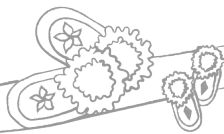




Northwest Territories Child Day Care Act

Have your say



What is the *NWT Child Day Care Act*?

The [Northwest Territories \(NWT\) Child Day Care Act](#) (Act) is a piece of legislation that describes how children should be cared for in facilities outside of their homes. The Act and [Standards Regulations](#) are not intended to inhibit the creativity of those who operate child care facilities and deliver licensed early learning and child care programs (licensed programs). Their purpose is to set minimum standards that ensure the quality, care, instruction and supervision of children.

Why is it being updated?

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) is proposing amendments to better support transformation of early learning and child care in the NWT. These changes will support achievement of the commitments outlined in [2030 Early Learning and Child Care \(ELCC\) Strategy](#) and support ongoing development of a robust, mature system.

The proposed updates to the Act will support the [19th Legislative Assembly's Mandate](#) to advance towards universal child care.

How were the amendments determined?

In Spring 2021, ECE released the [ELCC Funding Programs Review](#).

In 2021-2022, ECE released the 2030 ELCC Strategy and finalized federal funding agreements to support implementation of the Strategy. The Strategy and federal agreements identify commitments and targets. Once achieved, these will contribute to the improvement of the quality, affordability, accessibility, and inclusivity of early learning and child care in the NWT and align with the long-term vision of a Canada-wide early learning child care system as set out in the Government of Canada's [Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework](#) and [Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework](#).

Both the ELCC Funding Programs Review and the 2030 ELCC Strategy were informed by Indigenous Governments, licensed program operators and early childhood educators.

ECE has determined that amendments are required to improve accountability and the interrelated nature of supports required to transform the early learning and child care system.

What is the timeline?

- **June 27, 2022:** Deadline to comment on the proposed amendments
- **March 2023:** Amendments will come into force

What is in the current *NWT Child Day Care Act*?

The [Act](#) and [Standards Regulations](#) set minimum standards that ensure the quality, care, instruction and supervision of children in facilities outside of their home.

The Act differentiates between licensed and unlicensed early learning and child care programs and identifies requirements for operating early learning and child care programs in the NWT while ensuring the health and safety of the children who attend those programs. The Director of Child Day Care Services is appointed by the Minister and is responsible for ensuring that licensed early learning and child care programs operate in compliance with the Act. The Director, and delegates, are responsible for investigating complaints about licensed programs.

What are the proposed amendments?

Establishing an NWT certification process and wage grid

What does it mean?

This means establishing a certification process for licensed programs to clearly identify the education level, experience and professional role of the early learning educator. These changes would support the establishment of professional standards and criteria for early childhood educators and would also establish a wage grid for early childhood educators in centre-based programs.

Why is it important?

A certification process will support early childhood educators, program operators and staff in their

professional growth and improve the quality of licensed programs.

A wage grid will create pay scales for early childhood educators in centre-based programs to help retain and recruit educators.

Increasing inclusion and reporting measures

What does it mean?

As part of the [Canada – Northwest Territories Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement](#), the GNWT agreed to provide Canada with information about the demographics of children in licensed programs. Proposed amendments would enable ECE to collect information from licensed programs about the children in their programs, and also support ECE's ability to support inclusion of all children in early learning and child care.

Why is it important?

In addition to meeting federal requirements, this information is needed to support inclusion in licensed programs. Information related to the diverse needs of children, including children who have specific developmental needs will allow ECE to make more effective use of resources to support children to get the most out of early learning and child care. This will assist ECE in ensuring that all children – including children from equity-seeking families and those needing enhanced or individual supports – have access to child care spaces to meet their needs.

Establishing cost control measures

What does it mean?

The GNWT has a mandate commitment to advance universal child care by increasing availability and affordability. Enabling the ECE Minister to implement cost control measures, such as setting limits on fees charged by licensed programs who are receiving government subsidies, will ensure that the funding earmarked for enhancing affordability for families is doing what it is intended to do. This would also

include defining the types and maximums of allowable child care fees.

Why is it important?

Affordable child care for families is a necessary component of advancing universal child care in the NWT. As a responsible government, it is necessary to ensure that government funding is used efficiently and effectively.

Protecting the rights of families

What does it mean?

To ensure that all families are able to benefit from safe and regulated child care, ECE is seeking to establish mandatory provisions to protect the rights of children and families within the Act.

Why is it important?

Families currently do not have an avenue for protecting their rights and the rights of their children if contract obligations are unmet and/or if they feel they have been treated unfairly by the operator of a licensed program.

Updating language

What does it mean?

Recognizing that the last updates were in 2013, ECE seeks to revise and/or add language to clarify meaning and reflect current terminology.

Why is it important?

Updates to the language in the Act is required to better define the types of programs that operate under the Act, clarify what types of programs are not required to comply with the Act, use gender-neutral language throughout, and to ensure that the terms used in the Act remain aligned with how they are used in other legislation.

How do I provide input?

Please provide your comments to:

Phone: 867-767-9354 Ext: 71280

Email: earlylearning@gov.nt.ca

More information

Department of Education, Culture and Employment

www.ece.gov.nt.ca/elcc
