



## Meeting Summary:

### The Minister's Early Learning Child Care Engagement Table (ELCCET)

Meeting 13: January 17, 2026 from 9:00am – 4:00 pm (In-person)

## Summary

The thirteenth meeting of the Minister's Early Learning and Child Care Engagement Table (ELCCET) was held on Saturday, January 17, 2026.

The meeting focus was:

- **ELCC Transformation Update:** A detailed presentation outlined progress on sector transformation and evolving funding realities. Members' questions were addressed throughout the presentation.
- **Operating Funding Model (OFM):** Members received an update on delays to the OFM rollout and discussed potential interim supports for the sector.
- **Quality Framework:** A presentation was delivered that covered sector development, partnerships, and an overview of the Quality Assurance Specialist (QAS) role. Members provided feedback on the role and approach to support overall effectiveness.

## Agenda

1. Hon. Minister Brendan Maguire Remarks and Q&A
2. ELCC Transformation Update
3. Operating Funding Model (OFM) Update and Interim Measures Discussion
4. Quality Framework Update
  - a. Sector Development and Partnerships
  - b. Quality Assurance Specialist (QAS) Role
5. Sector Communications

## Hon. Minister Brendan Maguire Remarks and Q&A

Hon. Minister Brendan Maguire expressed his appreciation for the work of table members alongside their work in the sector. He recognized the foundational work that has been put in place and celebrated how far Nova Scotia has come on the journey of Early Learning transformation. He acknowledged that current funding levels mean it will not be possible to achieve \$10/day on-average fees for children under 6. The Minister continues to meet with federal and provincial counterparts to advance Nova Scotia's priorities. He listened to table members' questions and comments on variety of perspectives and responded.

## ELCC Transformation Update

An update was provided on the progress of ELCC sector transformation since 2021, along with impacts of the evolving economic and fiscal environment. Inflationary pressures and updated sector data mean original cost assumptions are no longer valid. Due to current



federal and provincial fiscal realities, the availability of additional funding is limited. Nova Scotia has increased its investment by more than 40% since 2021, and future federal funding will focus on maintaining progress achieved rather than supporting further expansion. Key factors affecting affordability, growth and sustainability were outlined, and questions from table members were addressed throughout the presentation.

## Operating Funding Model (OFM) Update and Interim Measures

An update was provided on the Operational Funding Model and that there is a delay in implementation while discussions are ongoing with the federal government on progress and priorities. A discussion took place among table members on potential interim measures designed to support the sector until the model is implemented. The need for financial supports, particularly for some operators, was emphasized in the discussion.

## Quality Framework Update

### Sector Development and Partnership

The primary focus in the quality framework discussion was on sector development and partnerships. Table members were invited to identify community organizations that could help meet sector needs and to suggest policies or resources that would support sector development.

### Quality Assurance Specialist (QAS) Role

An overview was provided of the Quality Assurance Specialist (QAS) role and the integration of licensing and compliance with continuous quality improvement. Details on the functions of the role and rationale for the change was provided. Table members emphasized the importance of Directors continuing to receive appropriate support, maintaining a realistic workload for QAS staff, and ensuring that individuals in the role have the right experience and background.

## Sector Communications

Sector communications were the last item on the agenda. A plan for communicating some important updates to the sector was presented. Members of the Table offered advice regarding what and how to communicate.