

Edmonton Council for Early Learning and Care Recommendations and Potential Next Steps

In May 2021, Edmonton Council of Early Learning and Care (ECELC) developed recommended actions for the Government of Alberta, numerous Edmonton School Boards and the City of Edmonton. ECELC provided ten recommendations to the City for action, of which seven are within the City's jurisdiction as a municipality and three are within the jurisdiction of the provincial and/or federal government.

Since ECELC's sharing of recommended actions, both the federal and provincial governments have committed to advancing a number of initiatives related to early learning and care. On November 15, 2021, the Government of Alberta and Government of Canada announced a \$10-a-day funding agreement that included improving affordability, expanding accessibility and supporting high-quality child care through providing additional funding for professional development, training and improved certification levels. On July 28, 2023, Premier Danielle Smith issued the mandate letter for the Provincial Minister for Children and Family Services, which reaffirmed this commitment through the following priorities:

1. Working with the federal government and child care providers to implement \$10-per-day daycare by 2026 that promotes and incentivizes new child care spaces for both private and non-profit operators.
2. Increasing the number of licensed child care spaces in private and non-profit centres as well as day homes.
3. Designing a ministry-specific job attraction strategy that raises awareness for young Albertans (aged 16 to 24) and adults changing careers of the skilled trades and professions available in childcare and related services, including pathways for education, apprenticeship, and training.

Federally, on December 16, 2021, the Prime Minister of Canada issued the mandate letter for the Federal Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, which emphasized some of the following federal government priorities of potential related ECELC interest:

1. Introduce federal child care legislation to strengthen and protect a high-quality Canada-wide child care system.
2. Establish a National Advisory Council on Early Learning and Child Care.

3. Ensure the Federal Secretariat on Early Learning and Child Care is fully resourced and operational by early 2023.
4. Work with Indigenous partners to ensure that Indigenous children have access to a culturally appropriate Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care system that meets the needs of Indigenous families wherever they live.

With the 2023 announcement of a new Federal Minister for Families, Children, and Social Development, it is anticipated that Minister Jenna Sudds' new mandate letter will incorporate and reaffirm these commitments.

The City Plan and the Edmonton Economic Action Plan (EAP) provide complementary policy direction to promote affordable, accessible, high-quality and inclusive early learning and child care facilities in a variety of locations throughout the city. The direction in these policy documents is included below, alongside the ECELC recommended actions and potential next steps.

City of Edmonton Jurisdiction

Edmonton Council for Early Learning and Care Action	Policy	Potential Next Steps	Resource Requirements	Status
1: That designated City staff engage with the ECELC and partners to create a policy and strategy to promote high quality, affordable, accessible, and inclusive early learning and care in Edmonton, and that this policy and strategy be	The City Plan, Edmonton Economic Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child care is embedded in The City Plan, the Edmonton Economic Action Plan and other policy and strategy documents. These policy documents provide strategic direction to City Administration to promote high quality, affordable, accessible, and inclusive early learning and care in Edmonton in a way that is within the City's municipal jurisdiction. Administration will continue to 	Existing resources	<p>COMPLETE</p> <p>Child Care is now reflected at an appropriate level of detail in two key strategic documents now adopted as policy by City Council:</p> <p>Policy 1.2.2.3 - City Plan "Enable accessible child care facilities in a variety of locations throughout the City"</p>

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presented to the City Council for endorsement.		align policy and plans to ensure they support and promote early learning and care for children, families and communities.		Action 17 - EAP "Promote affordable, accessible and inclusive early learning and child care"
2: That City staff and the ECELC report on progress to City Council annually and revise the strategy as necessary.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With the incorporation of ECELC as one of the "Game Changers" under the umbrella of EndPovertyEdmonton rather than an independent body, reporting on progress of implementation of these recommendations will be incorporated into EndPovertyEdmonton's regular annual report. 	Existing resources	REVISED APPROACH ECELC is now integrated into EndPovertyEdmonton's mandate. The group's activities will be reported to Edmonton City Council as appropriate.
3: That City staff engage with the ECELC and partners to ensure that high quality, affordable, accessible, and inclusive early learning and care is part of ongoing plans regarding zoning (such as the Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative), space (such as the Joint Use	The City Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with ECELC, EndPovertyEdmonton and other stakeholders in areas of planning that pertain to early learning and care, and continue work already underway, which includes: <u>Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administration will continue to seek opportunities to reduce or remove regulatory barriers and expand potential location options for child care facilities in 	Existing resources	ONGOING The Zoning Bylaw Renewal will significantly expand the potential for the creation of child care facilities through the expansion of this as a permitted land use in most zones - essentially removing regulatory barriers to siting these facilities where needed as determined by the operators. Intent is that these facilities have the opportunity

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Agreement), and neighbourhood development (including 15-minute districts).		<p>Edmonton through the Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From May 1 to July 30, 2023, Edmontonians were invited to share feedback on the final draft of the new Zoning Bylaw on Engaged Edmonton. A draft of the proposed regulations specific to child care was sent to the ECELC for review and comment. <p>Previous Zoning Bylaw Actions:</p> <p><u>Charter Bylaw 19679 - Zoning Bylaw 12800 Alignment with Provincial Bills 39 and 48 (June 23, 2021)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in Bill 39 Child Care Licensing Amendment Act, 2020 were intended to support Alberta's Recovery Plan, streamline the provincial licensing process for child care facilities, and increase transparency for parents seeking licenced child care. Text amendments to the Zoning Bylaw, Charter Bylaw 19679, aligned with these changes by differentiating between home-based child care and 		<p>to be recognized as integral parts of all neighbourhoods and districts.</p> <p>The proposed Zoning Bylaw will be presented at a City Council public hearing on October 16, 2023.</p> <p>As a general comment, land use regulation is not considered to be a significant barrier to creation of child care and early learning spaces.</p>

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		<p>facility-based child care and enabling 24-hour care.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition, Charter Bylaw 19679 removed a barrier to Home Based Child Care operations within Multi-unit Housing or Row Housing, allowing the potential for child care opportunities within a greater variety of housing types. • A draft of the proposed regulations was sent to the ECELC and childcare providers. Refinements were made to the amendment based on their recommendations. <p><u>Reducing Regulatory Barriers to Child Care Services Across the City - 2016</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2015 and 2016, the Zoning Bylaw had a thorough review to evaluate barriers to expanding childcare services in Edmonton, and to reduce those barriers where possible through amendments to the Zoning Bylaw. Amendments to the bylaw, Bylaw 17643, were approved on May 25, 2016. • Engagement included two 		

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		<p>telephone surveys of child care services facilities operating in Edmonton. Participants were also sent a draft copy of the proposed regulations for comment and feedback.</p> <p><u>Joint Use Agreement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Joint Use Agreement: Facilities (JUA) would manage space within school buildings for community use primarily for recreation, and primarily within gymnasium space (or school use within City recreation facilities). If Council deems this the correct instrument for provision of early learning space, any changes to current practices would need to be negotiated with the three Edmonton school divisions. City representatives sit on the Joint Use Agreement Steering Committee as well as the JUA Facilities Management Committee. <p><u>District Planning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration has proposed the inclusion of Early Learning and Care language into the draft 		

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		<p>District General Policy (the guidance for land use and mobility through future District Plans). District Planning will not set new policy directions or goals that are not already established, but a general interest in this outcome in District Plans is appropriate given The City Plan policy 1.2.2.3. Enable accessible child care facilities in a variety of locations throughout the city. The draft policy language will be subject to public review through engagement occurring in 2023.</p>		
<p>4: That City staff engage with the ECELC and partners to ensure that high quality, affordable, accessible, and inclusive early learning and care is included in implementing the elements of the City Plan and the Economic Action</p>	<p>The City Plan, Edmonton Economic Action Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administration continues to assign a delegate to serve as an Institutional Liaison to ECELC. This role facilitates clear and open communication between the City and ECELC and includes attendance of monthly meetings. Implementation of The City Plan will be achieved across the corporation through the delivery of policy and services. Future policy development 	<p>Existing resources</p>	<p>ONGOING</p> <p>Institutional Liaison has been delegated and will work with ECELC as appropriate.</p> <p>The Economic Action Plan Grant (EAPG) supports the implementation of the Economic Action Plan and provides matching reimbursement grants of up to \$25,000 for projects and</p>

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Plan that involve the development of healthy, vibrant communities.		<p>(strategic plans, geographic plans, guidelines, regulations) and public engagement will work to implement The City Plan, in particular Policy Intention 1.2.2. - Ensure vibrant and inclusive communities where children, youth and families can live, learn and grow together and Policy Direction 1.2.2.1 - Incorporate the needs and voices of children, youth and those around them into plans, programs and amenities that serve and impact them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Edmonton Economic Action Plan - Action 17: Promote affordable, accessible, high-quality, and inclusive early learning and child care. 		<p>programs that support the outcomes of the Economic Action Plan, including Action 17.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To date, EAPG has provided funding for 3 projects: \$35,025 in total for 2 completed and paid projects \$50,000 for 1 project underway (not yet paid) <p>These projects will create over 140 new child care spaces in Edmonton.</p>
5: That City staff engage with the ECELC, local school boards, and other levels of government to convene and resource a Data Working Group to ensure that the data required for needs	The City Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECELC and EndPovertyEdmonton will convene a Data Working Group, provide evaluation, and contribute to planning, analysis, evaluation and interpretation. City staff will participate in the Data Working Group. 	Existing resources	<p>IN PROGRESS</p> <p>ECELC's Data Working group has been formed (including the City representative) and is in the process of building an inventory of data needs to enable informed planning, management, monitoring and evaluation of early learning</p>

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assessments and for planning and managing a system of early learning and care are collected, analyzed, and shared.				<p>and care in Edmonton. The document will set out data needs in each of five areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quality • affordability • accessibility • inclusion • flexibility <p>The document will also explain why data in these areas are important, prospects and problems with gaining or interpreting data, and most importantly, the kinds of data needed.</p>
<p>6: That City staff engage with the ECELC, local school boards, and the provincial government to convene and resource the Coordinating Community Action Working Group to address problems in finding space, co-locating services, and addressing</p>	The City Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECELC and EndPovertyEdmonton will convene, facilitate and evaluate the Coordinating Community Action Working Group. • City staff will participate in the Coordinating Community Action Working Group. • The Coordinating Community Action Working Group is the formal name for the Problem Solving working group as suggested in the recommendations. EPE and the City are on track to complete 	Existing resources	<p>IN PROGRESS</p> <p>City Administration is working with EndPoverty Edmonton on a number of committees and working groups and will continue to expand or refine based on need and focus.</p>

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issues of affordability, quality, and inclusiveness in early learning and care.		this recommendation.		

Provincial and/or Federal Jurisdiction

<p>7: That City staff engage with the ECELC and partners in other levels of government, postsecondary education, and community organizations to plan the development of two high quality early learning and care demonstration centres. These centres will help early childhood educators build the culturally sensitive competencies and dispositions needed</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City staff will work with ECELC and EndPovertyEdmonton to identify what programs currently exist and, where possible, explore opportunities to advance what is in place. City staff will participate in the process as required to address issues that involve the municipal government, such as space, planning, zoning and funding. 	<p>Funding required and funding sources to be determined.</p>	<p>REVISED APPROACH</p> <p>ECELC has recognized that this recommendation may be premature. Instead, they suggest that ECELC convene whatever meetings are necessary to:</p> <p>(a) identify the most pressing early learning and care needs of children and families who are often marginalized in the city, and;</p> <p>(b) make recommendations to City and provincial governments, to school boards, and to other organizations as necessary.</p>
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to work effectively with diverse children and families. One centre would be devoted to meeting the needs of Indigenous children and families, and the other to meeting the needs of refugee and immigrant children and families.				
8: That City staff engage with the ECELC, and possibly with other levels of government, to create and fund a grant program designed to help early learning and care centres meet the needs of Indigenous and newcomer children and families and those marginalized by economic and social factors.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City will monitor the status of the roll-out of the federal-provincial funding program. As this new programming rolls out, assessment can be undertaken on how this impacts the childcare options in Edmonton. 	Existing resources; should Council direct additional action, funding would be required and funding sources to be determined.	<p>REVISED APPROACH</p> <p>ECELC has recognized that this recommendation may be premature. Instead, they suggest that ECELC convene whatever meetings are necessary to:</p> <p>(a) identify the most pressing early learning and care needs of children and families who are often marginalized in our city, and;</p> <p>(b) make recommendations to city and provincial governments, to school boards, and to other</p>

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				organizations as necessary.
<p>9: That the City, with advice from the ECELC, advocate to the federal and provincial governments for a role in planning, implementing, and allocating federal funding for the anticipated national system of early learning and child care as it applies to Edmonton.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City will monitor the status of the roll-out of the federal-provincial funding, and if required, engage in advocacy consistent with City policy and through appropriate channels, should concerns with the accessibility and affordability of programming in Edmonton be raised. Continue work that is in progress, which includes supporting the work underway through Alberta Municipalities following the resolution passed at the November 2021 convention: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is therefore resolved that the AUMA advocate to the provincial government for a National Early Learning and Care Program that will be high-quality, inclusive, affordable and accessible, developed with significant long-term sustained funding and which will create a Canada-wide early-learning and child-care system. 	Existing resources; should Council direct additional action, funding would be required and funding sources to be determined.	<p>REVISED (Action 9-10)</p> <p>ECELC has acknowledged that original actions 9-10 were written well before the federal-provincial agreement (outlined in the report) was in place. Now that this agreement has been signed and implementation is underway, priorities have changed.</p> <p>They now believe it is critical that Edmonton and other municipalities have direct input into the process of implementation. Prior to the 2023 provincial election, staff in Children's Services had indicated a possible interest in such input, but to date, no specific action has occurred. It is unclear what form this input from the City would take.</p> <p>ECELC has been encouraged to develop connections and work closely with agencies like</p>

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		Note: The provincial and federal governments are currently working to create an expansion plan for future growth in the private child care sector and expect to complete this plan in 2023.		Alberta Municipalities and Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) on broader advocacy efforts as these needs are a universal theme, especially with the large urban centres.
10: That the City, with advice from the ECELC, advocate strongly for an integrated system of early learning and care that is high in quality, affordable, accessible, and inclusive for all families that need it, with an emphasis on meeting the needs of low-income and vulnerable families.	The City Plan, Edmonton Economic Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City will continue to engage in advocacy consistent with City policy and through appropriate channels. 	Existing resources	