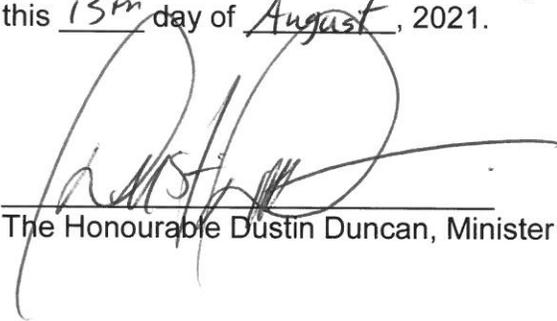
12. 6 This Agreement is drafted in English at the request of the Parties. *Les parties ont convenu que le présent Accord soit rédigé en anglais.*

SIGNED on behalf of Canada by the Minister of Families Children and Social Development at Regina this 13<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2021.



The Honourable Ahmed Hussien, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development

SIGNED on behalf of Saskatchewan by the Minister of Education at Regina this 13<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2021.



The Honourable Dustin Duncan, Minister of Education

## **Annex 1**

### **MULTILATERAL EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE FRAMEWORK**

#### **Introduction**

Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers Most Responsible for Early Learning and Child Care agree<sup>1</sup> on the importance of supporting parents, families and communities in their efforts to ensure the best possible future for their children. Ministers also recognize that quality early learning and child care systems play an important role in promoting the social, emotional, physical and cognitive development of young children and can support positive lifelong benefits.

The early years of life are critical in the development and future well-being of the child and continuum of learning. During this period, experiences influence children's rapid brain development. These experiences create the foundation for supporting competencies, including but not limited to the ability to regulate emotions and enjoy positive interactions with others. These foundational skills in turn impact learning, behaviour and health today and in the future; this is particularly true for children who are vulnerable. The evidence is clear that there are positive relationships between quality early learning and child care, especially for less advantaged children, parental labour market participation, especially for women, and child developmental outcomes.

#### **A long term vision**

This Framework sets the foundation for governments to work toward a shared long term vision where all children can experience the enriching environment of quality early learning and child care that supports children's development to reach their full potential.

Ministers Most Responsible for Early Learning and Child Care agree that the further development of early learning and child care systems is one of the best investments that governments can make to strengthen the social and economic fabric of our country. Federal, provincial and territorial governments have important roles to play and provide investments to support the early learning and child care needs of families. They recognize the importance of collaborating with stakeholders and may consider advice of subject matter experts in achieving the long term vision. This Framework sets the foundation for collaboration and additional federal investments in provincial and territorial early learning and child care systems. Governments recognize that each jurisdiction has the responsibility to develop systems that best responds to the needs and priorities of their communities.

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<sup>1</sup> While the Government of Québec supports the general principles of the Early Learning and Child Care Framework, it does not adhere to the Framework as it intends to preserve its sole responsibility in this area on its territory. The Government of Québec expects to receive its share of the federal funding and will continue to invest significantly toward programs and services for families and children.

## **A set of principles**

Guided by the following principles, this Framework supports a commitment by Governments to work towards investments to increase quality, accessibility, affordability, flexibility, and inclusivity in early learning and child care, with consideration for those more in need. Governments also recognize the diverse and multicultural fabric of Canada. Early learning and child care systems are respectful of language and culture and in particular recognize the unique needs of French and English linguistic minority communities and those identified by provinces and territories in their action plans, and of Indigenous peoples. Governments agree to work together over time to achieve broad long term goals for early learning and child care systems that are:

### High Quality

High quality early learning and child care:

- Provides rich early learning experiences and environments and views children as capable, competent learners who are full of potential.
- Values the importance of building strong, responsive and respectful relationships in which purposeful interactions support optimal learning for children.
- Recognizes the importance of qualifications and training for the early childhood work force.

### Accessible, Affordable and Flexible

- High quality early learning and child care should be flexible and broadly available to respond to the varying needs of children and families to promote early childhood development. Accessible, affordable and flexible early learning and child care also supports families participating in employment, education or training, and harder-to-serve populations.

### Inclusive

Inclusive early learning and child care systems respect and value diversity, which could include but is not limited to:

- Children and families who are experiencing vulnerability.
- Children with varying abilities.

## **Objectives**

Early learning and child care needs across the country are vast and diverse. Investments in early learning and child care benefit all children, particularly those who are vulnerable. In support of this Framework, the Government of Canada commits that the annual allocation until 2027-28 will be no less than the allocation of 2017-18. In keeping with the guiding

principles of this Framework, Provinces and Territories will use investments allocated by the Government of Canada to further build early learning and child care systems by addressing local, regional and system priorities that have an impact on families more in need, such as lower-income families; Indigenous families; lone-parent families; families in underserved communities; those working non-standard hours; and/or families with children with varying abilities. The Government of Canada will work with provinces and territories over time to build long-term capacity in the early learning and child care sector.

### **Scope of investments**

To align with the guiding principles and advance the objectives set out above, funds provided under this initiative will build upon existing provincial and territorial investments in early learning and child care and will prioritize investments in regulated early learning and child care programs and services for children under age six.

- Regulated programs and services are defined as those that meet standards that are established and/or monitored by provincial and territorial governments.
- Early learning and child care programs and services are defined as those supporting direct care and early learning for children in settings including, but not limited to, regulated child care centres, regulated family child care homes, early learning centres, preschools and nursery schools.

Provincial and territorial governments will use federal funding under this agreement to support the delivery of early learning and child care systems that reflect their particular local and regional needs in support of the objectives of this Framework.

### **Innovation and Knowledge**

#### Innovation

Early learning and child care systems are operating in increasingly complex and challenging environments. Innovative practices can help develop solutions that better meet the complex needs of children and families, and can support more integrated and higher quality early learning and child care systems. In keeping with the guiding principles and investment areas identified in the Objectives section of this Framework, as part of the funding provided under this Framework, provincial and territorial governments will, as identified in bilateral agreements, promote, define and deliver identifiable innovative approaches to enhance the quality, accessibility, affordability, flexibility, and inclusivity of early learning and child care systems, with consideration for those more in need.

#### Knowledge

Research, knowledge and information are the foundations of evidence-based decision-making and are critical to informed policy development, strong accountability and encouraging innovation. Governments agree to work together to share and release data as available, and knowledge, research, and information on effective and innovative practices

in early learning and child care, to further support the development of and reporting on quality and outcomes. Governments also agree to work together to improve data collection and dissemination on key early learning and child care information for children under age six (e.g., number of children receiving subsidies, number of licensed early learning and child care spaces broken down by age of child and type of setting).

### **Working together**

Governments will work together in full respect of their responsibilities to their citizens, recognizing that Provinces and Territories have the primary responsibility for the design and delivery of early learning and child care systems. Each provincial and territorial government determines its own priorities for early learning and child care and the Framework provides flexibility on how Provinces and Territories will meet objectives as defined in this Framework.

This Framework acknowledges the successes achieved by jurisdictions in developing their early learning and child care systems. Governments will work together to ensure that concrete, incremental results are achieved and reported to Canadians. New federal funding under this Framework will not displace existing federal, provincial and territorial funding in support of early childhood development and early learning and child care.

This Framework is intended to be complementary to the proposed development of a separate framework for Indigenous early learning and child care. Governments acknowledge the mutual impact of both streams of investment into early learning and child care within Canada. While respecting the federal/Indigenous partnership in the proposed development and implementation of an Indigenous early learning and child care framework, federal, provincial and territorial governments agree to ongoing discussions regarding the two frameworks.

This Framework will form the basis for the development of subsequent early learning and child care bilateral funding agreements between the Government of Canada and Provinces and Territories. As part of bilateral funding agreements with each Province and Territory, action plans will demonstrate how federal investments under this Framework will be used and identify the associated indicators from the list below. Action plans will also make specific reference to innovation. Federal funding will be provided following the approval and signature of bilateral agreements. The first bilateral agreements with Provinces and Territories will be for three years and will be updated and renewed as necessary.

The Government of Canada will make publicly available up-to-date early learning and child care bilateral agreements entered into with all Provinces and Territories under this Framework, including any amendments, by posting them on a Government of Canada website.

### **Public Reporting**

Governments will report annually on progress made in relation to the Framework and the impact of federal funding, while reflecting the priorities of each jurisdiction in early learning

and child care. Reporting and data build knowledge and disseminates information to families, communities and service providers.

Governments agree to demonstrate progress based on the principles outlined in the Framework for early learning and child care programs set out in the Scope of Investments section of the Framework.

Provinces and territories will choose from the following list of indicators all those which reflect their areas of investment. Additional indicators may be agreed to under bilateral agreements:

### **High Quality**

- Number and proportion of providers with Early Childhood Education (ECE) certification and/or participating in professional development or training.
- Number and proportion of providers adopting innovative new tools, such as an evidence-based curriculum framework for early learning and child care.

### **Accessible, Affordable and Flexible**

- Number and percentage of children who have access to regulated child care spaces and/or early learning programs.
- Number of children receiving subsidies or other financial supports.
- Number of flexible early learning and child care arrangements (e.g., non-traditional arrangements such as flexible/irregular hours, weekend and emergency services; and geographic distribution of spaces) for harder-to-serve populations of children.

### **Inclusive**

- Number of children benefiting from programs and/or number of programs designed to serve children from diverse populations, which could include but not limited to: children from French and English linguistic minority communities, Indigenous people off-reserve, recent immigrants and refugees.
- Number of children with additional support needs participating in early learning and child care programs.
- The number and proportion of children from low income and middle class families participating in early learning and child care programs.

Governments also agree to work together, and with stakeholders, towards the development of common quality and outcome measures that could be included in bilateral agreements in the future that could reinforce the Framework's long-term vision.

# Saskatchewan's Canada-wide Action Plan for 2021-2022 to 2022-2023

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## INTRODUCTION

Saskatchewan's integrated approach to early learning and child care recognizes high quality care and holistic, play-based approaches that best support the development of young children. Investments by Saskatchewan for young children and families are based on research that supports the social, physical, emotional and intellectual development of a child's early years by helping them to reach their full future potential.

Saskatchewan is committed to building an early learning and child care (ELCC) system guided by a shared vision with Canada, and focused on principles of affordability, accessibility, inclusivity, and high quality. This system is in addition to previous investments made through the 2017-2018 to 2020-21 Canada-Saskatchewan Bilateral Early Learning and Child Care Agreement ). In addition, Canada and Saskatchewan are working on extending a current Early Learning and Child Care Agreement to 2024-25 which will also include a one-time workforce development investment to support the recruitment and retention of early childhood educators (ECEs), as well as provincial investments in early learning and child care spanning decades. These investments are the foundation upon which the architecture of the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Bilateral Agreement will be built.

This system will also be framed by Saskatchewan's comprehensive approach to early learning and child care, as described by Play and Exploration: Early Learning Program Guide , which is the foundational curriculum to guide quality practice and approaches in the sector. The guide lays out the principles of holistic, responsive and developmentally appropriate early learning and child care programs. High quality programs focus on the healthy development of the whole child – social, emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual development. These programs engage children and their families through healthy, safe, culturally sensitive and stimulating programs that promote children's abilities and interests. Saskatchewan's vision is that all programs will reflect the vision, principles and quality elements described in the Play and Exploration curriculum, which has the flexibility to adapt to the particular needs of children and families they serve and the community context in which they operate.

This provincial early learning framework places good child outcomes at the centre of the work of educators, families, and communities. Saskatchewan recognizes its role in supporting good outcomes for young children and their families as part of the extended community in which children grow and learn. The child care sector in Saskatchewan is diverse and reflects the various needs and choices of families. In addition to child care centres, there are also numerous other arrangements in the province, such as family child care homes, private preschools, and before and after-school child care programs.

The early years sector further extends beyond child care in the province, and includes Early Childhood Intervention Programs, KidsFirst, Family Resource Centres, Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten, and the library and literacy sector. <sup>2</sup> Child care is embedded within the early years sector, and throughout Saskatchewan's realization of the principles of this agreement, the province will continue to build bridges across programs to support early childhood educators and other service providers to meet the needs of Saskatchewan's children and families.

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<sup>2</sup> All these programs provide services directly to children between the ages of 0-5. The Early Childhood Intervention Program provides home-based program to support the early development of children with developmental delays and disabilities while the KidsFirst Program supports children living vulnerable circumstances through the delivery of an attachment based parenting curriculum, mental health service and referrals to other supports. Early Years Family Resource Centres provide access to early learning, parenting supports, well-being, information and referrals. Pre-Kindergarten is provides an early learning opportunity for age 3 and 4. Libraries and literacy offer a range of local programming.

## KEY PRINCIPLES

**Shared vision:** Saskatchewan and Canada are committed to collaborating on a universal high quality early learning and child care system that is inclusive, affordable, flexible and accessible to all Saskatchewan children and families.

**Affordability:** This agreement demonstrates a commitment to further expand the provision of average parent fees of \$10 a day, for child care for children under 6 (ages 0-5) for all regulated spaces by the end of fiscal year 2025-2026.

**Access:** Saskatchewan and Canada agree to make investments directed towards increasing the number of spaces so that families have access to affordable, high quality early learning and child care opportunities.

**Inclusive:** This agreement supports inclusive programming for children that require additional supports to access early learning programs, as well as vulnerable children and children from diverse populations. This agreement focuses on working collaboratively with First Nations and Metis partners to ensure Indigenous children have access to affordable, high-quality, and culturally appropriate early learning and child care.

**Quality:** Qualified early childhood educators (ECEs) are a significant factor predicting good outcomes for young children. Focusing on ensuring there is a qualified workforce to support the developmental outcomes of young children is essential.

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## SASKATCHEWAN'S APPROACH TO A CANADA-WIDE SYSTEM

### PRIORITY #1: ENHANCE AFFORDABILITY

Under the principle of affordability, the Canada-Saskatchewan action plan includes reducing out-of-pocket parent fees for regulated early learning and child care spaces for children aged 0-5:

- By an average of 50% from 2019 levels by the end of calendar year 2022; and,
- To an average of \$10/day, by the end of fiscal year 2025-2026.

To address affordability, Saskatchewan will work to enhance our existing system through fee reductions for parents as well as through modification in how child care operators are currently funded to meet all the principles under this agreement.

#### Sustainable Predictable Child Care Funding

A change in how child care is funded in the province provides a wonderful opportunity to ensure that child care operators have access to sustainable long-term funding to sustain their core operations. The intent of the revised approach to funding would reflect the way that child care facilities operate and to ensure child care quality is not impacted by lower parent fees.

This will provide the foundation for future expansion of regulated child care facilities to ensure there is a long term sustainable, high quality, child care system in Saskatchewan that will offer choice for parents.

#### Child Care Fee Reductions for Parents

Starting in 2021-22, regulated not-for-profit child care providers will be eligible for parent fee reduction funding to ensure that parents out of pocket fees will be reduced by an average of 50% from March 2019 levels. This will reduce the range of variability by bringing the out of pocket fees closer, and ultimately aligned at \$10 per day.

Ongoing core funding will be provided to regulated non-profit child care operators to reduce parent fees by one half for children 0-5 years of age in accordance with the target date of December 2022.

Beginning in 2021-22, with the help of an enhanced core operational funding and an aligned child care subsidy program, work on affordability will focus on movement to reach the target of an average of \$10/day child care fees by the end of fiscal year 2025-26. Increased funding for operations will be combined with direction for

restructured fees for parents. These changes will culminate in defined child care fees consistent with the targets. This increased funding will result in reduced fees for virtually all families with children 0-5 years old in regulated childcare who are paying more than \$200/month even bringing a small percentage of fees down to \$10/day. This is expected to benefit approximately 22,000 children by the end of 2022-23

To put this in perspective, the range of monthly fees in Saskatchewan licensed facilities as of March 31, 2021 are as follows:

**Range of monthly fees in Saskatchewan**

Age Group	Low – Centre Based	High – Centre Based	Low – Home Based	High – Home Based
Infant	\$400	\$1,300	\$550	1,200
Toddler	\$400	\$1,180	\$450	1,150
Preschool	\$400	\$1,180	\$350	\$950
Kindergarten	\$335	\$820	\$350	\$950

Regulated providers can expect an increased amount of operational funding for each age category that will be ensure parents experience reduced fees.

By December 2022 or earlier, average fees will be reduced by at least 50% of the 2019 provincial average in each category, down to a minimum of \$200 per month (no fees less than \$10/day).

Target	2021-22 Investment	2022-23 Investment
Affordability - Reduction in parent fees by 50%	\$93.558M	\$125.474M

## Affordability Targets:

- By the end of calendar year 2022, parents' out of pocket fees will be reduced by an average of 50% through ongoing core funding which will be provided to regulated non-profit child care operators. Approximately 22,000 are children expected to benefit by end of 2022-23.
- By the end of 2025-2026, the average of \$10/day child care fees will be reached through increased funding for operations combined with restructured fees for parents.

## PRIORITY #2: ACCESS

Increasing access to quality early learning and child care is fundamental to this agreement. As of March 31, 2021, Saskatchewan had 17,665 (full-time equivalent) licensed child care spaces. The majority (98%) of Saskatchewan's early learning and child care spaces are in not-for-profit centres and homes. Only not-for-profit child care centres are eligible to receive grant funding from the Ministry of Education.

Under this agreement, Saskatchewan will increase regulated spaces to ensure anyone in Saskatchewan who wants child care will be able to access it. By the end of fiscal 2025-26, Saskatchewan will increase the net number of regulated spaces for children age 0-5 by at least 28,000. This is the estimated number of new full-time equivalent spaces required to reach a 59% coverage rate in Saskatchewan and to meet the expected demand for spaces in the province at the \$10/day average price for child care targeted for 2025-26.

Saskatchewan will also develop an expansion and strategy plan as part of preparations for the second (2023-24 to 2025-26) action plan under the agreement with a focus on ensuring additional centre based spaces will be available in more urban areas, as population warrants. The expansion plan may also include, for example:

- Child care in new school builds. Developments in neighbourhoods with populations of vulnerability including newcomers to Canada, Indigenous children and official language minorities. A number of these developments are already pending.
- Establish a public awareness campaign to attract new home based child care providers to the industry.
- Consider construction of child care centres in communities where population/economic is greatest and where vulnerability and hard to serve arrangements are required.

To support the development of this plan, Saskatchewan will continue to work with communities and partners to enhance early learning and child care so families who would like to have access to affordable, high quality ELCC opportunities regardless of where they live. This consultation with communities and partners will:

- Ensure new space development will meet their community needs, especially in the context of child care deserts;
- Provide for new opportunities to offer early learning and child care; and,
- Allow for as much flexibility for parents as possible.

Our experience in providing dedicated child care for pandemic response workers in 2020 demonstrated a need and openness to more flexible/extended hours and consideration would be given to provide ongoing support for sustained availability of such a service. Building on existing and establishing new partnerships will ensure that child care in Saskatchewan is reflective of the diverse communities in the province.

For 2021-2022 and 2022-2023, Saskatchewan will target to increase regulated child care spaces by 12,100 (full-time equivalent) by using a range of flexible options including regulated not-for-profit child care centres, small child-care facilities, and family-based child care. This will provide a foundation to achieve a target of 28,000 new regulated not-for-profit regulated spaces by the end of the agreement in 2025-2026.

Indicator	2021/22 Target	2021/22 Investment	22/23 Target	2022-23 Investment	Cumulative Target	Total Investment
Increase Spaces	6,000 spaces	\$16.326M	6,100 spaces	\$33.501M	12,100 spaces	\$49.827M

### Access Targets:

- By the end of 2022-2023, 12,100 new full-time equivalent not-for-profit regulated spaces will be created for children age under six by using a range of flexible options including regulated not-for-profit child care centres, small child-care facilities, and family-based child care.
- By the end of 2022-23, Saskatchewan will develop an expansion plan and strategy, informed by consultation with communities and partners, to guide the development of new spaces for the duration of the agreement.
- By the end of 2022-23, Saskatchewan will develop an expansion and strategy plan as part of preparations for the second (2023-24 to 2025-26) action plan under this agreement with a focus on ensuring additional centre based spaces will be available in more urban areas, as population warrants.
- By the end of 2025-2026, 28,000 new full-time equivalent not-for-profit regulated spaces will be created for children age under six.

## PRIORITY #3: INCLUSION

Child care should be responsive to the unique needs of all children and families taking into consideration culture, identity, language, and individual needs.

As detailed below, Saskatchewan will work with a range of partners to develop plans and options to ensure that vulnerable children from diverse populations will have equitable access to regulated child care that meets their unique needs.

To facilitate parental choice and relevant child care options, Saskatchewan will invest in 2021-22 and 2022-23 in defining a range of child care options that best meets the needs and interests of our diverse population. This range of options will inform the space development for vulnerable families such as newcomers to Canada, Black and racialized children, and official language minorities, to ensure that the choices are flexible yet responsive to families who may not be best served by traditional child care models in later years of the agreement. Saskatchewan will draw on the expertise of early childhood experts, families, and service providers to define the range of relevant models that meet unique needs.

Saskatchewan has enjoyed measured progress in working with First Nations and Métis partners to develop responsive child care including working with First Nations to develop more child care spaces and meeting regularly with Métis officials regarding early learning and child care priorities and initiatives for their members. With the Canada-Saskatchewan ELCC Agreement 2017-18 to 2020-21, Saskatchewan invested in professional development, and resources for the early learning and child care sector including aboriginal awareness training (over 1000 participants), indigenous early learning books for early learning programs and consulted with First Nations organizations and elders in the creation of spiritual development materials for educators to facilitate a sense of belonging, culture and awareness. Saskatchewan also has mechanisms in place to license on-reserve child care centres if a First Nation invites the province to do so. There are currently two on-reserve child care centres that are provincially licensed.

In 2021-22 and 2022-23, Saskatchewan will invest in engaging with First Nations and Métis organizations to develop a plan for a coordinated system that reflects the needs and demands of Saskatchewan's First Nations and Métis peoples that is centred on children, grounded in culture, guided by leaders in indigenous early learning and child care in the province. The resulting plan will guide the actions for access to affordable, high quality and culturally relevant early learning and child care in 2024-2025 and 2025-2026.

In 2021-22, Saskatchewan will focus on supporting vulnerable children who are not currently engaged or who have minimal involvement to make smooth transitions to child care. This will be accomplished through partnerships between early childhood development programs working with vulnerable families and child care to support children to transition to developmentally appropriate child care programs. This action will focus on identifying children for transition, creating awareness amongst families about the importance and value of early learning and care, and helping families to navigate supports and services.

Supporting inclusive early learning and child care opportunities for young children experiencing disability is a priority for Saskatchewan. The Saskatchewan Plan for Growth lays out the goal that Saskatchewan will be the best place in Canada to live for persons with disabilities. This goal is affirmed in The Saskatchewan Disability Strategy which aims to improve programs and services so that Saskatchewan is the best place in Canada to live for persons experiencing disability, including through Recommendation #8:

- Focus on development and lifelong learning;
- Remove barriers to inclusive quality education, early development programming and lifelong learning so that people experiencing disability have the opportunity to realize their potential.
- Expand early learning programming that helps young children experiencing disability to receive a good start on their learning and development.
- This recommendation was informed by the results of public consultations.

Saskatchewan's Disability Strategy strives to take an inclusive approach to disability by developing environments that consider everyone's needs. The province has worked towards inclusion of children in child care settings as a foundational approach. Currently the province does not designate specific spaces for children experiencing disabilities allowing for children to access child care as any other child. Funding is provided for children with additional needs through two funding envelopes.

With the Canada-Saskatchewan ELCC Agreement 2017-18 to 2020-21, Saskatchewan invested in professional development invested in inclusion training for early childhood educators and enhanced accessibility funding. Building

on the success of recent initiatives for children with disabilities and drawing on the skills and experience of our early learning community, Saskatchewan will continue to improve access to child care for children with disabilities. In 2022-23, Saskatchewan will strive to further build capacity within the child care sector to fully engage children with disabilities in child care programs. This will be accomplished by leveraging the skills, tools, and existing relationships with early childhood development partners to facilitate program planning for Early Childhood Educators working directly with children with disabilities. It is anticipated that this investment will result in improved child development, greater participation in child care and improved skills and knowledge for early childhood educators.

Saskatchewan’s funding model review will consider the need to review support for enhanced accessibility for children with disabilities with the goal of identifying opportunities for greater efficiency and effectiveness. It is anticipated with fee reductions and supported transition that there will be a greater need for enhanced accessibility support. From 2021-2022 to 2022-2023, Saskatchewan will invest additional enhanced accessibility support for children experiencing disability. The enhanced accessibility grant provides \$2000 a month to support the full inclusion of children in the care program. In addition, this coupled with the increased capacity of sector professionals to engage children with disabilities will facilitate enhanced individual supports for children with disabilities.

Component	2021/22 Target	2021/22 Investment	22/23 Target	2022-23 Investment	Cumulative Target	Total Investment
<b>First Nations and Métis Engagement</b>	N/A	\$ .400M	N/A	\$ .300M	N/A	\$ .700M
<b>Develop a range of flexible options</b>	N/A	\$ .250M	N/A	\$ .250M	N/A	\$ .500M
<b>Transitioning Vulnerable Children</b>	150 children	\$ .975M	150 children	\$ .975M	300 children	\$ 1.95M
<b>Children Experiencing Disability</b>	100 children	\$ .251M	100 children	\$ .251M	200 children	\$ .502M
<b>Enhance Accessibility</b>	100 children	\$ .200M	100 children	\$ .200M	200 children	\$ .400M
<b>Child Care Subsidy</b>	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
<b>Total</b>		\$ 2.076M	350 children	\$ 1.976M	700 children	\$ 4.052M

## Inclusion Targets:

- The planned consultations and investments in the first two years of this agreement will inform the development of an inclusion plan and investments for the subsequent action plan for 2023-2024 to 2025-2026. These future investments will work toward the objective of ensuring that all vulnerable children and children from diverse populations – no matter where in the province they live – have access to regulated child care by the end of fiscal year 2025-2026. In aiming to provide spaces to all children that want spaces, it is anticipated that vulnerable children and children from diverse populations, including but not limited to children with disabilities, children living in low income; Indigenous children; Black and other racialized children; children of newcomers to Canada, and official language minorities, will have equitable access to regulated child care spaces, in proportion to their presence in the population.
- Saskatchewan will establish baseline data to determine future need for space development for official language minorities.
- In 2021-22 and 2022-23, Saskatchewan will invest in engaging with First Nations and Métis organizations to develop a plan for a coordinated system that reflects the needs and demands of Saskatchewan’s First Nations

and Métis peoples that is centred on children, grounded in culture, guided by leaders in indigenous early learning and child care in the province.

- Saskatchewan will invest \$1.95M in the first two years of the Agreement to support 300 vulnerable children to make smooth transitions to child care.
- From 2021-2022 to 2022-2023, Saskatchewan will provide additional investments through the enhanced accessibility grant to support the full inclusion of children in the care program. 200 children will benefit from this grant.
- In 2021-2022 and 2022-23, Saskatchewan will invest \$.502M to build capacity within the child care sector to fully engage children with disabilities in child care programs by leveraging the skills, tools, and existing relationships with early childhood development partners. This will facilitate program planning for ECEs working directly with children with disabilities. This will benefit approximately 200 children.

## PRIORITY #4: QUALITY

Supporting the quality of the early learning and child care system has always been a priority for Saskatchewan, and this priority was reaffirmed by Saskatchewan's Early Years Plan and the Education Sector Strategic Plan. Investing in quality is important because it yields dividends for child outcomes. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Starting Strong III, "well-educated, well-trained professionals are the key factor in providing high-quality [early childhood education] with the most favourable cognitive and social outcomes for children."

The foundation of quality in Saskatchewan's early learning and child care programs is the early learning framework Play and Exploration: Early Learning Program Guide. Quality educator practice is guided by this framework, and an array of related professional development supports that are currently housed on the province's online resource repository, the Early Learning Portal. Saskatchewan will continue to support and encourage the adoption of this early learning framework in new child care spaces that are developed in the province. Saskatchewan will also enhance investments in the province's Professional Development Grant proportional to the creation of new spaces to support ECEs and child care home providers to participate in professional learning opportunities.

In addition, under the 2017-2021 Canada-Saskatchewan Bilateral Early Learning and Child Care Agreement, Saskatchewan has been working toward the development and implementation of a differential monitoring system. This tool will allow for a greater focus on child care facilities that struggle with compliance and in turn lead to additional support for those facilities to meet regulated standards. In addition, there will be a quality measure integrated in this tool to assess high quality in early learning and child care programs, surpassing regulated standards. Early learning and child care programs that demonstrate higher quality environments are shown to be better equipped to foster outcomes like improved child developmental outcomes and school readiness.

The province will continue to collaborate with experts in the field of risk-based assessment so that the differential monitoring system will reflect current research and best practice. This change in approach to licensing will also provide the opportunity to develop innovation and quality measures for child care in Saskatchewan in a more systematic way. This will provide a basis for better data-informed decision making within the licensed system.

In addition, the province has a series of regulations that outline the standards of quality delivery which are further detailed in the licensees manual that are provided to each operator in the province. We provide board training to all of the not-for-profit operators to ensure they understand their role in the delivery of high quality child care in their facility.

This investment builds upon quality in Saskatchewan early years settings, the foundation of which is the province's overarching early learning framework Play and Exploration: Early Learning Program Guide. Quality educator practice is guided by the foundational curriculum of the framework, and a constellation of related professional development supports. The guide lays out the principles of holistic, responsive and developmentally appropriate early learning and child care programs. High quality programs focus on the healthy development of the whole child – social, emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual development. These programs engage children and their families through healthy, safe, culturally sensitive and stimulating programs that promote children's abilities and interests.

Saskatchewan will support the momentum of the forthcoming 2021-2022 Early Childhood Education workforce initiative components, including: increased support for early childhood educators, building a qualified workforce and continuous professional learning and skills enhancement.

As the Government of Saskatchewan registers regulated providers and administers the fee reduction grant, the Government will ensure that regulatory regime achieves the same or higher standards of quality, including safety and qualifications for operators, as mandated in its current regulatory requirements.

The Government of Saskatchewan will also continue to consult with child care providers, parents, and stakeholders on requirements and opportunities to access further training, professionalization and career development opportunities.

Providers who have previously operated a home child care for more than one year and choose to become registered will have until August 31, 2023 to fully meet the educational requirements.

## Component #1: Increased support for ECEs

- Saskatchewan's funding model review will consider compensation of ECEs as a critical component of child care funding. By December 31, 2022, Saskatchewan will ensure that in addition to the reduction in child care fees by 50%, there are also sufficient increases to centre- based funding to support appropriate compensation of ECEs.
- ECE wages are a significant aspect of child care centre operating expenses; appropriate compensation of ECEs will be an integral feature of Saskatchewan's operational funding support. In 2022-23, Saskatchewan will provide \$11M for increased compensation support for ECEs.
- In 2022-23, Saskatchewan will work to develop a wage grid. Saskatchewan's renewed funding model will recognize this wage grid and compensation of ECEs as an essential feature of child care funding. The wage grid developed in 2022-23 will serve as an anchor for determining appropriate compensation according to certification level. Saskatchewan will work towards implementing the wage grid as part of the renewed funding model.

## Component #2: Building a Qualified Workforce

- As a component of the 2021-22 one-time workforce funding initiative, Saskatchewan is investing in a blueprint to support the recruitment and retention of a qualified ECE workforce. Saskatchewan will take guidance from this blueprint to inform a renewal of ECE qualifications in Saskatchewan, based on a foundation of best practice. Saskatchewan will review qualifications of ECEs and consider a model that takes into consideration and promotes the various educational pathways individuals may take to reach the ECE profession.
- In 2022-23, Saskatchewan will work with post-secondary institutions to assess the demand for early childhood education certificate or diploma training seats. Saskatchewan will also explore options for developing and delivering non-traditional and flexible training options. Prospective ECEs will be supported through bursaries. Currently employed ECEs will continue to be supported through the tuition reimbursement grant, which will increase in proportion to any planned increases in the number of regulated spaces.
- Currently, about 70% of staff hold an ECE certification level (ECE I, ECE II, ECE III). Increased salary and supports for attaining/improving certification would move towards a target of 85% of staff holding an ECE certification level in the province.
- Having higher proportion of ECE IIIs will result in higher quality child care being provided. Evidence also suggests that ECEs who are more highly trained are more likely to be retained in the sector. Currently, approximately 22% of child care staff are certified as ECE IIIs; a 15 percentage point would translate to nearly 40% of ECEs employed in child care centres holding an ECE III, and Saskatchewan would target this level of ECE III utilization by 2025-26.

## Component #3: Continuous professional learning and skills enhancement

In 2022-23, Saskatchewan will invest in professional development activities responsive to the needs and interests of the sector, in consultation with the province’s child care association and provincial training partners. Saskatchewan will also extend the professional development grant to ensure that more ECEs are able to access the grant, in proportion to any increases in regulated child care spaces.

### 2022-23 Targets and Estimates – Quality (Sustaining ECE Workforce Initiatives and Planning for Future Needs)

As the Government of Saskatchewan registers regulated providers and administers the fee reduction grant, the Government will ensure that regulatory regime achieves the same or higher standards of quality, including safety and qualifications for operators, as mandated in its current regulatory requirements.

The Government of Saskatchewan will also continue to consult with child care providers, parents, and stakeholders on requirements and opportunities to access further training, professionalization and career development opportunities.

Component	Target	Estimate
<b>Increased support for ECEs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Core funding to support ECE compensation in licensed facilities.</li> </ul>	<b>\$11M</b>
<b>Building a Qualified Workforce</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuing with bursaries of up to \$5,000 provided to full-time ECE students in the 2023 academic year</li> <li>Post-secondary institutions will be prepared to respond to any demands in increased ECE training seats, and the development and delivery of non-traditional and flexible ECE models will be explored</li> <li>An enhancement to the tuition reimbursement grant funding envelope will be made in anticipation of space increases (and corresponding need for additional ECEs)</li> </ul>	<b>\$3.55M</b>
<b>Continuous professional learning and skills enhancement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional learning opportunities addressing the interests and needs of the sector will be developed in consultation with sector partners.</li> <li>An enhancement to the professional development grant funding envelope will be made in anticipation of space increases (and corresponding need for additional ECEs)</li> </ul>	<b>\$1.15M</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$15.7M</b>

## Quality Targets:

- As the Government of Saskatchewan registers regulated providers and administers the fee reduction grant, the Government will ensure that regulatory regime achieves the same or higher standards of quality, including safety and qualifications for operators, as mandated in its current regulatory requirements.
- The Government of Saskatchewan will also continue to consult with child care providers, parents, and stakeholders on requirements and opportunities to access further training, professionalization and career development opportunities.
- In 2022-23, Saskatchewan will work to develop a wage grid and increase compensation of certified child care staff through enhanced operating funding, which is expected to benefit 1,800 ECEs.
  - Saskatchewan will take more immediate actions by investing \$11M in 2022-2023 to provide sufficient increases to centre-based operating funding to support appropriate compensation of ECEs by December 31, 2022. This will build on planned investments in increased compensation as part of the forthcoming early childhood workforce funding agreement – 2021-22.
- In 2022-2023, Saskatchewan will invest \$3.55M to continue building a qualified workforce. Investments in supporting a qualified workforce and continuous professional development is expected to result in providing 150 bursaries and supporting up to 500 ECEs with training support grant.
- In 2022-2023, Saskatchewan will invest \$1.15 million in continuous professional learning and skills enhancement, which is expected to benefit 50% of existing child care staff.
- By 2025-26, Saskatchewan will increase the percentage of child care workers providing regulated child care in the province who fully meet Saskatchewan’s certification requirements by 15 percentage points.

## PRIORITY #5: REPORTING AND ADMINISTRATION

The Canada Wide agreement allows for up to ten per cent of the maximum annual allocation to support costs incurred by Saskatchewan to support the growth, expansion and administration of the agreement in 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. Saskatchewan will invest in administration funding for additional staffing, program and policy development, and system enhancements to support implementation, data collection, reporting, and accountability.

To support the expanded system, Saskatchewan will increase the sector resource to drive the implementation and continued level of quality in the system through increased resources for licensing, monitoring, policy development, accountability and reporting and program implementation.

Saskatchewan will invest in a child care data system that is in alignment with future funding of childcare, and will make available relevant financial and administrative data needed to demonstrate progress. Effort will be made to ensure that data system is capable of reporting on the desired attributes of children, as defined in the agreement. Data may also be acquired through an annual census when necessary.

Saskatchewan will conduct an annual census of child care providers and will share the results with Canada.

To support the ongoing improvement of Saskatchewan’s system, the province will also utilize standard program review processes to identify how it could enhance its public management of its system, planning and reporting.

Saskatchewan will also examine a variety of ways to support its overall management of Canada-wide child care implementation. As plans develop, this could include, but not be limited to:

- Targeted analysis on the barriers faced by vulnerable children and children from diverse populations, including but not limited to children with disabilities and children living in low income; Indigenous children; Black and other racialized children; children of newcomers to Canada, and official language minorities
- Building on current service delivery efforts in supporting a user-friendly approach to licensing for child care providers;
- Conducting an evaluation of its current data collection capacity and development of plans to address data gaps.

**SUMMARY OF INVESTMENTS FOR 2021-2022 AND 2022-2023**

<b>Summary of Canada-Wide Investments</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>
<b>Affordability</b>	(\$M)	(\$M)
50% Reduction in Parent Fees for Regulated spaces	66.967	71.565
Parent Fee reduction for Expansion	26.591	53.909
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>93.558</b>	<b>125.474</b>
<b>Access (59% coverage rate)</b>	(\$M)	(\$M)
Increase in Spaces (12,100 by 2022-23)	16.326	33.501
<b>Inclusion</b>	(\$M)	(\$M)
First Nations and Metis Engagement	0.400	0.300
Inclusion initiatives in Child Care and Early Learning	1.676	1.676
Subsidy	TBD	TBD
<b>Quality</b>	(\$M)	(\$M)
Workforce Strategy - ECE Compensation*	ELCC –forthcoming early childhood workforce funding agreement – 2021-22	11.000
Training and Qualifications*	ELCC – forthcoming early childhood workforce funding agreement – 2021-22.	4.700
<b>Planning, Reporting and Administration</b>		
Child Care System Strategy	0.250	
Data system - development	1.000	2.000
Administration (up to 10%)	1.200	1.200
<b>Total</b>	<b>114.410</b>	<b>179.851</b>
Available funding	114.410	179.851

\*The funding identified for 2022-2023 will continue to build on early childhood workforce investments for 2021-2022 that are fully outlined in the forthcoming Canada-Saskatchewan Early Learning and Child Care Agreement – 2021-22 to 2025-26.

### Canada-wide ELCC Reporting Indicators

A Canada-wide child care system requires significant expansion of data and reporting to ensure a system that is accessible, affordable, inclusive and of high-quality for all Canadian families, including families in Saskatchewan. The table below provides an outline of data that will be captured with federal funds, and where current gaps exist in reporting capacity. This data collection will help monitor progress, identify gaps in the system and inform policy development to support the Canada-wide child care vision.

Principle	Outcome	Indicator	Targets	Current Data Availability	Annual Report
<b>Affordability</b>	Decrease the average daily child care fee	Average daily parental out-of-pocket fee for regulated child care spaces at the end of each Fiscal Year	50% reduction in parent fees by 2022.  An average of \$10 a day by 2025-26 for all regulated child care spaces	Administrative Data	TBD
		Number of children aged under age six and 6-12 years receiving fee subsidies, broken down by families receiving partial and full subsidies	TBD	Administrative Data	TBD
<b>Access</b>	Increase number of ELCC spaces available	Number of ELCC spaces available during the Fiscal Year - broken down by age groups of child and type of setting	Approximately 28,000 full-time equivalent spaces for children aged 0-5 by 2025-26	Administrative Data	TBD
		Number of net new spaces created during the Fiscal Year - broken down by age groups of child and type of setting	6000 new full-time equivalent spaces for children aged 0-5 by end of 2021-22  6,100 new full-time equivalent spaces for children aged 0-5 by end of 2022-23	Administrative Data	TBD
		Number of children on waiting lists to access regulated ELCC spaces	TBD	Data currently not available	TBD
<b>Quality</b>	Increase quality early learning and child care	Number and percentage of staff working in regulated child care programs in who fully meet the	15 percentage point increase of staff working in regulated child care programs who fully meet certification/educational requirements.	Administrative Data	TBD

		certification/educational requirements			
		Wages of the early childhood workforce according to the categories of certification, including any wage enhancements, top-ups and/or supplements	Develop and implement a wage grid	Administrative Data	annual
		Annual public expenditure on training and professional development of the early childhood workforce	TBD	Administrative Data	TBD
		Average child-to-staff ratio among licensed child care service providers	Maximum centre size: 90 spaces (maximum of 12 infant spaces); Maximum staff-child ratios: Infants (< 18 months) 1:3; Toddlers (19 – 29 months) 1:5; Preschool (30 months – 6 years) 1:10; School-age (grade 1 – 12 years) 1:15	Administrative Data	TBD
<b>Inclusivity</b>	Increase number of inclusive spaces	Number of inclusive spaces created/converted – broken down by age group of child and type of setting	TBD	Data not currently available	TBD
		Number of children receiving the Enhanced Accessibility Grant	200 children will benefit from this grant	Administrative Data	TBD
		Number and proportion of centers/providers that provide flexible arrangements (i.e. non-traditional arrangements such as flexible/irregular hours, weekend and emergency	TBD	Data not currently available	TBD

		services; and geographic distribution of spaces) for harder-to-serve populations of children			
		Number of children under age six and 6-12 years with disabilities/varying abilities that are in regulated ELCC spaces	TBD	Data not currently available	TBD
		Number or proportion of child care service providers who provide services that are adapted to the needs of children with disabilities or special needs	TBD	Data not currently available	TBD
		Number of Indigenous children under age six years in regulated ELCC spaces, where possible broken down by distinction-based_	TBD	Data not currently available	TBD
		Number of racialized Canadian children, including Black Canadian children under age six in regulated ELCC spaces	TBD	Data not currently available	TBD

**TABLE 1. TARGETED CANADA-WIDE ELCC IMPROVEMENTS FOR FISCAL YEARS 2021/22 AND 2022/23**

Canada-wide Investments					
Priority Area	Initiative	Proposed Activity and Expected Impacts	Target	2021/22 (\$M)	2022/23 (\$M)
1. Affordability	Fee reduction through core funding	To support a 50% fee reduction for children aged 0-5, Saskatchewan will implement an increase in core funding. Approximately 22,000 children expected to benefit by end of calendar year 2022.	Fee reduction by an average of 50% by end of the calendar year 2022 for all children aged 0-5 who want a space  Fee reduction to an average of \$10/day by the end of fiscal year 2025-2026 for all children aged 0-5 who want a space	\$93.558M	\$125.474M
2. Access	Increased Infant, Toddler, Pre-Kindergarten, and Preschool Spaces	Increase regulated spaces to ensure anyone in Saskatchewan who wants child care will be able to access it.  By the end of fiscal 2025-26, Saskatchewan will increase the net number of regulated spaces for children age 0-5 by at least 28,000.  This is the estimated number of new full-time equivalent spaces required to reach a 59% coverate rate.	6000 new full-time equivalent spaces for children aged 0-5 by end of 2021-22  6100 new full-time equivalent spaces for children aged 0-5 by end of 2022-23  28,000 FTE spaces for children age 0-5 by 2025-2026.	\$16.326M	\$33.501M

Canada-wide Investments					
Priority Area	Initiative	Proposed Activity and Expected Impacts	Target	2021/22 (\$M)	2022/23 (\$M)
	Develop an expansion and strategy plan as part of preparations for the second (2023-24 to 2025-26) action plan under the agreement.	The expansion and strategy plan as part of preparations for the 2023-24 to 2025-26 action plan under the agreement will focus on ensuring additional centre based spaces will be available in more urban areas, as population warrants.	Plan completed by end of 2022-23	N/A	N/A
3. Inclusion	Develop collaborative plan with relevant stakeholder groups including but not limited to children with disabilities, newcomer, black and other racialized and official minorities	In 2021-22 and 2022-23, Saskatchewan will invest in engaging with relevant stakeholder groups to develop a plan for flexible models including space creation.	Plan completed by end of 2022-23	\$.250M	\$.250M
	Transitioning Vulnerable Children	Saskatchewan will focus on supporting vulnerable children who are not currently engaged or who have minimal involvement to make smooth transitions to child care.	300 vulnerable children will be supported	\$.975M	\$.975M
	Develop a collaborative plan with	In 2021-22 and 2022-23, Saskatchewan will	Plan completed by end of 2022-23	\$.400M	\$.300M

Canada-wide Investments					
Priority Area	Initiative	Proposed Activity and Expected Impacts	Target	2021/22 (\$M)	2022/23 (\$M)
	relevant First Nations and Métis Nation organizations in Saskatchewan	invest in engaging with First Nations and Métis organizations to develop a plan for a coordinated system			
	Increased supports for children with disabilities	Additional investments through the Enhanced Accessibility Grant to support the full inclusion of children in the care program	200 children will benefit from this grant	\$.200M	\$.200M
		Build capacity within the child care sector to fully engage children with disabilities in child care programs	200 children will benefit from this increased support	\$.251M	\$.251M
4. Quality	Registration of regulated providers and administration of the fee reduction grant	Ensure that regulatory regime achieves the same or higher standards of quality, including safety and qualifications for operators, as mandated in its current regulatory requirements as the Government of Saskatchewan registers regulated providers and administers the fee reduction grant.	Ongoing	N/A	N/A

Canada-wide Investments					
Priority Area	Initiative	Proposed Activity and Expected Impacts	Target	2021/22 (\$M)	2022/23 (\$M)
	Consultations with child care providers, parents, and stakeholders	Continued consultations with child care providers, parents, and stakeholders on requirements and opportunities to access further training, professionalization and career development opportunities.	Ongoing	N/A	N/A
	Increased support for ECEs	Increased support for qualified Early Childhood Educators	Develop a wage grid by 2022-23  78% of staff certified to receive additional support in 2021-22 (early ELCC Workforce Agreement funding – 2021-22)  Support an estimated 1800 ECEs	N/A. Complemented by 2021-22 ELCC Workforce Agreement funding	\$11M (separate from 2021-22 workforce funding)
	Building a Qualified Workforce	Continuing enhance certification levels and bring more qualified ECEs into the profession  Supporting education costs for prospective and current ECEs	15 percentage point increase of staff working in regulated child care programs who fully meet certification/educational requirements  Up to 150 bursaries  Up to 500 ECEs with training support grant	N/A. Complemented by 2021-22 ELCC Workforce Agreement funding	\$3.55M

Canada-wide Investments					
Priority Area	Initiative	Proposed Activity and Expected Impacts	Target	2021/22 (\$M)	2022/23 (\$M)
	Continuous professional learning and skills enhancement	Professional learning opportunities addressing the interests and needs of the sector will be developed in consultation with sector partners.	50% of child care staff participate in continuous professional learning and skills enhancement	N/A. Complemented by 2021-22 ELCC Workforce Agreement funding	\$1.15M