

Inclusion Pilot: FAQs

1. What is the purpose of the Inclusion Pilot?

The purpose of the Inclusion Pilot is to explore and evaluate additional approaches to funding inclusion of children with extra support needs in child care programs.

The overall intention is NOT to find a model to replace the existing Supported Child Development (SCD) and Aboriginal Supported Child Development (ASCD) programs, rather, it is to learn more about the strengths and challenges of different funding models within different child care settings, and within the context of moving towards universal child care.

Despite the important supports and services provided through the SCD and ASCD programs, we know many families across B.C. still face challenges in accessing inclusive child care, and child care operators face challenges in building capacity for inclusive child care. For example, the majority of child care operators have termination policies for challenging behaviour, which reflects the need to enhance capacity for supporting children with challenging behaviours. Government's commitment to universal child care compels policy makers to examine barriers and explore interventions that can help families access affordable, high quality, inclusive care for their children with extra support needs.

2. What are the two additional models of funding inclusive child care that are being piloted?

- a) The Inclusion Coordinator Funding Model involves government providing funding to child care operators to hire an Inclusion Coordinator to work within their program. This role involves:
 - Providing learning opportunities about inclusive approaches for all staff through modelling/shared knowledge
 - Provide an inclusion lens to program design
 - Provide an inclusion lens to physical space set-up
 - Enhance staffing to child ratio to support the program as whole, enabling increased opportunities for direct support to children that may need this. This enhanced ratio is intended to reduce reliance on direct 1:1 support for children with extra support needs and increase emphasis on shared support and full integration into the program.
- b) The Inclusion Support Funding Model involves child care operators collaborating with families to apply directly to government for inclusion support funding for an individual child. This funding includes two streams: base funding that is intended to enhance the capacity of all staff in meeting the extra support needs of children in their care and creating a fully inclusive child care environment; and additional funding for children who would benefit from increased opportunities for direct support throughout the duration of the child's participation in the program.

3. How were the additional funding models developed?

The models were developed by the Inclusion Supports and Services Policy Team and informed by a jurisdictional review of other models in Canada and the historic B.C. experience. The Inclusion Coordinator model uses key elements from the B.C. Aboriginal Head Start program model. The Inclusion Support model has elements of the Inclusion Grant Model in Saskatchewan. The evaluation of these models will help us better understand their strengths and limitations.

4. A version of each of these additional models has already been used in parts of B.C. Why is government testing them out again?

The additional models that are being tested do have some elements that have been used before in B.C. However, there is added emphasis on increasing capacity to meet the needs of all children in the child care program as a whole, and a movement away from significant reliance on direct 1:1 support. Both models do acknowledge that there will be some children with more complex-support needs that will require this direct 1:1 support.

5. How were sites chosen to be included in each additional model?

A sampling of child care operators who were selected as *Prototypes of Universal Child Care Sites* were invited to pilot additional models of inclusion funding. These invitees were chosen based on their expressed interest in the Inclusion Pilot and on having some current capacity for inclusion. The sampling was determined using the following representation requirements: representation from all five health authority regions, representation from both rural and urban areas and representation from some Indigenous agencies. In the remainder of the Prototype sites, the existing program models will be evaluated.

6. How many Prototype child care operators will be piloting the additional models?

Approximately 15-18 child care Prototype operators from across the province will be piloting an additional model of inclusion funding. Government is still in the process of confirming the participation of some of these sites.

7. How will the models be evaluated?

Both the existing program and pilot models of funding inclusive child care are being evaluated as a component of a larger evaluation of the Prototypes of Universal Child Care. This evaluation will be conducted by a third-party evaluator who will examine the sustainability and cost effectiveness of each model, the perception and experiences of families and child care operators, and the efficiency for families in accessing and maintaining quality child care. The measures and methodology used in this evaluation have not yet been determined. Government will be engaging with representatives from the sector, including the Supported Child Development and Aboriginal Child Development programs, regarding the evaluation methodology and the review of the subsequent findings.

8. When does the Inclusion Pilot start and end?

The Inclusion Pilot will start in December 2018 for some child care sites and as late as February 2019 for some sites. It will end on March 31, 2020 and will not be extended.

9. Is there a specific age focus for the Inclusion Pilot?

The Inclusion Pilot includes infant toddler, preschool-aged, and in some sites, school aged care.

10. Does the term “pilot” suggest that government plans to roll out one or more of these additional models more broadly when the pilot period ends?

No, the pilot models will not be rolled out more broadly at the end of the pilot period. Instead, the evaluation of these models will be one component of ongoing learning and engagement that will inform strategies for inclusive universal child care. These findings will allow government to consider a variety of approaches and potentially a blending of different models. It is unlikely government will find a single model that addresses the needs of all children and child care operators in B.C. – the intention of any pilots is to inform the development of a made-in-B.C. approach to fully inclusive universal child care.

11. Will Supported Child Development (SCD) or Aboriginal Supported Child Development (ASCD) continue to support children who are enrolled in centres that are piloting one of the additional models?

For the duration of the pilot, sites will not have access to enhanced staffing supports through the Supported Child Development Program or the Aboriginal Supported Child Development Program, in addition to the funding supports available to them through the pilot. Child care operators will still be able to access limited consultative services through these programs. SCD/ASCD programs that are supporting sites that are invited to participate in the pilot will be asked to continue with the following:

- Facilitating intake processes. Intake meetings should still occur, so ASCD/SCD programs can prepare for caseload demands at the end of the pilot.
- Supporting kindergarten transition. We are asking ASCD and SCD programs to continue with any kindergarten transition planning for children who are beginning kindergarten in the fall of 2019 in all pilot sites.
- Supporting cultural connection. We are asking ASCD programs to continue with any consultation they are providing regarding cultural connection.
- Any local workshops or training. We are asking SCD and ASCD programs to include these pilot sites in any broader training for child care operators they may have planned.

While it is our intention to learn as much as possible about additional models for funding inclusion supports, we are committed to ensuring no child who is currently receiving service will receive less service or be “worse off”. We are also committed to ensuring that the transition in and out of the pilot is as smooth as possible for families, child care operators, and SCD/ASCD programs.

12. What Professional Development supports are provided through the additional models of inclusion?

For the Inclusion Coordinator model, positions are funded at 40 hours per week. Sites may choose to fill these positions at a minimum of 35 hours a week, and use the remaining funds for

professional development opportunities. For the Inclusion Support model, base inclusion funding is intended to provide opportunities for professional development. An example of how a site might use this funding is to hire a therapist to provide site-specific training.

13. Are families able to choose whether or not they participate in the Inclusion Pilot?

The decision to participate in the Inclusion Pilot rests with the child care operator, and they are encouraged to consider the individual needs of the children and families in their decision. For the Inclusion Support Funding Model, families decide whether or not they want the child care operator to put forward an application on their behalf. This process involves collaborate with families to fill out the application. Government will be providing a letter about the Inclusion Pilot to share with families. In addition, families will be engaged in the evaluation.

14. When will communication with Supported Child Development (SCD) and/or Aboriginal Supported Child Development (ASCD) occur?

SCD and ASCD programs have been informed of the Inclusion Pilot. Once contract modifications are in place with individual child care operators, MCFD will connect directly with the SCD and/or ASCD program that is providing supports to that site to plan for the transition. Until this planning has occurred, current supports through SCD and ASCD will be status quo.

FAQ's Specific to the Inclusion Coordinator Model:

15. What is the wage for the Inclusion Coordinator?

The wage for this position is specific to each child care site and is based on their existing wage for an Early Childhood Educator with special needs certification. The positions are funded at 40 hours per week.

16. Does the funding for the Inclusion Coordinator position include benefits?

The funding for the Inclusion Coordinator position includes 18% in lieu of benefits.

17. Is the Inclusion Coordinator position eligible for the ECE Wage Enhancement?

Yes, provided all the standard eligibility requirements for the ECE Wage Enhancement are met.

18. Will Government be providing a job description for the Inclusion Coordinator position?

Child care operators will be responsible for creating a job description for the Inclusion Coordinator specific to their facility. Government has detailed overarching vision and recommended qualifications for the position in the contract, but child care operators have some flexibility in how they choose to structure the role. This is an opportunity to assess how the capacity for inclusion within the centre can be enhanced through a dedicated position. It is recognized that there will be some variation between communities regarding the qualifications of applicants.

19. What if child care sites have challenges recruiting an Inclusion Coordinator?

It is recognized that there may be recruitment challenges in some communities and this issue will be important to the evaluation. For individual child care sites, this issue will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Funding from Supported Child Development and/or Aboriginal Supported Child Development will not be paused until this position is in place.

FAQ's Specific to the Inclusion Support Funding Model

20. How does a child care operator apply for Inclusion Support Funding?

Participating Inclusion Support Funding model sites will receive an application for funding. Child care operators are asked to work with families to complete an application for each child with extra support needs in their care. This application involves documenting the child's specific needs and strategies to meet those needs, working with the family to obtain a professional declaration from a child development or health care provider, and obtaining consent from the child's caregiver to disclose the information to the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). Once MCFD has received the applications for a given site and adjudicated these applications, a contract modification will be drafted to facilitate the funding. These contract modifications will be reviewed in March 2019 to determine if the level of funding is meeting the need.

21. Does the child need to have a diagnosis to be eligible for funding?

No, a diagnosis is not required. A professional declaration is required indicating that the child, for physical, cognitive, social, emotional, communicative or behavioural reasons, requires support or services beyond that required by children in general.

22. How are the applications for Inclusion Support Funding adjudicated?

A team of Inclusion Supports and Services Policy staff at MCFD as well as SCD and ASCD regional advisors will be reviewing the applications and determining the level of funding.