



**Alberta**  
Government

# Together We Raise Tomorrow.

[Alberta Family Wellness  
Initiative Symposium  
[Plenary Session ]

## **The Perfect Storm** Core Story – Alberta Approach to ECD – FOI

Alberta Family Wellness Initiative's introduces "the core story"

Social Policy Introduced in Alberta

Premier's focus to improve measure of child health and development

Harvard Center on the Developing Child invites Alberta to explore FOI

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## Vision for Social Policy in Alberta

In Alberta, everyone contributes to making our communities inclusive and welcoming.

Everyone has opportunities to fulfill their potential and to benefit from our thriving **social, economic, and cultural life.**

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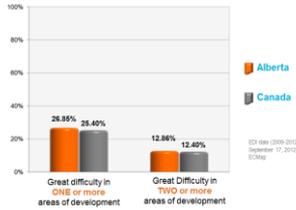
## Social Policy Framework



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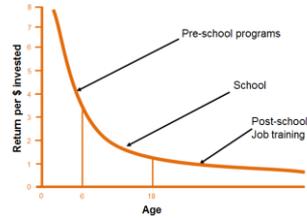
# Why Does Early Childhood Development Matter?

New brain science research provides evidence that shows what happens in early childhood has impact throughout the life span.



Approximately 27% of Alberta's kindergarten children are experiencing developmental difficulties.

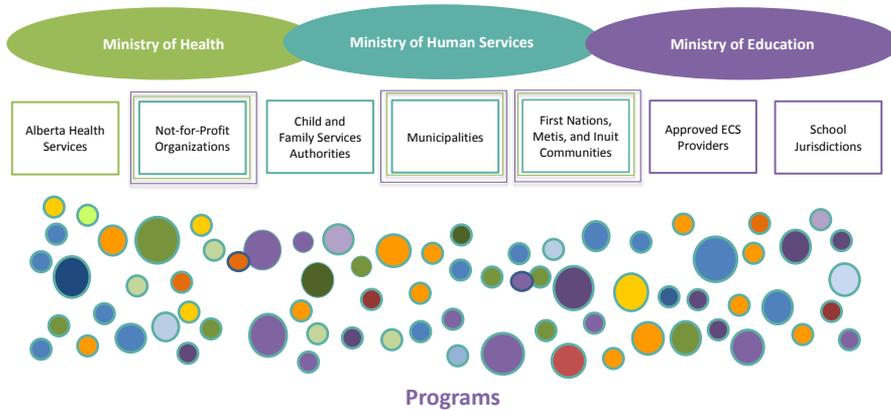
Improving early childhood development is a good investment.



Early Child Development Mapping Project, ECMap, as part of the Government of Alberta's Early Child Development Mapping Initiative

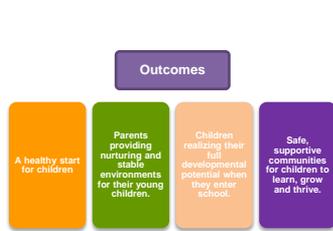
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# Current State: A Foundation to Build On



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# The Future State: The Alberta Approach to Early Childhood Development:



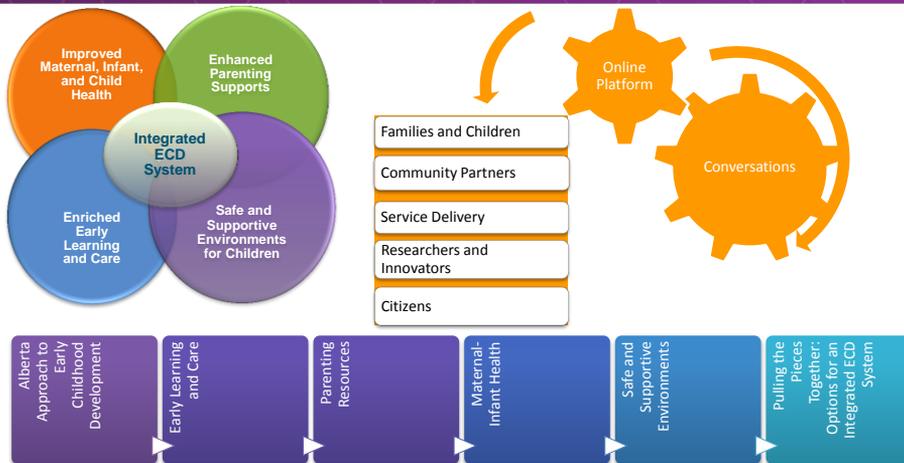
In Alberta, all children have a healthy start, safe and healthy environments, nurturing and supportive relationships and opportunities to learn, creating the foundation for them to fulfill their potential and benefit from our thriving social, economic, and cultural life.



Community networks of high quality, integrated and accessible early childhood programs and services will allow parents to access the right services at the right time.

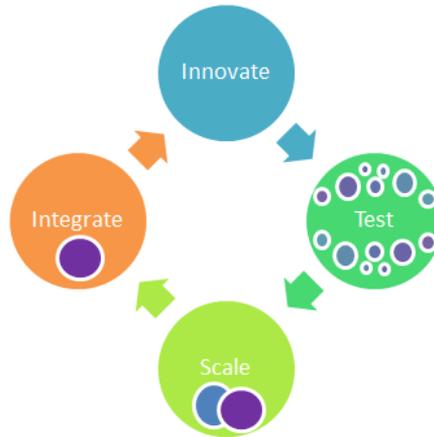
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# Community Conversations: The Alberta Approach to Early Childhood



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## Transforming through Innovation: The Alberta Approach to Early Childhood Development:



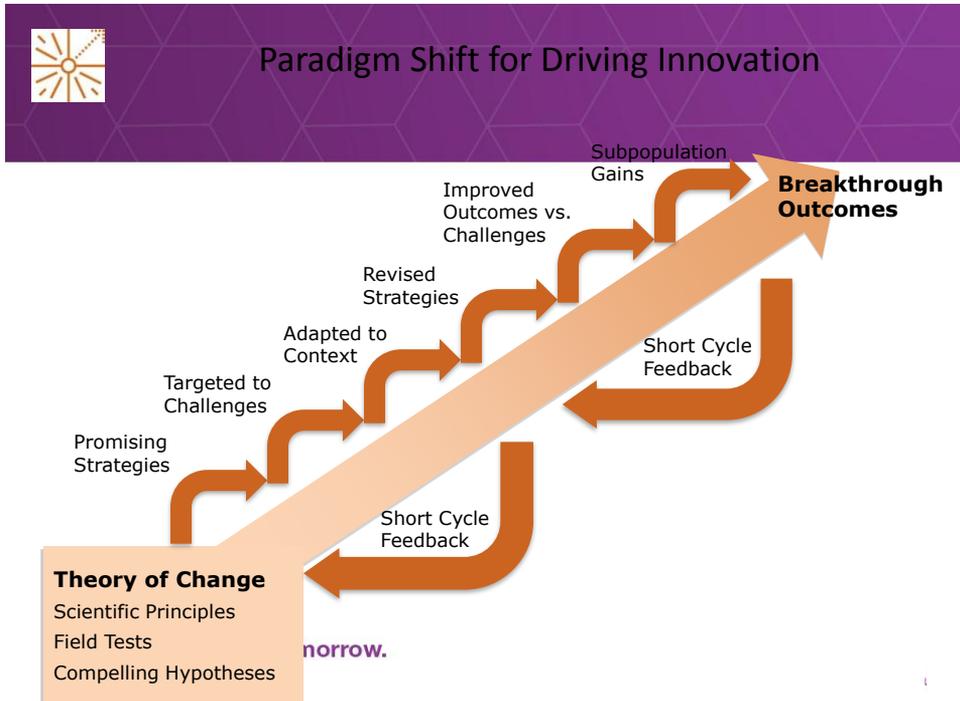
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### Creating an Ecology of Innovation

**CLIMATE:** the policy, professional, and investment environment that creates incentives and influences the allocation of resources.

**SEEDS:** breakthrough ideas that offer the potential for substantially more effective policies and practices that are affordable, replicable, scalable, and sustainable.

**SOIL:** a rich combination of people and contexts that cultivates promising ideas, learns from failure, and encourages risk-taking in the service of driving greater impacts.



## Research and Innovation Strategy

### Why Do we need a Research and Innovation Strategy?

- An enabler to drive the success of an integrated ECD system is research (including measurement and evaluation) and fast cycle innovation
- Many excellent ECD programs and services currently exist. However, evidence of their effectiveness on improving outcomes is limited.
- Within an integrated ECD system, a clear and well-defined provincial ECD Research and Innovation Strategy will create a shared vision and mandate of how to address the challenges in the current state of ECD in Alberta.

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# Research and Innovation Strategy

## Vision

To enable an evidence-informed early childhood development strategy through research expertise and knowledge of best practices.

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## Strategic Goals

- Build awareness of existing research and create ways to utilize current evidence (provincial, national and international).
- Influence the creation of new knowledge to address gaps and anticipate ongoing need for research.
- Create a collaborative environment that enhances relationships between researchers, policy makers, practitioners and the public.

# Research and Innovation Strategy

## A High Performing Research and Innovation Strategy should:

- Inform explicit policy directions and best practices
- Facilitate inter-disciplinary and inter-sectoral applied research and evaluation and capacity building
- Align funding with evidence informed ECD outcomes
- Be supported by longitudinal, population-based studies
- Generate and mobilize knowledge on a timely-basis decision-makers, program leaders, and the public
- Build support for the value of ECD to society

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## Research and Innovation Strategy

### What remains to be accomplished:

- Further engagement – researchers, government, community
- Further development – communication, documentation to suit different audiences and stakeholders
- Support for infrastructure development, including the Child and Youth Data Lab and Child Data Center of Alberta
- Alignment and coordination within overall ECD Priority (e.g. measurement and evaluation, innovation)

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## Brain and early childhood development research and KT initiative

- Effort to catalyze interdisciplinary interest and collaboration in advancing and applying integrative knowledge building on the core story of brain development
- Alberta Family Wellness Initiative and Alberta Centre partnering to support seed grants
- Opportunity to build interest and engage other partners too

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## What defines FOI in Alberta

A set of complementary processes and activities:

- Research and Innovation Strategy
- Brain and early childhood development research and knowledge translation initiative
- Innovation by Design Province
- Community Sites

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## Innovation by Design Province

- Umbrella for accelerated innovation process in communities
- Formal sharing with other FOI jurisdictions
- Engaging private, public and not-for-profit partners
- Translation into policy, program and practices

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## Community Process Steps

- Mapping the landscape
- Identifying the intended result, population, and indicators
- Developing system(s) change strategies
- Preparing for practice innovation

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## Innovation Platform: Next Steps

- Building a culture of innovation and communities of purpose:
  - Early childhood and brain development science (core story)
  - Common outcomes
  - Collaborative leadership
  - Building on existing policy, program and practice innovation opportunities
  - Testing FOI accelerated innovation process
  - Others?

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## Resources

<http://developingchild.harvard.edu/>

<https://www.ecmap.ca/Pages/default.aspx>

<http://www.albertafamilywellness.org/>

Contact:

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