The small steps make a big difference.

Over the past two decades, we’ve uncovered just how big a difference the small steps make.

Our brain grows to 90% of its adult weight during the first five years of life.

Newborn 25%  
6 months 50%  
1 year 60%  
2 year 75%  
4-6 year 90%

Why care about early childhood?

THE SMALL STEPS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD.

During their early years, children take important steps to acquire the foundational skills of literacy, numeracy, thinking, social awareness and interactions.

EDUCATION DURING THIS EARLY PERIOD HAS A LASTING IMPACT.

Multiple studies show big impacts for all children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, who attend at least one or more years of quality preschool.

EVEN INCREASING ECE FROM HALF DAY TO FULL DAY MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE.

Students attending 1 to 2 years of full day kindergarten, compared to those attending half day.

EARLY EDUCATION CREATES ADVANTAGES FOR CHILDREN FROM ALL INCOME GROUPS.

THE BIGGEST DIVIDEND IS IMPROVED VOCABULARY—THE FOUNDATION OF ALL LEARNING.

IT’S TIME TO APPLY THIS KNOWLEDGE WHERE IT COUNTS: THE EARLY YEARS.
When children count during board games, they build numeracy.

When they sing songs, they build memory.

When they chat with friends and educators, they build vocabulary, language, social skills.

When they build with blocks, they learn design.

When they negotiate play with their friends, they learn problem-solving.

ECE isn’t school. It’s organized play that makes more advanced learning possible.

EARY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IS NOT AN EXTENSION OF SCHOOL. IT’S AN EXTENSION OF PLAY.
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IS NOT A FAMILY SUBSTITUTE. IT’S A FAMILY SUPPORT.

ECE doesn’t break parent-child bonds. It works with families to build children’s nascent abilities and creativity, while simultaneously making family life and career more compatible.
While a higher percentage among low-income children are considered vulnerable, the majority of children with vulnerabilities live in middle-income families.
Change in total ECE spending by Provinces/Territories 2011/2014/2017

CHANGE IN TOTAL PROVINCIAL / TERRITORIAL ECE SPENDING (DOLLARS IN BILLIONS)

- 2011: $7,497,341,600
- 2014: $10,706,197,393
- 2017: $11,685,981,210

Budget estimates as reported by provincial/territorial governments
ECE budgets as a percentage of Provincial/Territorial budgets 2014/2017
Percentage of 2-4 year olds regularly attending an ECE program by P/T
The public education landscape is ready:

- The public education system ranks second highest among Canadian institutions in public confidence.

- Almost 40 percent of pre-schoolers now get their early education in school and half of 2-to-4-year-olds in Canada attend preschool, compared to 1 in 3 in 2011.

Schools are well placed to grow down to include younger children, as well as out to provide additional hours for working parents.

MANY IMPORTANT STEPS ARE ALREADY IN PLACE.
THE STEPS AHEAD NEED CAREFUL THOUGHT.

For ECE to be successful, we need a coherent universal system:

1. **WE NEED THE RIGHT ACCESS:**
   - Open to all children regardless of family employment or income

2. **WE NEED THE RIGHT QUALITY:**
   - Delivered by qualified and supported educators

3. **WE NEED THE RIGHT DURATION:**
   - Children attending long enough

4. **WE NEED THE RIGHT QUANTITY:**
   - Enough children attending

5. **WE NEED THE RIGHT COST:**
   - Without parent fees

Source: Cleveland, G.  Making Licensed Childcare Affordable for All in Ontario.  February 2018
Canadian jurisdictions spend between 1% and 4.5% of their annual budgets on ECE. It's time to bring this country in line with other OECD countries and dedicate 6% of Canada’s annual public spending to ECE.

It’s time for Canada to step up for our youngest children.
For more information

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