Assessing the Impact of the First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative (FNICCI) across Inuit Nunangat

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami
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Executive Summary

In preparation for the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) successor strategy and the First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative (FNICCI) post-2015, ITK and the Inuit Early Childhood Development Working Group identified the need to assess the impact of FNICCI funding on early childhood development programs in each of the Inuit Regions. This report reviews the impacts of FNICCI funding, highlights gaps in Inuit early childhood development funding, and proposes recommendations for future regional and national child care policy considerations in Inuit Nunangat.1

The FNICCI was established through Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) to address the child care needs of Inuit and First Nations communities. The FNICCI is important because:

- It funded the construction of child care centres between 1995-1998. Whereas there were 8 centres operating in Inuit Regions in 1995, there are 59 FNICCI-funded child care centres operating across Inuit Nunangat today;
- It has created opportunities for many Inuit parents to participate in the labour force;
- FNICCI funding is injected back into local economies in the form of wages and salaries. For example, over $3 million was paid out in 2013 across Inuit Nunangat using FNICCI dollars;
- Each Region in Inuit Nunangat uses FNICCI dollars in specific and creative ways. Without this funding, wage subsidies for Inuit child care workers, child care subsidies for working parents, and annual operating budgets would cease to exist;
- FNICCI set out to design a framework where Inuit sustained full ownership of early childhood programming rooted in Inuit knowledge, cultures, languages, and the involvement of Elders.

The First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative has been vital to child care programs across Inuit Nunangat. However, key messages shared by Inuit Regions in regards to early childhood development programs have stressed the need for increased funding in order to address the following areas: pay parity between early childhood educators and teachers, ongoing training and professional development, infrastructure, increasing demand for child care spaces in each Region, and the strengthening of Inuit early childhood development programs rooted in Inuit culture, language, worldview and knowledge. Guaranteeing the right of Inuit children to child care grounded in the language, culture, values, and traditions of their families and communities requires a funding framework, indexed to the rising cost of living, that encourages, sustains, and supports Inuit ownership of early childhood development programs. This includes Inuit determined linguistic and cultural priorities, Inuit defined policies and practices, and the creation of Inuit-specific training curriculum for workers in the Inuit early childhood sector.

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1 Inuit Nunangat is a term used to describe the collective Inuit homeland in Canada encompassing the land, water and ice of the four Inuit land claim regions (Inuvialuit Settlement Region, Nunavut, Nunavik and Nunatsiavut). For the purposes of this report, Nunavut’s three regions (Qikiqtaaluk, Kivalliq, and Kitikmeot) will be considered separately.
Introduction

Quality, Inuit early child care programs are vital to the well-being of communities. This report looks at the impacts of First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative (FNICCI) funding on early childhood development programs and regional economies across Inuit Nunangat. This document will:

- Provide background on the First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative and revisit its main principles;
- Explore the shifting demographic and economic realities in each Inuit Region;
- Summarize information gathered through surveys and interviews with regional child care coordinators and employment officers about the impacts of the FNICCI;
- Formulate region-specific recommendations for future policy considerations;
- Propose recommendations for future policy considerations across Inuit Nunangat.

1. The First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative – Background

The FNICCI was established in 1995 through Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) to address the child care needs of First Nations and Inuit communities. As an initiative funded through HRSDC, the FNICCI was designed in part to support labor market development in Aboriginal communities through increasing parents’ access to licensed child care. Between 1999 and 2011, the FNICCI was managed through the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy (AHRDS), an Aboriginal labour market development program that was replaced by the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) in 2011. FNICCI funding is currently distributed through the ASETS program, which falls under the mandate of Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC).

In 1995, there were only eight child care centres operating across Inuit Nunangat: three in Iqaluit, one in Kuujjuaq, one in Baker Lake, two in Rankin Inlet, and one in Cambridge Bay. The main goal of the FNICCI was to establish child care services for Inuit and First Nations children under the age of six that matched the accessibility of services in the rest of Canada. The FNICCI aimed to create 6000 quality child care spaces in Inuit and First Nations communities within a three-year transitional phase (between 1995 and 1998) by improving the quality of existing spaces, creating new spaces, and supporting the operation of these spaces. Of these 6000 spaces, 625 were slated to be opened in Inuit communities. The Initiative provided 72 million dollars for the three-year transitional phase, and 36 million per year afterwards.

A second and equally as important objective of the FNICCI was to support the development of direct services to children rooted in the values, traditions, cultures, and priorities of Inuit and First Nations communities. In 1995, the Joint First Nations/Inuit Federal Child Care Working Group created a framework document that highlighted considerations and recommendations

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3 Ibid.
for the FNICCI. Inuit and First Nations ownership of child care programs, the importance of culture, language, traditional knowledge, and the involvement of Elders, were stressed throughout the framework document. The joint working group defined quality child care as follows:

Quality care, from a First Nations or Inuit perspective, is care created by First Nations/Inuit, rooted in First Nations/Inuit culture, traditions and values, and provided in the First Nations or Inuktitut language where the language is still vital in the community, or integrated with language learning where the traditional language has not been retained as strongly.5

In summary, the FNICCI’s main goal was to close the gap in the availability of child care between Inuit, First Nations and non-Aboriginal families. The FNICCI set out to design a framework where Inuit sustained full ownership of early childhood programming rooted in Inuit knowledge, cultures, languages, and the involvement of Elders.

1.1. Envisioning Inuit Early Childhood Development

Since the FNICCI was established in 1995, leaders in Inuit ECD have outlined a strong vision for quality Inuit early childhood programming. In 2005, ITK specified that quality Inuit early childhood development programming means guaranteeing the right of Inuit children to access culturally and linguistically appropriate child care that incorporates the values and traditions of their parents and communities.6 The Inuit Early Childhood Development Strategy (IECDS), developed by the Inuit Early Childhood Development Working Group (IECDWG) envisions Inuit early childhood development as encompassing “Inuit culture, Inuit language and ways”7. The ultimate goal of the IECDS is to achieve healthy, happy and safe Inuit children and families.8 Turning this vision into a reality requires long-term funding strategies and sufficient resources.

2. Project Methodology

In preparation for the ASETS successor strategy and the FNICCI post-2015, ITK and the IECDWG identified the need to assess the impact of FNICCI funding on ECE programs in each Region. Because the FNICCI was placed under the AHRDA (now ASETS) program in 1999, and used as a tool to encourage Inuit parents to access employment, education, and training opportunities, this project also set out to explore the impacts of FNICCI-funded child care on regional economies. The first step entailed reviewing all historical documents pertaining to the First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative, including the initial recommendations put forward by the

5 Ibid., p.5.
7 Ibid., p. 3.
Joint First Nations and Inuit Federal Working Group in 1995, a FNICCI program evaluation conducted in 2002, and relevant discussion papers and reports.

A set of project indicators was confirmed at the annual IECDWG meeting in February, 2014, and a work plan for data collection was developed. Statistical data on population, employment, income and the cost of living were collected with assistance from Inuit Qaujisarvingat, ITK’s Inuit Knowledge Centre, and Statistics Canada. In February and March, 2014, a questionnaire was distributed to child care coordinators in each region, and follow-up interviews were conducted. During this time, regional employment officers and other employees familiar with the ASETS program were also interviewed. A total of 17 interviews were conducted during this phase.

3. Regional Profiles

Each Regional context is unique. Differences in jurisdictional arrangements, funding frameworks, population size, and economics create opportunities and challenges that are specific to each Region. This section will look at regional population, income and employment statistics. Census data from 1996 is used in the below tables as the baseline to show changes in these three areas since the FNICCI was first established in 1995.

### Table 1. Regional Population Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Inuit Population</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Rate of Growth of Total Population</th>
<th>Inuit Children Aged 0-5</th>
<th>All Children Aged 0-5</th>
<th>Rate of Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inuit Nunangat (TOTAL)</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>33,350</td>
<td>41,565</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>6,105</td>
<td>7,005</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>43,460</td>
<td>52,115</td>
<td></td>
<td>6,765</td>
<td>7,370</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nunatsiavut</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>2,105</td>
<td>2,815</td>
<td>-8%</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>-3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>2,325</td>
<td>2,615</td>
<td></td>
<td>255</td>
<td>275</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nunavik</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>7,625</td>
<td>8,690</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>1,490</td>
<td>1,625</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>10,755</td>
<td>12,060</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,695</td>
<td>1,795</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qikiqtaaluk</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>10,435</td>
<td>12,900</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>1,895</td>
<td>2,110</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>13,585</td>
<td>16,805</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,170</td>
<td>2,340</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kivalliq</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>5,970</td>
<td>6,820</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>1,185</td>
<td>1,270</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>8,080</td>
<td>8,910</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,320</td>
<td>1,390</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitikmeot</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>4,025</td>
<td>4,610</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>755</td>
<td>810</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>5,405</td>
<td>5,980</td>
<td></td>
<td>880</td>
<td>915</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inuvialuit</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>3,185</td>
<td>5,725</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>815</td>
<td>-2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>3,310</td>
<td>5,775</td>
<td></td>
<td>440</td>
<td>650</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All of the data in this table were retrieved by Statistics Canada for Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, and based on the 1996 and 2011 censuses.

The numbers listed above illustrate several key trends. First, the population of Inuit Nunangat grew by 20% between 1996 and 2011. (During the same period, Canada’s total population grew by 13.5%\(^9\).) Second, this population increase occurred primarily due to the growth of the Inuit population in each Region. Even in Nunatsiavut, where the total population decreased over this period, the Inuit population grew. Lastly, the number of children aged 0-5 increased significantly in four out of six Regions. While an increase in the number of children aged 0-5 indicates an increased need for child care, this is not the only factor impacting the demand for child care. Numerous trends and factors, such as training, education and employment opportunities in Inuit communities, the desire for quality, culturally based early childhood programming, participation in the traditional economy, and caregivers working towards wellness, all contribute to the demand for child care. It is important to keep in mind that communities within Regions are diverse, and statistics may not describe realities faced at the community level. For example, the city of Iqaluit has experienced a high rate of growth since 1999, when it became the capital of the newly formed territory of Nunavut. And across the north, the intensification of mining and other industrial projects are changing the demographic profiles of remote communities, which presents unique challenges to child care service providers.

### Table 2. Income, Labour Force Participation, and Employment Among Inuit across Inuit Nunangat*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Year**</th>
<th>Median Inuit Personal Income</th>
<th>Median Inuit Household Income</th>
<th>Labour Force Participation Rate of Inuit</th>
<th>Employment Rate Among Inuit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nunatsiavut</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>11,728</td>
<td>40,141</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>19,234</td>
<td>61,561</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nunavik</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>13,931</td>
<td>57,824</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>20,826</td>
<td>82,799</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qikiqtaaluk</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>10,388</td>
<td>47,853</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>20,373</td>
<td>80,380</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kivalliq</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>12,576</td>
<td>48,320</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>19,408</td>
<td>80,902</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^9\) Calculated from data provided to ITK by Statistics Canada in April 2014.
### Table 3. Income, Labour Force Participation, and Employment in Canada

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Median Personal Income</th>
<th>Median Household Income</th>
<th>Labour Force Participation</th>
<th>Employment Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>22,278</td>
<td>64,018</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>29,878</td>
<td>74,777</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Income numbers from 1995 were multiplied by 1.3229 in order to be adjusted to 2010 constant dollars.

It is important to note that labour force statistics collected by the Canadian government do not take participation in the traditional economy into account, including subsistence hunting, fishing and the many forms of work that support the hunt. The above tables illustrate that the employment rate is significantly lower across Inuit Nunangat than in the rest of Canada, and that Inuit earn less than the Canadian average in terms of median income. However, in three out of six Regions in 2010, median Inuit household income was higher than median household income in the rest of Canada. This is due in part to a higher number of Inuit households having more than 1-2 income earners. It is important to emphasize that the average Inuit household is larger than the size of the average non-Aboriginal household\(^\text{10}\), and household earnings in Inuit homes often need to support more people than in a non-Aboriginal home. Larger average household size also often means that multiple generations live under one roof. The Aboriginal Children’s survey revealed that children living in homes that included a grandparent were more likely than their peers who did not live with a grandparent to be exposed to the Inuit language every day, which rendered them more likely to speak the Inuit language\(^\text{11}\).

The above data shows that income and employment equitability has not yet been achieved between Inuit and non-Aboriginal Canadians, which has particular implications when the high cost of living in the north is factored in. Unfortunately, no regional data on the Consumer Price


Index (an index showing the change in price that average consumers pay for basic goods and services) has been collected by Statistics Canada in Inuit Regions, therefore the rate of inflation and overall increase to cost of living between 1996 and 2011 per region are unknown. However, looking at the cost of the Revised Northern Food Basket (RNFB) in 2012-2013 illustrates the high and rising cost of living in Inuit Nunangat. The below table calculates the cost of providing a family of four a healthy diet for a full year in each Region, and compares this figure to median Inuit household income in each Region. The information below was calculated based on RNFB costs from March 2013, and used data from communities where costs were the highest.

Table 4. Estimated Annual Cost of a Healthy Diet Compared to Inuit Household Income Per Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nunatsiavut – Nain</td>
<td>362.63</td>
<td>18,857</td>
<td>61,561</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nunavik – Salluit</td>
<td>391.83</td>
<td>20,375</td>
<td>82,799</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qikiqtaaluk – Pangnirtung</td>
<td>469.87</td>
<td>24,433</td>
<td>80,380</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kivalliq – Chesterfield Inlet</td>
<td>438.32</td>
<td>22,793</td>
<td>80,902</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitikmeot – Taloyoak</td>
<td>478.83</td>
<td>24,900</td>
<td>74,452</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The cost of living in Inuit Nunangat is high, and on the rise. For example, providing a healthy diet to a family of four in Taloyoak, Kitikmeot cost approximately $24,900 in 2013.

12 The cost of the RNFB in March 2013 was compared to median Inuit household income from 2010 in the absence of CPI data for Inuit Regions. It is important to note that this comparison has some limitations, notably that there was no regional income data available from 2013, and real income may have increased since 2010. Secondly, the cost of the RNFB is calculated monthly, therefore multiplying the cost in March 2013 by 12 yields an approximate annual cost – not the real annual cost of a healthy diet for four people. It is also worth noting that the average Inuit household in the North is larger than four people, and so the average cost of providing a healthy diet to an entire Inuit household in each Region may be higher than the numbers cited in the table above.

There is an urgent need to better understand the cost of living and doing business in the north. A clear picture of how much housing, construction, food, and other basic goods cost are necessary in order to support and strengthen child care programs across Inuit Nunangat. Funding is required to conduct research on the actual cost of living and doing business in the north.

4. Funding Received by ASETS Agreement Holders for Child Care in Inuit Nunangat

Between 1995 and 1998, FNICCI dollars were used to build child care centres in every region of Inuit Nunangat. Today FNICCI supports the provision of licensed child care in most Inuit communities. The information summarized in the table below was provided by regional child care coordinators, and represents the funding received by ASETS agreement holders through the First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative and other sources.\(^\text{14}\)

\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
Inuvialuit – Ulukhaktok & 461.57 & 24,002 & 69,079 & 35\% \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

\(\text{14}\) The Government of Nunavut has an annual child care budget of approximately two million dollars, which contributes to and supports child care, but is not managed by regional child care coordinators and therefore does not appear in table 5.
#### Table 5. Funding Received by ASETS Agreement Holders Per Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Annual Budget</th>
<th>Sources of Funding</th>
<th>Amount ($)</th>
<th>% Annual Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nunatsiavut</td>
<td>$1,500,000</td>
<td>FNICCI</td>
<td>$990,000</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>GNL</td>
<td>$165,215</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nunavik</td>
<td>$15,702,083</td>
<td>FNICCI</td>
<td>$1,390,772</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Province of QC</td>
<td>$13,376,704</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Block Funding)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>AHS&lt;sup&gt;15&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>$934,607</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qikiqtaaluk</td>
<td>$1,795,955</td>
<td>FNICCI</td>
<td>$1,795,955</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kivalliq</td>
<td>$1,109,491</td>
<td>FNICCI</td>
<td>$1,109,491</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitikmeot</td>
<td>$771,000</td>
<td>FNICCI</td>
<td>$771,000</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inuvialuit</td>
<td>$910,000</td>
<td>- FNICCI</td>
<td>$528,000</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- GTC</td>
<td>$48,000</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- GNWT ECE rent</td>
<td>$34,000</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- SCI</td>
<td>$45,000</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Language Nest</td>
<td>$101,000</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- HCI</td>
<td>$106,000</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Supportive Child</td>
<td>$11,000</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Brighter Futures</td>
<td>$37,000</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FNICCI funding has been absolutely vital to Inuit early childhood programs, and its importance cannot be overstated. With the exception of Nunavik and Inuvialuit, the FNICCI provides 90-100% of annual child care budgets for ASETS agreement holders across Inuit Nunangat. However, the cost of doing business in the north has increased substantially in recent decades. Inflation and the high cost of living have made the provision of child care services within existing funding models challenging for some Regions. Spikes in the cost of fuel, gasoline, electricity, rent, and food are putting a lot of pressure on regional child care coordinators to continue offering quality programming for children. For example, in Nunatsiavut, the recent government moratorium on caribou hunting has meant that child care centres do not have as much country food for their nutrition program as they usually do. Families would often give caribou to child care centres, but now the regional coordinator has to purchase meat, which is expensive. Since

<sup>15</sup> In Nunavik, the Kativik Regional Government (KRG) manages all licensed early childhood development programs, including Aboriginal Head Start (AHS). AHS funds are therefore included in Nunavik’s annual budget, whereas these funds are generally managed and run separately in other Regions.
June 2013 (less than a year), it has cost $13,000 to offer the nutrition program to 26 children. Persistent, insufficient funding in many Regions has made it very difficult, if not impossible, to sustain services, address unmet demand, and to maintain buildings in accordance with licensing regulations. Centres in Inuit Nunangat have had to close and others are operating at reduced capacity due to lack of funding. The impacts of lack of funding will be explored in more detail in the Discussion and Regional Policy Recommendations section.

4.1. Affordability: Family Fees across Inuit Nunangat

Families are vital contributors to child care centres. In some Regions, the gap between available funding for child care programs and growing operational costs is being bridged through family fees. This is challenging for many families, but has severe impacts on single parent families in particular. It is important to note that 26% of Inuit children in Inuit Nunangat live in households headed by single parents\textsuperscript{16}. It is also important to reiterate that median Inuit personal income is significantly lower than median income in the rest of Canada. The table below shows the cost of child care compared to median personal income earned by Inuit in each Region. Regional child care coordinators provided information on family fees. Depending on the specific child care landscape in each region, the below table may not represent all licensed child care offered in each region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Median Inuit Personal Income (2010)</th>
<th>Family Fees (p/day)</th>
<th>Estimated Annual Family Fees Per Child*</th>
<th>Percentage of Median Personal Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nunatsiavut</td>
<td>19,234</td>
<td>$10</td>
<td>$2,200</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nunavik</td>
<td>20,826</td>
<td>$7</td>
<td>$1,540</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qikiqtaaluk</td>
<td>20,373</td>
<td>$15-54</td>
<td>$11,880</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kivalliq</td>
<td>19,408</td>
<td>$15-40</td>
<td>$8,800</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitikmeot</td>
<td>19,147</td>
<td>$25-50</td>
<td>$11,000</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inuvialuit</td>
<td>20,390</td>
<td>$0**</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The figures in this column were calculated based on 220 days of child care. It is important to note that while centres in some communities are only open 9-10 months out of the year, many households have more than one child in child care at once. Where there was a range in fees, the maximum amount was used.

** In the three child development centres managed by the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and funded through FNICCI, the GNWT, and other sources, child care is free for Inuit families.

**Family fees are highest in Nunavut, and lowest in Nunavik where the Quebec government has committed long term funding to support universal child care.** The Government of Nunavut does offer some subsidy programs including those for working or training parents, as well as the “Young Parents Stay Learning” program for parents under 18 who want to continue in school. Yet, employment officers mentioned that high fees for child care can pose a barrier to employment, as families may earn too much to qualify for subsidies, but too little to pay for the full cost for child care.

### 4.2. Accessibility: Space and Infrastructure Needs Across Inuit Nunangat

Population growth, new employment and training opportunities, as well as the growing desire for quality, culturally based early childhood programming, have led to increased demand for child care in communities across Inuit Nunangat. Many regions struggle to meet this demand as they lack the funding to create new child care spaces.

The tables below summarizes information provided by regional child care coordinators, and focus specifically on FNICCI-funded, licensed child care spaces. This excludes private centres, unlicensed child care spaces, and Aboriginal Head Start (except in the case of Nunavik).
Table 7. FNICCI-Funded Child Care and Space Needs Per Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>No. of FNICCI Funded Sites</th>
<th>No. of FNICCI Funded Spaces</th>
<th>No. of Children on Waitlist</th>
<th>Estimated No. of New Spaces Needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nunatsiavut</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>10(^{17})</td>
<td>50(^{18})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nunavik</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1009(^{19})</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>110(^{20})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qikiqtaaluk</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>220(^{21})</td>
<td>910</td>
<td>300(^{22})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kivalliq</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>30(^{23})</td>
<td>60(^{24})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitikmeot</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inuvialuit</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13(^{25})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tumikuluit Saipaaqivik (Iqaluit Inuktitut Daycare), Qikiqtaaluk**

In 2008, a small group of Inuit mothers who believed in the strength of Inuktitut early childhood education started the Iqaluit Inuktitut Daycare. These mothers wanted culturally based child care services, offered completely in Inuktitut, for their children. It is currently the only child care centre in Nunavut that has an Inuktitut-only policy. This means that 100% of the centre’s staff speak Inuktitut, the Inuktitut language is spoken 100% of the time in the centre, and ECE materials are all in Inuktitut. The day care works closely with the families to provide continuity in Inuktitut both at the facility and at home. This program serves a very important purpose in Iqaluit, where English now prevails in schools, on the streets, and in playgrounds. According to Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory, the Executive Director and one of the founding members, the centre creates a safe environment for the Inuktitut language to prosper, where children are welcomed and encouraged to speak their own language. The centre has some funding to bring Elders in to work with the kids, and recently, mothers in the centre came together to learn how to sew sealskin clothing.

Year after year, teachers in kindergarten and grade one remark that students who have gone to Tumikuluit are the strongest students in the class. There is a strong want and need for more Inuktitut programming for children in Iqaluit. With only enough space for twenty children, the Iqaluit Inuktitut Daycare has 76 children on their waiting list. It costs $40 per day for families to send their children to the centre, however Kakivak Association uses FNICCI funding to subsidize 50% of this cost.

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17 There are 5 on the waitlist in Nain and 5 in Makkovik. In Hopedale, there was funding at one point to run an afterschool program for 15 children, but due to lack of funding, this program has shut down.
18 New spaces needed in Nain, Makkovik, and Hopedale.
19 In Nunavik, the Kativik Regional Government manages Aboriginal Head Start and licensed child care. This figure represents the total number of licensed child care spaces in the Region.
20 80 new spaces have been requested in Kuujjuarap and 30 have been requested in Umiujaq.
21 This number comes from 2012-2013.
22 This is an approximate number. A study is needed to determine the need for space more accurately.
23 All 30 children on the waitlist are in Rankin.
24 Approximately 20 additional spaces are needed in each of Kivalliq’s three largest communities.
25 New spaces are needed in Sachs and Tuktoyaktuk.
While data on the size of waitlists in each Region was collected, waitlists may not accurately illustrate unmet need. For example, when child care is largely inaccessible due to a severe shortage of space, or unaffordable due to high fees, families may not put their children on a waitlist, even if they are in need of child care. Due to lack of space, families in Iqaluit, Qikiqtaaluk put children’s names on multiple wait lists in the hopes of securing a spot; therefore the figure of 910 waitlisted children in this Region is not accurate. However, it attests to the ongoing crisis regarding availability of child care spaces in Nunavut’s capital and the desperation of parents searching for child care. This will be discussed in more detail in the Discussion and Regional Recommendations section.

In many Regions, it can be a struggle to get, and keep, a child care centre up and running. It is often challenging to find dollars for needed renovations, or funding to properly train centre managers, which can impact the daycare’s standing with provincial and territorial licensing bodies. For example, Nunatsiavut just succeeded in opening a centre in Makkovik after several years of negotiations and hard work. Kitikmeot just succeeded in re-opening a centre in Taloyoak this past April, 2014 after seven years. Forty-six children are already registered in the centre.

Table 8. Overview of Infrastructure Needs Per Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number of Centres in Need of Renovations</th>
<th>Number of Sites Closed Due to Infrastructure Needs</th>
<th>Number of New Centres Needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nunatsiavut</td>
<td>1/5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2²⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nunavik</td>
<td>14/19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qikiqtaaluk</td>
<td>7/23</td>
<td>4²⁷</td>
<td>6²⁸</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kivalliq</td>
<td>7/9</td>
<td>1²⁹</td>
<td>*²⁰</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitikmeot</td>
<td>5/5¹¹</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1³²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inuvialuit</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>1³³</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

²⁶ A new centre is needed in Hopedale, and the centre in Rigolet needs new spaces added.
²⁷ Centres that have closed due to lack of funding to renovate, repair, or comply with licensing requirements are located in: Arctic Bay, Resolute Bay, Hall Beach and Qikiqtarjuaq.
²⁸ Four new centres are needed in Iqaluit, 1 in Igloolik, and 1 in Pangnirtung.
²⁹ In Whale Cove.
³⁰ Funding and resources needed to assess how best to address space needs in the Region.
³¹ It costs $630,000 to operate a centre with 30 spaces, and $1,400,000 per year to operate a centre with 80 spaces.
³² One of the buildings in need of major renovations may need to be replaced with a new building.
³³ In Sachs Harbor.
Aging infrastructure, combined with high construction costs and lack of funding has resulted in the closure of six child care centres across Inuit Nunangat. Because most Regions have not had the budget for new construction since FNICCI’s initial startup phase from 1996-1998, it is difficult to know exactly how much it would cost to build a new centre in each Region. However, Nunavik serves as a useful model. After a lengthy and thorough cost analysis, Kativik Regional Government (KRG) determined the actual cost of doing business in Nunavik today and successfully negotiated with the Quebec Government to accept a ratio of 4 to 1 for all future capital investments. In summary, if it costs $1 million dollars to build a child care centre in the south, it is expected to cost $4 million to construct the same building in Nunavik. KRG has determined that it costs $5-6 million to build a new child care centre in Nunavik, and between $630,000 and $1.4 million annually to operate a building (depending on its’ size).

4.3. Impacts of FNICCI Funding on Communities

Employment officers across Inuit Nunangat made it clear that child care is vital to the economy. Interviews were conducted with employment officers and leaders in each Region about the various ways in which the FNICCI directly, and indirectly, impacts regional economies. Every interviewee in the employment and training development sector emphasized the importance of licensed child care services, and explained their main economic impacts as twofold. First, child care centres are major employers, and educator and manager positions require professional training. Second, licensed early childhood centres also provide parents with a safe and reliable service, so that they may access training, education and work opportunities.

Table 9. Employment and Wages in FNICCI-Funded Child Care Centres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total Staff34</th>
<th>Early Childhood Educator Wages (Per Hour)</th>
<th>Amount Paid in Wages with FNICCI Funding in 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nunatsiavut</td>
<td>20 full time 8 part time</td>
<td>$15-30</td>
<td>$494,755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nunavik</td>
<td>249 full time 56 part time</td>
<td>$25.81-34.21 (DEC) $22.81-34.21 (without DEC)35</td>
<td>$765,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qikiqtaaluk</td>
<td>64 full time36 40 part time</td>
<td>$30 (manager) $22-26 (ECE) $15 (casual)</td>
<td>$258,821</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

34 These numbers include early childhood educators, centre managers, program coordinators, cooks, and other staff working in child care centres.
35 In Quebec, DEC stands for “diplôme d’études collégiale” or “college studies diploma”.
36 These numbers represent the number of Inuit staff working in child care centres in the Region.
FNICCI funding has created important employment opportunities across Inuit Nunangat, however early childhood educator salaries remain low. Increased wages for early childhood educators and more opportunities for training and professional development are required.

Past reports have called for increased wages for early childhood educators, and have linked low wages to high staff turnover.

It is important to emphasize that with the exception of Nunavik, Regions lack adequate, consistent funding for early childhood educator training and ongoing professional development. A 2013 report prepared by ITK studied the causes and impacts of persistent, unmet training needs across Inuit Nunangat. One of the most pressing issues is that trained early childhood educators often leave the field due to low wages and lack of benefits. Past reports have demonstrated the need for pay parity between early childhood educators and teachers in order to reduce staff turnover.

5. Discussion and Regional Policy Recommendations

In this section, regional policy considerations are presented based on information gathered from questionnaires and conversations with regional child care coordinators and employment officers.

5.1. Nunatsiavut

The regional child care coordinator in Nunatsiavut reports that child care is being impacted by a lack of funding. For example, lack of funding has prevented the Region from using existing infrastructure at full capacity. This is true of Nain and Hopedale in particular, where there is physical space for more children, but no funding to operate these child care spaces. In total, there are 28 unopened spaces in Nain and 25 in Hopedale. In addition, daycares in Nunatsiavut

37 Wages depend on the budgets of individual centres and what they can afford to pay.
close two months out of the year due to funding constraints. A recent survey in the Region found that 40% of parents surveyed would like to see child care centres open all year round.

Recommendations for Policy and Funding Considerations in Nunatsiavut

1) Increased funds to operate centres at full capacity. This includes funding for the after-school program in Hopedale;

2) Funding that keeps pace with the increased cost of operations and construction in the Region. Operational costs have risen to the extent that if the annual budget does not increase, the nutrition program may need to be cut;

3) Increased funding for early childhood educator training and ongoing professional development. If additional funding were to become available for new spaces and additional salaries, the regional coordinator estimates that it could take between 3 to 5 years to recruit and train staff;

4) Adequate, multi-year funding to meet the Region’s child care needs. Provincial funding ($30,000) is renewed annually, and requires intensive reporting throughout the fiscal year.

5.2. Nunavik

The Region of Nunavik has a 23-year child care funding agreement with the Government of Quebec. This multi-year agreement has enabled ongoing early childhood educator training programs to be delivered in communities, as well as training for child care centre directors, Board of Directors, and cooks, a nutrition program that provides children with 100% of their daily nutritional requirements, the development of Inuit-specific educational materials, and implementation of the learning story/narrative assessment model. Despite significant investment on the part of the provincial government, increased funding is needed in several areas.

Recommendations for Policy and Funding Considerations in Nunavik

1) Federal funding for infrastructure;

2) Enhancement funding to support the implementation of the learning story/narrative assessment curriculum. This funding would allow the program to roll out in more communities at once;

3) A pedagogical counsellor in each centre to oversee curriculum development;

5.4. Qikiqtaaluk, NU

Lack of child care spaces is the most urgent issue faced in this Region. The regional child care coordinator reports that there has been a space crisis in Iqaluit since the territory of Nunavut was created in 1999, with the city’s size and needs having changed drastically since then. Lack of
funding has also created staffing issues in many of the Region’s centres. In 2013 alone, the regional coordinator lost five managers because there was no funding to properly train them. It is very hard to replace daycare managers, and centres sometimes remain closed for months or years due to lack of Board members or management. In addition, trained early childhood educators are frustrated with low wages, which is compounded by the high cost of living. Some educators leave their jobs to work in the school system, or other sectors with better remuneration, causing high staff turnover.

Recommendations for Policy and Funding Considerations in Qikiqtaaluk

1) Immediate and adequate funding to address the space crisis, including the construction of new centres, and sufficient funding for ongoing infrastructure maintenance and operations;

2) Educator wages on par with teachers’ in order to retain qualified personnel and reduce staff turnover;

3) Increased and consistent funding for management, administrative, financial and board governance training;

4) Decrease in parent fees through increased, direct funding for child care programs in the Region.

5.5. Kivalliq, NU

Communities within Kivalliq are diverse, and face different realities in relation to child care. There is an acute shortage of child care spaces and long waitlists in Kivalliq’s three largest communities. In smaller communities, where employment and training opportunities may be limited, occupancy in child care centres can fall to 50%. Across the Region, there is a pronounced need for more training for daycare centre managers.

Recommendations for Policy and Funding Considerations in Kivalliq

1) Increased funding to open up new child care spaces in Kivalliq’s three largest communities;

2) Increased and consistent funding for management, administrative, financial and board governance training;

3) More opportunities for community-based training for early childhood educators, and increased support for ongoing professional development;

4) Funding to repair and maintain the Regions’ existing child care centres.

5.3. Kitikmeot, NU

FNICCI dollars in this Region are used strictly for wage subsidies and audit costs, and without them, the Region would not be able to pay its centre staff. The impacts of lack of funding touch
several areas, particularly infrastructure and maintenance. The regional child care coordinator reports that consistent lack of funding in these areas has resulted in a situation where 100% of Kitikmeot’s child care centres need renovations. Centres in the eastern communities belong to daycare operators, and maintenance is their responsibility. In Cambridge Bay and other central communities, daycares are owned by the territorial government and leased to daycare operators, and the Government of Nunavut maintains the buildings. In smaller communities in eastern Kitikmeot, where operators look after the costs of energy, repairs, and renovations themselves, infrastructure costs can become overwhelming.

**Recommendations for Policy and Funding Considerations in Kitikmeot**

1) Community-based training for early childhood educators, and annual professional development for all child care centre staff, particularly managers;

2) Funding to repair and maintain the Regions’ existing child care centres. Infrastructure issues compromise the consistency of child care services in some communities, which negatively impacts working and training parents;

3) A significant decrease in parent fees through increased, direct funding of child care programs;

4) A reduction in administrative burden, which could be achieved through bundling various funds and reducing reporting requirements, as well as reviewing the child care centre building ownership scenario in the interest of more equitable operations.

5.6. Inuvialuit

The Manager - Early Childhood Programs in Inuvialuit reports that in order to complement FNICCI funding, she submits nine additional proposals annually and produces reports for each fund separately, which creates administrative burden and prevents limited resources from being dedicated elsewhere. Multi-year funding would permit centres to plan long-term, and would allow the Region to address issues regarding availability of space. While the three FNICCI-funded centres managed by the IRC are free for parents, they are at capacity, and the only childcare facility in Inuvik with space available is too costly for many families to afford. In addition, as in other Regions, staff turnover is a major issue in Inuvialuit. Educator wages are often too low to retain trained staff.

**Recommendations for Policy and Funding Considerations in Inuvialuit**

1) Educator wages on par with teachers’ to retain trained personnel and reduce staff turnover;

2) Increased and adequate funding for operations and infrastructure, indexed to the rising cost of living in the north;

3) A comprehensive, multi-year funding approach from multiple sources;

4) Increased funding for training, including special needs training and the budget to hire
training coordinator.

5.7. Summary

Although each Region in Inuit Nunangat is unique, all Regions face similar challenges. This report has found that child care infrastructure across Inuit Nunangat is aging, and is in need of significant investment. Budgets for operations, renovations, and construction need to reflect the actual cost of doing business in the north, or child care programs will have no choice but to scale back their important services. Low salaries, compounded by the high cost of living, are causing high staff turnover in the field of early childhood. More community-based training opportunities for educators, managers, administrators and Boards of Directors, combined with higher wages and better working conditions, would strengthen early childhood development programs across Inuit Nunangat.

6. General Recommendations for Policy Considerations Across Inuit Nunangat

FNICCI funding aided in the construction of child care centres across Inuit Nunangat and has created opportunities for many Inuit parents to access training and employment. In order for child care programs in Inuit communities to continue operating, and to support families in accessing training and employment, FNICCI funding absolutely needs to be continued.

This report has shown that increased funds are needed to address a number of urgent issues that are compromising the ability of Regions to offer consistent, quality child care programs rooted in Inuit languages and culture. After a careful analysis of the key messages shared by interviewees, general recommendations for policy considerations are presented below:

1) The First Nations Inuit Child Care Initiative has been vital to the establishment of child care programs across Inuit Nunangat. FNICCI funding needs to be renewed and the monies increased in order to:

- Address urgent demand for child care in many communities through the creation of new centres and spaces;
- Negotiate pay parity between early childhood educators and teachers in order to reduce staff turnover and retain trained personnel;
- Ensure ongoing and adequate training in the field of early childhood, including for educators already employed in early childhood centres, Boards of Directors, managers, and administrators;
- Develop an Inuit-specific early childhood educator training program rooted in Inuit worldviews and knowledge of ECE, that is delivered in Inuit languages;
- Create consistent opportunities for representatives in Inuit ECD to come together to exchange knowledge and further the national vision for Inuit ECD;
- Support the development of Inuit-specific, made-in-Inuit-Nunangat, educational materials.

2) If Inuit Regions are to continue offering quality child care programming, it is suggested that the next phase of the Initiative take the following into consideration:

- All Inuit Regions rely on the FNICCI for their annual child care budgets. There cannot be a lapse in funding while the ASETS successor strategy is negotiated in 2015, as child care operations in much of Inuit Nunangat would cease as a result;

- In depth assessments of infrastructure needs must be performed in each Region to accurately assess the cost of renovations and new construction. A multi-year block of funding committed to adequately assessing and addressing these needs in the next phase of the Initiative will be crucial;

- The development of a new funding formula indexed to the high cost of living and doing business in the north will be vital, and will need to be re-assessed every 1-3 years.

3) Multi-year, direct funding for child care from all levels of government is required in order to create a funding framework that ensures that quality, culturally-based early childhood programming is accessible and affordable for Inuit parents across Inuit Nunangat.

The recommendations outlined above were captured in a letter sent to the Prime Minister of Canada in 2010 by Educators from many Aboriginal Head Start programs and child care centres in Canada’s Inuit regions. This letter, signed by close to 100 people, describes the five things that the government of Canada could do to improve the quality of Inuit early-childhood education. These five things are: invest in Inuit ECE, invest in infrastructure, allow teachers to teach, support the Inuit language, and support training and professional development.

**Conclusion**

The ASETS succession strategy post-2015 must include the continuation of funding currently distributed under the FNICCI. These funds represent the vast majority of child care budgets in most Regions. The renewal of these funding agreements is vital to the continuation of licensed child care programs across Inuit Nunangat. However, as this report has illustrated, many Inuit communities presently struggle to provide affordable, licensed child care, and lack of child care poses a barrier to parents who want to join the labour force, access training, or participate in the traditional economy. The process of assessing the impact of FNICCI funding has provided an opportunity to bring attention to the valuable role that the FNICCI plays in supporting Inuit families in the workforce and funding licensed child care programs in Inuit Nunangat. This report also highlights the persistent, current and future needs of early childhood development programs across Inuit Nunangat. In theory, the objectives of the FNICCI are in line with the Inuit Early Childhood Development Strategy and Inuit QUAD principles. However, as this report has outlined, guaranteeing the right of Inuit children to child care grounded in the language, culture, values, and traditions of their families and communities requires a funding framework, indexed to the rising cost of living, that encourages, sustains and supports Inuit ownership of early
childhood development programs. This includes Inuit determined linguistic and cultural priorities, Inuit defined policies and practices, and the creation of Inuit-specific training curriculum for workers in the Inuit early childhood sector.

“[Child care] services must be provided within the cultural context of Inuit society if they are to strengthen, rather than to weaken, the fragile balance between western and Inuit cultures.” 39

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BIBLIOGRAPHY


