

PT Ministers Most Responsible for Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC)

January 29, 2026
1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. ET

Location: Victoria Hall
John G. Diefenbaker Building,
111 Sussex Drive, Ottawa, Ontario

AGENDA

| TIME | TOPIC | LEAD |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| 1:00 p.m. (5 minutes) | 1. CICS Overview and Housekeeping | CICS Conference Manager |
| 1:05 p.m. (15 minutes) | 2. Welcoming Remarks and Introductions Objective: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Elder opening prayer▪ Chair provides Land Acknowledgement and Opening Remarks▪ PTs provide introductions during roll call for in-person and on-line participants | Manitoba (Chair) |
| 1:20 p.m. (5 minutes) | 3. Administrative Updates Objective: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Approve the Record of Discussion from the November 2025 Ad Hoc Meeting of PT Ministers Most Responsible for ELCC.▪ Approve the Record of Discussion from the November 2024 Meeting of PT Ministers Most Responsible for ELCC | Manitoba (Chair) <i>Decision Item</i> |
| 1:25 p.m. (65 minutes) | 4. Sustainability of the Canada-wide ELCC system Objective: Round Table Discussion with Presentation from Ontario Discussion Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Question 1: Given the current economic environment and fiscal constraints, what could be potential solutions to ensure sustainability of early learning and child care over the longer term? | All <i>Discussion Item</i> |

| TIME | TOPIC | LEAD |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Question 2: What could we explore collectively via the Multilateral Forum to address longer term sustainability? ▪ Question 3: Have you pursued or are you interested in pursuing any innovative approaches or partnerships to address sustainability issues in the system? <p><i>Chair will summarize the information to share a statement of collective perspective at the forthcoming FPT meeting</i></p> | |
| 2:30 p.m. (20 minutes) | Health Break | All |
| 2:50 p.m. (15 minutes) | 5. Multilateral Priorities Objective: Discuss common perspectives on current Forum priorities that will be discussed at the FPT Ministers' meeting including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Next steps regarding the ELCC Multilateral Workforce Strategy ▪ Opportunities for greater Indigenous collaboration ▪ Data and Reporting ▪ Explore concepts and definitions of high quality ELCC <p><i>Chair will summarize the information to share a statement of collective perspective at the forthcoming FPT meeting</i></p> | Manitoba (Chair) <i>Discussion Item</i> |
| 3:05 p.m. (20 minutes) | 6. Priorities for the next FPT Forum Cycle Objective: Discuss recommendations for FPT Forum priorities over the next year and outline the process for developing the communiqué to follow the FPT meeting. | Manitoba (Chair) <i>Discussion Item</i> |
| 3:25 p.m. (5 minutes) | 7. Closing Remarks | Manitoba (Chair) |

**Meeting of Federal-Provincial/Territorial (FPT) Ministers
Most Responsible for Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC)**

January 29, 2026
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. ET

**Mackenzie Room
Forty One Restaurant
100 Elgin Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5K8**

| TIME | TOPIC | LEAD |
|-------------------------------|--|-------------|
| 6:00 p.m. (2 hours) | FPT Ministers Dinner Objective: Ministers are provided an opportunity to meet informally before the meeting. | All |

**Meeting of Federal-Provincial/Territorial (FPT) Ministers
Most Responsible for Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC)**

January 30, 2026
9:00 a.m. – 3:55 p.m. ET

**Victoria Hall
John G. Diefenbaker Building
111 Sussex Drive, Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 5A1**

| TIME | TOPIC | LEAD |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| 9:00 a.m. (20 minutes) | Opening Remarks (Elder Vince Kicknosway) | Manitoba |
| 9:20 a.m. (30 minutes) | 1. Welcoming Remarks and Roundtable Introductions Objective: Co-chairs provide opening remarks and PTs provide introductions. | Canada and Manitoba |
| 9:50 a.m. (5 minutes) | 2. Administrative Updates Objective: Approve the Record of Discussion from the 2024 Meeting of FPT Ministers Most Responsible for ELCC. | Manitoba <i>Decision Item</i> |
| 9:55 a.m. (35 minutes) | 3. Accomplishments of the Canada-wide ELCC System Objective: Reflect on achievements and economic outcomes of the Canada-wide Agreements over the first five years. | Canada and Manitoba <i>Discussion Item</i> |
| 10:30 am (15 mins) | Health Break | All |
| 10:45 a.m. (75 minutes) | 4. Sustainability of the Canada-wide ELCC System Objective: Discuss potential solutions to ensure sustainability of the Canada-wide ELCC system over the longer term, given the current economic environment and fiscal constraints. | Canada and Manitoba <i>Discussion Item</i> |
| 12:00 p.m. (75 minutes) | Lunch | All |
| 1:15 p.m. (30 minutes) | 5. Sustainability of the Canada-wide ELCC System – Continued Objective: Share innovative approaches or partnerships jurisdictions are pursuing, or willing to pursue, to address sustainability issues in the Canada-wide system. | Canada and Manitoba <i>Discussion Item</i> |

| TIME | TOPIC | LEAD |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
| 1:45 p.m. (45 minutes) | 6. Data and Reporting Objective: Showcase the progress of the Data and Indicators Sub-Working Group and discuss future multilateral work on Data and Reporting. | Canada and Manitoba <i>Decision Item</i> |
| 2:30 p.m. (25 minutes) | FPT Minister's Official Photo and Health Break | All |
| 2:55 p.m. (20 minutes) | 7. Update on Other Multilateral Priorities Objective: Update on other multilateral priorities including, Workforce, Indigenous engagement, and Quality. | Canada and Manitoba <i>Discussion Item</i> |
| 3:15 p.m. (30 minutes) | 8. Approval of the Joint Communiqué Objective: Review and approve the joint communiqué to be issued at the end of the meeting. | All |
| 3:45 p.m. (10 minutes) | 9. Closing Remarks | Canada and Manitoba |

For immediate release

Federal, provincial and territorial ministers most responsible for early learning and child care meet to discuss progress made and the sustainability of the Canada-wide system

January 30, 2026

Ottawa, Ontario

Federal, provincial and territorial ministers* most responsible for early learning and child care gathered today in Ottawa for their regularly scheduled meeting to advance shared priorities, marking this pivotal moment as governments move into the next phase of their agreements. The meeting was co-chaired by the Honourable Patty Hajdu, Canada's Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario and the Honourable Tracy Schmidt, Manitoba's Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning.

The ministers reviewed the progress achieved in all jurisdictions since 2021 to increase access and improve affordability of child care for families in Canada including initiatives under the initial set of Canada-wide agreements. Ministers also acknowledged the need to get this right for Canadian families, given the pressures facing families, providers and governments amid ongoing global economic disruption.

Under this Canada-wide system partnership, all jurisdictions made substantial progress to improve child care affordability by reducing fees by at least 50% resulting in families saving thousands per child, per year, varying by jurisdiction. Furthermore, access to affordable child care allows more parents, particularly mothers, to participate in the labour force and achieve greater economic security. Thanks in part to the Canada-wide system, the participation of mothers with young children in the labour force reached a near record high in 2025.

In 2025, all Canada-wide agreements were extended, reflecting governments' shared commitment to continue the work toward improving access to affordable and high-quality regulated child care beyond March 2026. As of January 2026, provinces and territories have reported the creation of nearly 155,000 new Canada-wide spaces while also announcing projects and investments to support the creation of nearly 210,000 new early learning and child care spaces**. Thanks to the combined efforts of provincial, territorial, and federal governments, approximately 900,000 children and their families across Canada are benefiting from affordable, high-quality child care.

Building on the agreement extensions signed in 2025, federal, provincial, and territorial governments recommitted to continue working in partnership to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Canada-wide early learning and child care system in the context of current economic realities and the distinct priorities of families and providers across provinces and territories.

As the system continues to mature, ministers noted that ensuring equity for the territories - including consideration of northern realities such as small populations, remoteness, and higher operating costs - will be an important element of building a resilient and sustainable Canada-wide early learning and child care system.

Ministers discussed opportunities to continue to advance the principles of the Canada-wide agreements, and emphasized the importance of providing stability for families across Canada while governments work to ensure system resilience.

As the early learning and child care system matures, ministers also acknowledge their shared commitment to effective reporting and efficient administration. To help streamline reporting efforts and track collective progress on the Canada-wide system, while recognizing the diversity of systems in each jurisdiction, ministers agreed to continue to work to develop targeted, common concepts and definitions.

Today's discussions took place during the fourth meeting of the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Forum of Ministers Most Responsible for Early Learning and Child Care. Established in 2022, the Forum serves as a table for ministers most responsible for early learning and child care to share information and best

practices, as well as discuss common priorities and areas of shared interest, such as supporting the child care workforce, high-quality care and better data reporting.

The ministers remain committed to working together to ensure sustainability of the Canada-wide system and support access to affordable, high-quality early learning and child care for families across the country.

** Nova Scotia's and Prince Edward Island's ministers were not in attendance; the respective Deputy Ministers participated in the meeting on their behalf.*

** To preserve its exclusive jurisdiction over child care and to maintain sole responsibility for the planning, organization, delivery and rollout of early learning and child care services in the province, Quebec participates in the Forum as an observer only. Quebec is not bound by this news release, is not part of the Canada-wide early learning and child care system and is not involved in any of the associated work.*

***Due to Quebec's asymmetrical agreement with the Government of Canada, Quebec is expected to provide Canada with public reports on its early childhood education system. Quebec publishes statistics on the development of its educational child care services network on its [website](#) (French only). In this dashboard, one of the figures indicates the number of subsidized spaces created since the launch of the Grand Chantier pour les familles, according to the data as of [November 30, 2025](#) (French only).*

Quotes

“Affordable child care is critical social infrastructure that helps build Canada strong. When parents have access to affordable, high-quality child care, they can work, pursue education, and/or increase their economic potential. Across Canada, the Canada-wide early learning and child care system is saving families thousands of dollars and strengthening Canada’s workforce. Together, with provincial and territorial partners, we are building a long-term, sustainable early learning and child care system, so that every child can learn and belong, and every family can plan for a strong future.”

– The Honourable Patty Hajdu, Canada’s Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario

“High-quality, affordable child care is essential to families across Canada and our economy. By working collaboratively, we are continuing to create thousands of new affordable child care spaces and strengthen the supports that help children and families thrive. As we look to the future of the Canada-wide Agreement, it is imperative that necessary investments are made to ensure the program’s long-term sustainability. We will continue working together so that families have the child care options they deserve.”

– The Honourable Tracy Schmidt, Manitoba’s Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning

Associated links

[Early Learning and Child Care Bilateral Agreements](#)
[Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework](#)
[Progress and impact of Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care](#)

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Contacts

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