

- In 2003, First Call approved and published its ECD Framework for Action, which proposes an 'ECD Basket' of supports and services that together form an integrated and effective approach to ECD.
- Such an approach supports communities in designing programs that meet their local needs, while ensuring that children and families across the province have a consistent level of support.
- The basket includes a continuum of ECD supports and services:
 1. Public Health initiatives
 2. Family Support Programs
 3. High Quality Child Care Services
 4. Early Intervention Supports and Services
 5. Access Strategies

and the goal is to have families experience the ECD supports and services as highly visible, seamless, culturally sensitive, inclusive, and affordable.

- Government commitment, supportive provincial policies, and sustained integrated funding provide the essential base for the basket. All policy and funding decisions made at the federal, provincial and regional levels should advance positive ECD outcomes for children and families. Significant funding, comparable to that available on a per child basis for education, is required.
- Our goal is to build on existing and create new neighbourhood hubs of integrated services that are readily available and easy for families to access.
- Appropriate province-wide research and clear public accountability mechanisms are critical to helping us understand how ECD funds are being spent and whether outcomes for young children and families are in fact improving.

First Call position statement on a publicly funded national child care program:

This Framework for Action supports First Call's commitment to advancing a national child care system as an important component of the required ECD basket of services. With federal and provincial funding and supportive policies in place, local communities can plan and deliver services that:

- Embrace the principles of quality, inclusiveness, universality, accessibility and developmental programming.
- Provide a comprehensive range of **licensed and regulated** choices that reflect these principles, including programs such as family child care, group child care, Aboriginal 'head start' and preschool.
- Meet the needs of all children regardless of whether their parents are working, studying, involved in the voluntary sector or at home.
- Support families in fulfilling their parenting, work and community responsibilities.
- Are seamlessly integrated with family support and other ECD programs and services.

Our vision of integrated, community-based service planning and delivery includes existing licensed and regulated providers, requires public funding for expansion to be directed to the non-profit sector, and acknowledges that transition planning is required particularly for existing commercial centres.

Wording in bold type is not specifically reflected in the Framework for Action document.