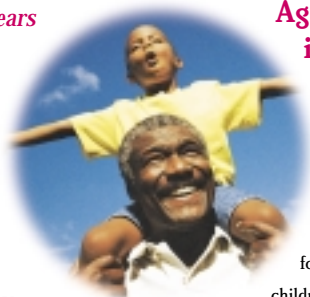


All children deserve the best possible start in life. Experts agree that children's early years play a big role in determining their well-being later on in life.

While parents play the primary role in raising children, governments and communities can also help by supporting children and families during the all-important early years.

That is why the Government of Canada, provincial and territorial governments reached an important agreement on early childhood development. They agreed to work together to improve and expand early childhood programs and services across the country.*



1. What is the Early Childhood Development Agreement and why is it important?

In September of 2000, the Government of Canada and its provincial and territorial government partners announced the Early Childhood Development Agreement to foster the well-being of Canada's young children.

Under this agreement, the Government of Canada is providing \$2.2 billion over five years, beginning in 2001/02, to help provincial and territorial governments improve and expand services in four key areas:

- Healthy pregnancy, birth and infancy;
- Parenting and family supports;
- Early childhood development, learning and care; and
- Community supports.

"Every child should be valued and have the opportunities to develop his or her unique physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual and creative potential."

First Ministers' Communiqué, September 2000

The programs and services funded under this initiative will build on those already in place, and begin to make them more coordinated and widely available. Governments are also committed to working with Aboriginal peoples to find practical solutions to address the developmental needs of Aboriginal children.

New Government of Canada transfers to provincial and territorial governments for early childhood development

| | |
|-----------|---------------|
| 2001-2002 | \$300 million |
| 2002-2003 | \$400 million |
| 2003-2004 | \$500 million |
| 2004-2005 | \$500 million |
| 2005-2006 | \$500 million |

2. What will this mean for children and families?

Since the agreement was announced in September 2000, provincial and territorial governments have announced new investments in early childhood development programs, such as prenatal nutrition, screening of newborns, child care, home visiting, parenting supports, and Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) and



Over time, this will mean more help for parents and better early childhood development programs... "so that young children can fulfill their potential to be healthy, safe and secure, ready to learn, and socially engaged and responsible."

First Ministers' Communiqué, September 2000

Fetal Alcohol Effects, (FAE) programs, to name just a few. (See the map on the other side of this brochure for a complete list of new investments.)

3. How will we know if the federal/provincial/territorial Early Childhood Development Agreement is working?

To give Canadians a clear idea of the progress being made, governments will report regularly on how young children are doing and on their investments in programs and services. In fall 2001, each participating government will report on its early childhood development activities and expenditures.

This will provide a starting point against which Canadians can track future progress. Beginning in fall 2002, governments will report annually on the improvements and expansion of early

childhood development programs and services. Governments will also report regularly on the well-being of young children in Canada.

This will help Canadians to hold governments accountable. It will also give governments the information they need to ensure their programs are as effective as possible.



In addition, all governments involved have agreed to work together on research and knowledge of child development, and to share information on programs that work.



Aussi disponible en français

* The Government of Quebec shares the same concerns as other jurisdictions on early childhood development, but it does not participate in the federal/provincial/territorial agreement. Quebec is receiving its share of funding from the Government of Canada for early childhood development.