



newsletter

CONFÉRENCE MINISTÉRIELLE
SUR LA FRANCOPHONIE
CANADIENNE | MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
ON THE CANADIAN
FRANCOPHONIE

SUMMARY

- 1 Taking Action in Early Childhood!
- 2 Ongoing official languages commitment
- 2 New early years policy framework in Ontario
- 3 Québec has « La francophonie @ cœur » (Francophonie @ Heart)
- 3 Ensuring NS Children Get the Best Start
- 4 Putting Children First: Positioning Early Childhood for the Future
- 4 Integrated Francophone Early Childhood Development ECD Services in Manitoba: The ECD Hub Model
- 5 British Columbia focuses on resources for families
- 5 PEI Preschool Excellence Initiative
- 6 Recognition of the Fransaskois Flag
- 6 Early childhood development: a priority initiative for Alberta
- 7 Caring For Our Future
- 7 A French daycare North of 60
- 8 Early Years in Yukon
- 8 Launch of 5544 French Services Line

MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE CANADIAN FRANCOPHONIE

Taking Action in Early Childhood!

SPEAKING, PLAYING, and living in French are essential to developing a positive relationship with the French language, liking it, and making it a tool of discovery, openness, and pride.

Research shows that the early years of life are important for children's future development and well-being. Early childhood development therefore plays a critical role in strengthening language, identity, and cultural development within the Canadian Francophonie.



To contribute to this topic, the ministers responsible for the Canadian Francophonie are meeting on September 4 and 5, 2013, in Winnipeg, Manitoba, for the 18th Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie under the theme *Early Childhood Development: essential to the vitality of the French language and French-speaking cultures*.

Their discussions will focus on the importance and determining role that governments play in early childhood, as well as on the various government strategies implemented, with consideration given to the realities of each government. The discussions will enable them to note that the implementation of programs and policies contributes to the optimal development of children and to the vitality of the culture, language, and identity of the Canadian Francophonie.

The Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie, created in 1994, is the only intergovernmental forum that brings together the ministers responsible for the Canadian Francophonie. The Conference works for an open, dynamic, and diverse Francophonie that contributes to, and participates fully in, the growth of Canadian society.



Ongoing official languages commitment

ON MARCH 28, the Government of Canada announced the new Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013-2018: Education, Immigration, Communities. This renewal represents an ongoing commitment to enhance the vitality of Canada's official language minority communities.

With a \$1.1 billion budget over five years, the new Roadmap retains the initiatives of the previous Roadmap, which were to "protect, celebrate and enhance Canada's linguistic duality," through three new pillars identified as priorities during the consultations:

1. Education: learning our official languages;
2. Immigration: promoting our official languages among immigrants;
3. Support to English- and French-speaking minority communities.

Through this commitment, Canadian Heritage can renew its cooperation with the provincial and territorial governments in the areas of services and education over the next five years. These initiatives can include among others the development of early childhood programs and resources. Through these agreements, the government of Canada provides significant support to provinces and territories in the area of education, enabling 2.4 million students to learn their second official language. 341,000 of these students are registered to French immersion programs, representing a 12% increase over the last years.

The government of Canada investments provide for concrete and tangible services for Canadians so they can participate fully in society.



Canadian
Heritage

Patrimoine
canadien

Canada

ONTARIO

New early years policy framework in Ontario

IN JANUARY 2013, the Ontario government introduced a new *Early Years Policy Framework* which articulates its early years vision, outlines the guiding principles, and clearly commits the government to priorities for moving forward.

The framework articulates four guiding principles:

1. Programs and services are centred on the child and the family.

Children and families always come first in its policy, legislation, planning, decision-making, implementation, and thinking.

2. Programs and services are of high quality.

Quality is the central component of its early years policy framework, because Ontario knows that high-quality programs and services have an extraordinary impact on children's long-term development.

3. Strong partnerships are essential.

Government can enact legislation and set policy, but transformation is only possible through commitment and participation from its partners. Ontario is committed to collaboration and dialogue as its working model.

4. Programs and services are publicly accountable.

Its planning and decision making will be based on evidence, research, and program evaluation.

In particular, the framework supports the unique mandate of French-language school boards under the *Politique d'aménagement linguistique* and recognizes the importance of the early years programs in Franco-Ontarian communities for the acquisition of culture and language.

To read the whole framework, visit www.edu.gov.on.ca/child_care/OntarioEarlyYear.pdf



La francophonie @ cœur

Nearly \$5.5 million in assistance for the Francophonie

In 2012-2013, the Government of Québec granted close to \$2.1 million in funding for more than 300 projects under its two financial support programs for the Canadian Francophonie. Nearly \$2.9 million was also granted to the Centre de la francophonie des Amériques toward the accomplishment of its ambitious mandate. In addition, \$530,000 was granted to support the 5th Congrès mondial acadien, which will be held from August 8 to 24, 2014, in Acadia of the Lands and Forests.

Early childhood: a priority for Québec

Annually, the Government of Québec devotes \$2.4 billion to early childhood and in 1997 established a network of public and private daycares that today offer 213,000 subsidized places at seven dollars a day. Québec's child care services contribute to the overall development of children, and legislation governs the organization of daycares and the quality of educational services.

Meeting with the president of the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne (FCFA) du Canada

On April 30, Minister Alexandre Cloutier met with the president of the FCFA, Marie-France Kenny, to discuss the issues and challenges facing Francophone communities today as well as the importance of increased collaboration to ensure the vitality of the French language.

Visit from French Minister Yamina Benguigui at the Centre de la francophonie des Amériques

On March 15, Minister Alexandre Cloutier welcomed French Delegated Minister for the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Responsible for the Francophonie, Yamina Benguigui. One of the highlights of the visit was the ministers' participation in a program of Radio jeunesse des Amériques, a multimedia platform hosted by youth.

Annually, the Government of Québec devotes \$2.4 billion to early childhood...

NOVA SCOTIA

Ensuring NS Children Get the Best Start

IN APRIL 2013, the Nova Scotia government announced changes and additional funding for early childhood development in its annual budget. Initiatives include the integration of provincial programs and services for children and families, the establishment of Early Years centres, and free and comprehensive screening for children aged 18 and 36 months.

One thousand Nova Scotians attended focus groups and group sessions that were available in both English and French, as well as provided written submissions for improvements to the province's supports for its children and families. Based on the feedback provided and research that shows the importance of development in the early years, the Department of Education expanded to include the Early Years branch, forming the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

The Early Years branch includes a team of experts from the departments of Community Services, Health & Wellness,

and Education. This will ensure an enhanced collaboration, a strengthened expertise, and expansion of knowledge with regard to early childhood development.

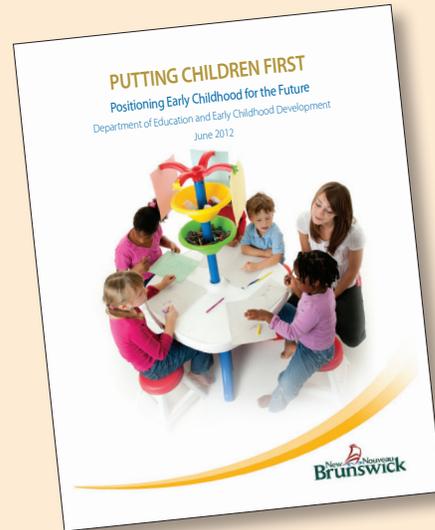
The Province will also establish three Early Years centres across the province in order to provide accessible locations where support can be provided to young children and their families. The centres will build on the successful SchoolsPlus program and existing community-based services, providing seamless access to regulated child care, early learning programs, early intervention, and parent education. SchoolsPlus is available at all eight school boards, including the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial.

The province will also develop a comprehensive plan for free wellness visits for children at 18 months and again at 36 months, designed to identify the child's needs early, which will ensure that supports are in place when the child starts school.

Putting Children First: Positioning Early Childhood for the Future

NEW BRUNSWICK is on a historic path to lay the groundwork for the future. *Putting Children First: Positioning Early Childhood for the Future* presents the plan for integrating early childhood services into the education sector. This plan will enable us to implement integrated services and a continuum of learning for children from birth to age eight.

With respect to the process of integrating preschool and school systems, it is essential to understand that the transfer of the administrative responsibility to the education sector is only one of many keys to its success. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development must also restructure the system to ensure not only a harmonization of preschool and school services, but also paragovernmental and governmental services. Hence, we are going to respond first and foremost to the specific needs of our children.



That way, our ongoing support services will give children the best chance at reaching their full potential and becoming active citizens who will contribute to New Brunswick's prosperity.

Click on this link for the full plan: <http://www.gnb.ca/0000/publications/comm/ChildhoodActionPlanReport.pdf>

Integrated Francophone Early Childhood Development ECD Services in Manitoba: The ECD Hub Model

MANITOBA'S FRANCOPHONE Early Childhood Development (ECD) Hub Model, "Les centres de la petite enfance et de la famille (CPEF)," provides a comprehensive continuum of integrated services and resources for Francophone parents of children (prenatal-6) in school-based centres across Manitoba. The *Coalition francophone de la petite enfance du Manitoba* Steering Committee, with representation from the Division scolaire franco-manitobaine, the Fédération des Parents du Manitoba, the Société franco-manitobaine, and Healthy Child Manitoba, coordinates the implementation of the model. Funding is provided through the Canada-Manitoba Agreement on French-Language Services.

The CPEF Steering Committee is supported by sub-committees of government and community partners that focus on the key areas of literacy/numeracy, parent education and awareness, support for exogamous families, research, early identification and intervention/multi-disciplinary services, linguistic and cultural supports, and professional training.

The Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet, Canada's first and only legislated cabinet committee dedicated to children and youth, has provided funding and support to the CPEFs since their establishment in 2004. CPEFs provide integrated resources and services to children and families in their primary language, including Healthy Baby programs, literacy and early learning, play groups, toy and book lending libraries, and early childhood development services, including referral to specialized resources. Currently, there are nine core CPEFs, two satellite locations, and one mini-CPEF across the province.

Manitoba's Premier and Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs, Greg Selinger, notes, "This integrated model better connects Francophone families with what is important for their children's well-being. As a result, our children have more opportunities to develop fully and will be more ready for school."

British Columbia focuses on resources for families

THE BRITISH COLUMBIA government is enhancing its support for Francophone families with additional resources in French.

To support the government's goal of putting families first, the Ministries of Education, Health, and Justice have completed new French-language resources for children and parents. These resources include:

- The online-reporting tool on the ERASE Bullying website from the Ministry of Education, which students can use to report bullying anonymously: <http://www.erasebullying.ca/bullying/bullying-types.php>. There is also information in French on different forms of bullying and cyberbullying for students and parents.
- *Baby's Best Chance: Parent's Handbook of Pregnancy and Baby Care* from the Ministry of Health, which offers useful information to expecting parents: <http://www.bestchance.gov.bc.ca/tools-and-resources/key-resources/index.html>



- Resources on the new *Family Law Act* from the Ministry of Justice to ensure parents put the interests of their child first when they are going through a separation or divorce. The French Parenting After Separation handbook is posted on the ministry website: <http://www.justicebc.ca/en/fam/help/pas/more-info.html>, <http://familieschange.ca/kids/index.htm>

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

PEI Preschool Excellence Initiative

AS A PROVINCE, we believe in preparing our young Islanders for a lifetime of education. It is in this context that the PEI Preschool Excellence Initiative was developed. This initiative aims at building an accessible, sustainable and quality-driven education system which recognizes the need for parental choice.

The first step in the process was the introduction of kindergarten as a full-day program in the public school system. This transition was completed in September 2010.

This first step is now being followed by an extensive remodeling of the early childhood sector to provide support to Island children from birth to age four, their parents and their educators. This includes the creation of Early Years Centres (EYC); training and a career ladder for all staff; a wage grid for EYC staff; regulated parent fees; the development of an Early Learning Framework, among others.

The objective is to optimize the learning environment for children attending Francophone centres.

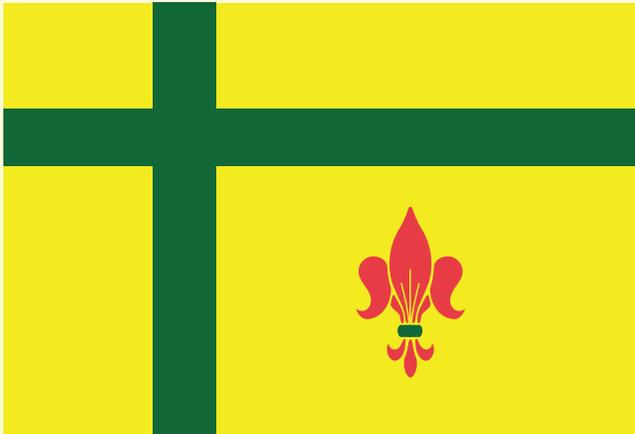
Recognizing the distinct nature and needs of the Francophone EYCs, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has supported a training path to meet the specific needs of the educators of those centres, drawing on the expertise and training available at the Collège Acadie Î. P. É.

The department has also supported an adaptation of the curriculum instead of a straight translation of English to French, in order to optimize the learning environment for children attending Francophone centres.

SASKATCHEWAN

Recognition of the Fransaskois Flag

EVERY YEAR since 2009, the Government of Saskatchewan has presented Francophone communities with a Fransaskois flag and commemorative plaque in recognition of their contribution to French language and culture in Saskatchewan.



According to Provincial Secretary Wayne Elhard, “the flag is symbolic of the relationship between our province and our Francophone community; a sign of deep respect and gratitude for all the contributions the Fransaskois have made throughout the decades, not only in this community but the entire province.”

The Fransaskois flag was adopted as a provincial emblem in 2005 to recognize the status of French as one of Canada’s official languages and acknowledge the heritage of Saskatchewan’s Francophones and their significant contributions to the province.

The flag has a gold background that represents the wheat fields of Saskatchewan. The cross, representing the role of the Catholic Church in Fransaskois history and culture, is green, the colour of the northern forests. The red fleur de lys symbolizes “la Francophonie”.

The following communities have received a flag and a plaque since 2009: Duck Lake, Ferland, St. Denis, Gravelbourg, Zenon Park, Regina, Saskatoon, Bellegarde, and North Battleford.

ALBERTA

Early childhood development: a priority initiative for Alberta

ALBERTA IS home to approximately 290,000 children under the age of six, and, of these, more than 5,000 speak French. The Government of Alberta recognizes that the foundation for strong and healthy children is set in the early years. That is why the Alberta government has made early childhood development one of six priority initiatives.

A child’s positive interaction with a parent is the most powerful way to develop a healthy, happy child. *The Early Childhood Development Priority Initiative* will build on existing early childhood programs in Alberta, including the 46 Parent Link Centres (PLCs).

PLCs are community-based family resource centres that provide early childhood development programs, parent education, family support services, and information and referral services to connect families to developmental screening and other resources in each community. Each of these centres is uniquely designed to meet the needs of families living in each community.

The Francophone PLC in Edmonton, *l’Institut Guy-Lacombe de la famille*, receives provincial funding to:



- provide information about becoming a parent and other parenting resources in the community, including how to support identity building, belonging, and transmission of language and culture;
- deliver parent education, such as promoting a healthy pregnancy, locating and choosing child care, communication and positive discipline;
- offer play-based learning activities for children and parents, including access to a toy-lending and resource library;
- provide snapshots of a child’s development (Ages and Stages Questionnaire).

Caring For Our Future

IN FEBRUARY 2013, the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services launched a 10-year child care strategy — *Caring For Our Future: Provincial Strategy for Quality, Sufficient and Affordable Child Care in Newfoundland and Labrador*. The strategy represents a way forward with all partners working together to achieve a common vision for child care in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Child care plays a vital role in the healthy development of children, families and communities throughout the province, including the Francophone community. The strategy represents a way forward with all partners working together to achieve a common vision for child care in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The strategy builds on three key pillars: quality, sufficiency and affordability. Each of these pillars contributes to a strong child care system, which will help to ensure that parents who choose regulated child care will have access to high quality, affordable services.

Some of the key components of the strategy include development of:

- a Workplace Training Program with Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition to support upgrading of qualifications of Early Childhood Educators;
- a Centralized Child Care Registry which will provide parents with an effective way to find child care, child care program operators with an efficient means of filling vacancies and the Provincial Government with improved data to determine supply and demand of child care spaces; and,
- a voluntary Operating Grant Program which will provide operational funding to child care centres choosing to become involved, based on such criteria as need for child care in the area and proposed sustainability of the operation. The program will have a monitoring and distribution system and participants will be required to meet specific criteria, including setting child care fees at provincial subsidy rates which help to address affordability for families.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

A French daycare North of 60

GARDERIE PLEIN SOLEIL is the only public French-language daycare in the capital city of Yellowknife in the Northwest Territories (NWT). Located in École Allain St-Cyr, the program is in high demand. The program maintains a strong connection to the Francophone community and regularly participates in activities associated with National Francophonie Week. One of the major strengths of the program is employee retention, as most of the employees have been at the daycare for three or more years.

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), Department of Education, Culture and Employment licenses and supports day cares as part of the Early Childhood Program (ECP). Under ECP, attendance-based funding is provided to all non-profit licensed child care programs in the NWT. Funding may also be available to licensed programs to address any fire or health inspection deficiency identified during the annual day care inspection. In addition, licensed programs were able to receive \$1,000 in 2012-2013 in order to purchase program materials.



Garderie Plein Soleil is approved for 8 infant spaces, 29 preschool spaces, and 20 afterschool spaces. The GNWT provides supports, including attendance-based and program resource funding. As well, the GNWT has undertaken the significant task of translating the *Understanding the Child Day Care Regulations: A Handbook for Early Childhood Programs*. This translation to French, totalling 89,500 words, is the largest French translation to date and will provide support for NWT French-language day cares such as Garderie Plein Soleil.

YUKON

Early Years in Yukon

THREE YUKON government departments (Health and Social Services, Education, and Women's Directorate) are working together on the joint Early Years project to improve linkages between current services and supports. The project will explore new ways to support parents in raising healthy, happy children and will ensure Yukon children have a solid foundation for lifelong health, learning and success.

The Early Years project captures the pre-natal period to age six. The departments will look at the influences on a child's development and ways to support parents and communities, including:

- pre-natal information, education, support and care;
- parenting and family supports;
- health services for children;
- child care, pre-school and kindergarten programs; and
- screening and access to specialized services for children.



Photo Credit: |Aurore boréale

They have their eyes on us.

Established in 1990, the Yukon French daycare centre, la Garderie du petit cheval blanc, is located on the grounds of École Émilie-Tremblay. Its long waiting list demonstrates the centre's success. Expansion plans have been the subject of discussions for several years. Currently 41 children aged six months to three years are enrolled in the centre, and 52 attend the after-school program. The centre employs 14 staff members.

NUNAVUT

Launch of 5544 French Services Line

THE GOVERNMENT of Nunavut's Department of Culture and Heritage launched last April the 5544 French Services telephone line, a referral service that provides information in French about GN programs and services.



With the coming into force of the *Official Languages Act* on April 1, 2013, Line 5544 provides Francophones with an initial point of contact with their government in French. This initiative marks an important first step towards improving the effective and efficient delivery of government French-language services in Nunavut.

Line 5544 is a creative and cost-effective approach and is operated by the Department of Culture and Heritage, in partnership with departments and public agencies. Francophones seeking information about services and programs provided by the Government of Nunavut can now call **867-975-5544** or send inquiries via email to: ligne5544@gov.nu.ca.

Approximately 1,205 people in Nunavut have the ability to speak French, the majority of whom reside in Iqaluit where they represent approximately 12% of the population.