



# EVALUATION OF THE NOVA SCOTIA EARLY YEARS CENTRES

Year 3 Report  
January 29, 2018

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## Introduction

In 2013, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (herein the Department) established a collaboration with the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation (MWMFF) for the development and implementation of Early Years Centres (EYCs) in Nova Scotia, bringing together existing programs and services within a public school setting. The implementation of the EYCs represents a joint effort of the Department and the school boards, in collaboration with community partners, service providers and families. The vision for EYCs in Nova Scotia is that over time, as the integration and collaboration of key service providers become well developed and as programs and services become more aligned, families will have seamless access to the services they need, when they need them. At a minimum, all EYCs in Nova Scotia aim to include three core components:

- play-based, no-fee Early Learning Program (ELP) for children in the year before entering school;
- family supports and resources; and
- onsite regulated childcare responsive to family needs.

This Year 3 evaluation builds on the learnings from the Year 1 and Year 2 evaluations (2015 and 2016) and is part of an overall four-year evaluation of the EYC initiative in Nova Scotia funded by the MWMFF. The evaluation was undertaken by an evaluation team (Dalhousie University, Research Power Incorporated, Mount Saint Vincent University) in 2017. This report presents background context for the EYC initiative, the current context of early learning environments in Nova Scotia and key findings related to the establishment and ongoing implementation of the EYC model. The report concludes with reflections and issues for further consideration.

### **The Model for Nova Scotia Early Years Centres**

The EYC model builds on similar work across the country with a vision that collaboration and integration between key service-providers will ensure that families have seamless access to the services they need, when they need them (Corter, Janmohamed, & Pelletier, 2012; Health and Education Research Group, 2013; Poon, Rowcliffe, Forer, Wiens, & Biferie, 2015). Previous research has shown that similar integrated service delivery

models have the potential to support families and child development (McCain, Mustard, & Shanker, 2007; Patel, Corter, Pelletier, & Bertrand, 2016).

Conceptually, the impact of the model can be considered through an ecological lens (Bronfenbrenner, 1977) where a child's development is influenced by the different systems and environments to which they are exposed. Figure 1 provides an overview of the various systems that may influence child development, including close interactions of the family and within the EYCs at a microsystems level, within specific social structures and policies at the exosystem level and broader societal and cultural influences at the macrosystem level.

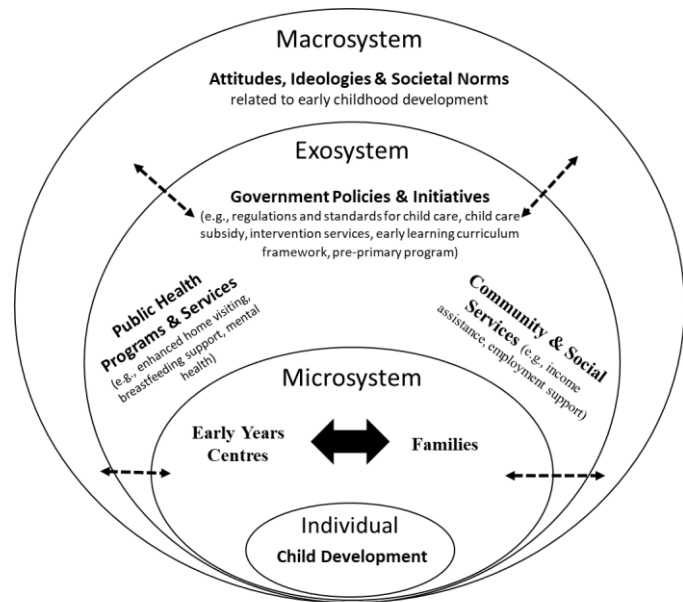


Figure 1. Conceptual framing for the impact on child development

## Purpose of this evaluation

### *Questions guiding the Year 3 Evaluation*

- 1. How are EYCs developing the EYC model?*
- 2. How are services at EYCs coming together?*
- 3. How are the EYCs improving outcomes for children and families?*

This Year 3 evaluation represents the mid-point of the evaluation of the EYC model. To meet the evolving needs of the initiative, a Project Charter was developed to focus the evaluation on three key questions through targeted data collection methods. These questions have been considered in the context of the evaluation framework and program logic model, with the goal of building on the five evaluation themes presented in the Year 2 evaluation: 1) Child Development, 2) Early Years Environment, 3) Collaboration and Partnerships, 4) Awareness and Engagement and 5) Building Capacity (Appendix A).

Methods used in the Year 3 evaluation included an adapted version of the Toronto First Duty Indicators of Change (IOC) tool, the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-3), Early Development Instrument (EDI), Program Participation Data, a focus group with Early Childhood Development Consultants and a EYC site and provincial report template. It is important to note that there are limitations of some of these data methods which influence the interpretation of results. The data methods and limitations are fully explained in Appendix B.

## **Evolving context**

In 2013, the Department of Education was expanded to include an Early Years Branch (EYB), which saw the establishment of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (the Department). The expanded mandate of the Department was implemented in recognition of the need for an integrated system that supports the learning, care and wellbeing of children and their families throughout the prenatal period to age six years.

The Early Years Branch established a collaboration with the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation for the development and implementation of EYCs in Nova Scotia, bringing together existing programs and services within a public school setting. Nova Scotia followed similar models that have been implemented in Toronto (Toronto First Duty) and New Brunswick (Early Childhood Development Centres).

The EYCs are in public schools, which as focal points in communities are mandated to provide education to school aged children, and well placed to expand and serve younger children and their families. The implementation of the EYCs represents a joint effort of the Department and the eight (8) school boards, in collaboration with community partners, service providers and families. With the establishment of the EYCs, it is expected that program quality and access to programs and services will improve which will lead to better child outcomes.

In 2014, the first four EYCs were established in four school boards:

- Rockingstone Heights School, Halifax Regional Municipality (Halifax Regional School Board)
- Jubilee Elementary School (includes the former St. Joseph School), Sydney Mines (Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board)
- Yarmouth Central School (includes the former South Centennial School), Yarmouth (Tri-County Regional School Board)
- East Antigonish Education Centre, Monastery (Strait Regional School Board)

In 2015, four additional EYCs were established:

- Clark Rutherford School, Cornwallis (Annapolis Valley Regional School Board)
- West Highlands Elementary School, Amherst (Chignecto-Central Regional School Board)
- École Beau-Port, Richmond (Conseil scolaire acadien provincial)
- New Germany Elementary School, New Germany (South Shore Regional School Board)

There is one site located in a francophone school (École Beau-Port).

For the purposes of this evaluation report, the four EYCs established in 2014 are referred to as *Phase 1 sites*. The four EYCs established in 2015 are referred to as *Phase 2 sites*. The Phase 1 sites were the subject of the Year 1 evaluation (2015)<sup>1</sup>.

The Year 3 evaluation provided an opportunity to inform further development of the EYC model as well as to support initiatives that support early childhood development across the system. However, it is important to acknowledge contextual factors that influence the implementation of the model within the changing system. The 2016/2017 year included unique challenges for the EYC model as a result of a labour dispute resulting in Work-to-Rule (WTR) job action by the Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU). The impact of WTR varied across sites. It was identified as a challenge that impacted the capacity of some stakeholders to engage in various activities that support the implementation of the EYCs.

The Department also announced the launch of a provincial Pre-primary Program starting in September 2017, which builds on the earlier evaluation findings related to the success of the ELP within EYCs and is corroborated by research that has suggested positive learning impacts from attending pre-school programs (Campbell & Ramey, 1995; Reynolds, 1994, 1998; Sylva et al., 2010, Patel, 2009). Although the Year 3 evaluation was completed before the Pre-Primary program began in September 2017, this evaluation provides insight to inform future implementation of this program across the province.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/docs/2015earlyyearscentreevaluationen.pdf>

## Section 1: How are EYC sites developing the EYC model?

This section summarizes how the EYC model is developing at Phase 1 and Phase 2 sites across the following evaluation themes<sup>2</sup>:

- *Early Learning Environment* (includes the ELP, family resources and supports, onsite regulated childcare, curriculum, pedagogical approach, behavior guidance and management, daily routines and schedules, and use of space),
- *Partnerships and Collaboration* (includes planning processes; policy, governance, and leadership; partnerships; and processes and tools),
- *Awareness and Engagement* (includes community engagement, family engagement, and communication),
- *Building Capacity* (includes human resources; allocation of financial resources; evaluation, monitoring, and accountability mechanisms; team of educators, roles and responsibilities; and capacity building opportunities).

Data sources included Administrative Data, Early Childhood Development Consultant Focus Group, ECERS-3, Indicators of Change<sup>3</sup> and Key Questions Form, and Site Summaries.

### ***Early Learning Environment***

#### **Early Learning Program (ELP)**

The ELP is a play-based, no-fee program available to children living in the catchment area who are four years of age or will be on or before December 31 and will be entering Grade Primary the following year. All EYC sites had an established ELP; ELP operating details can be found in Appendix C: EYC Site and Provincial Report Template. The ELP, as a component of the EYC model, continued to be the focus of the work during Year 3.

The enhancement of the environmental quality of the ELP related to values, content, activities and development of competencies and processes is reflected in the ECERS-3 scores examined across the three-year period. The assessment of overall quality of the ELP component of the EYC model shows an increase in Total Average Scores across years 1, 2 and 3. At year 3, the Average Total Score for Phase 1 is above “good”, Phase 2 is above “adequate” and combined Phase 1 and 2 scores is “good”.

The ECERS-3 Average Total Scores for Phase 1 and Phase 2 sites, shown by year in Figure 1, illustrate changes in quality scores. Results suggest that program quality is influenced as investments in early learning environments become established, e.g., through the implementation of a play-based learning approach. Total Average Scores increased across

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A for an overview of components and corresponding outcomes, as per the EYC program logic model adapted from the EYC Evaluation Year 2 Report.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix F for a full breakdown of Indicators of Change ratings

2015, 2016 and 2017 for the Phase 1 sites and 2016 and 2017 for Phase 2 sites. Similarly, the combined Phase 1 and Phase 2 Total Average Scores increased across the three years.

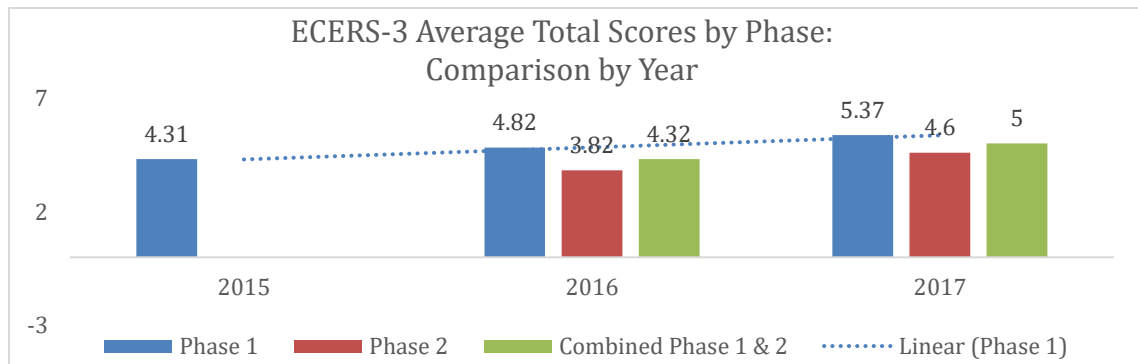


Figure 1. ECERS-3 average total scores by phase from Year 1 to Year 3 (2015 – 2017)

Subscale scores from the ECERS-3 assessment are useful indicators for the identification of areas for continued investment of resources to support the development of competencies and processes necessary for quality early years programs at specific sites.

A breakdown by subscale scores for Phase 1 and Phase 2 sites across years, found in Appendix D: ECERS-3 Subscales, indicate annual increases in most subscales. In line with the Total Average Score, subscale scores are higher for the Phase 1 sites compared to the Phase 2 sites except for the *Program Structure* subscale score. At the site level, individual subscale scores provide practical direction for the implementation of supports necessary to enhance the pedagogical approach and curriculum in the ELPs.

### Family resources and Supports

In Year 3, family resources and supports continued to vary in terms of frequency, diversity in programming, and target audience across the eight EYCs. Services ranged from one-off sessions focused on specific topics to regular weekly playgroups; many were offered in partnership with community organizations. Each site offered several programs to children and families, with one site offering over 25 programs.

In all Phase 1 sites EYC partners were offering joint activities that included opportunities to enhance parenting capacity and some are expanding programs (e.g., Strengthening Families; Incredible Years; Parenting Time; Family Matters; Summer Slide; and joint programs with Public Health, Community Health Teams, Mental Health, libraries, SchoolsPlus, etc.). Phase 2 sites were more variable in collaborating to offer programs, however, all but one indicated joint activities. Challenges to the delivery of family resources and supports included a lack of time due to a focus on high needs children within the ELP.



### **Onsite Regulated Childcare**

In Year 3, onsite regulated childcare continued to develop uniquely across the eight EYC sites. Among Phase 1 sites, one site (Yarmouth Central EYC) offered onsite regulated childcare to children in the ELP and Grades P-2, through a partnership with the Boys and Girls Club. East Antigonish EYC had implemented an onsite, unregulated, before and after school care program to serve the needs of children and families in the ELP as well as school-aged children up to 10 years of age. This program remained unregulated due to challenges in the definition of 'school age' in the child care regulations. Pre-primary children (4 year olds) are not within the school age definition and thus would require a lower ratio for before and after school care which is cost preventative for an operator. Jubilee EYC provided offsite childcare in four approved Family Homes through a licensed Family Home Care Agency and were in the process of becoming a licensed Family Home Childcare Agency so that services would be co-located at the EYC. In 2015, Rockingstone Heights EYC completed a community needs assessment, which found that onsite regulated childcare was not a priority for the community.

Among Phase 2 sites, one EYC had established onsite regulated childcare. Beau-Port EYC continued offering its previously established onsite regulated childcare for children 18 months to 4 years and afterschool care for children in the ELP and school aged, provided through partnership with the Richmond County Early Childhood Education Association. Onsite regulated childcare was initially established at New Germany EYC in 2015, however it was discontinued due to lack of enrolment and cost related issues. Despite efforts to build the childcare component in this EYC, families in that community did not identify childcare as a need because of existing options and a strong informal childcare network within the community (e.g. families, "stay-at home" parents, seasonal work). In West Highlands EYC, children in the ELP accessed offsite regulated after school childcare provided by the local YMCA. This EYC also formed a partnership with a regulated childcare centre in the community to provide childcare for EYC families. Clark Rutherford EYC provided onsite unregulated afterschool care for children in the ELP through partnership with the YMCA.

### **Space, Curriculum and Pedagogy**

Most Phase 1 and 2 sites discussed coordinating schedules and space within the school (e.g., transition planning with Primary teachers, coordination of space with Grade Primary, the ELP is included in school planning, coordination of breakfast and lunch programs, effective transitions with before and after school programs). However, a few sites noted that there is a lack of coordination between the EYC and early elementary (the EYC is located apart from the rest of the school and early elementary, which poses challenges for sharing schedules and space).

Both Phase 1 and 2 sites reported cooperation and/or coordination to deliver curriculum in the ELP and organize the learning environment with partners. Some sites noted that while partners review program goals and objectives, there is not a shared philosophy

between partners. It was noted that work remains to be done in terms of building a shared philosophy with early elementary, although progress has been made in the last year and most sites discussed better understanding of play-based learning with early elementary. It was noted that collaborative learning days with early elementary teachers are helping to build greater awareness among teachers about play-based learning, and shared understanding between the ECEs and early elementary teachers about pedagogical approaches.

There was variability across both Phase 1 and 2 sites related to behaviour guidance and child management. Some sites indicated that behaviour guidance strategies remain separate between partners and within the school. Other sites noted common approaches in joint programs, development of codes of conduct, and consistency in approach with particular programs/educators such as Nova Scotia Early Childhood Development Intervention Services (NSECDIS) and the Boys and Girls Club.

### ***Partnerships and Collaboration***

All sites have established a Site Management Team (SMT) with representation from a range of partners<sup>4</sup> and also have a community advisory committee to help guide the work of the EYC. Sites described fostering relationships and partnerships through the SMT and community advisory committee. Sites continue to work on expanding the number/range of partnerships (e.g., municipalities, SchoolsPlus, Community Services, Justice, community agencies and groups). A couple of sites noted increasing connections in a larger geographic area (e.g., other counties). Participation from partners was variable across sites, and challenges engaging some partners were discussed. Other challenges identified include the focus on the ELP component which leaves little time to build and support partnerships, and the challenge of sharing information between partners due to privacy legislation. Some sites discussed the need to continue to expand partnerships and a couple noted the importance of continuing to strengthen partnerships with early elementary within the school.

Some sites described coordination of policies with a few organizations, and a couple of sites discussed a shared vision across partners. However, other sites indicated that there is a lack of collaboration related to policy, governance, and decision making. It was noted that there are not necessarily formal processes/structures in terms of governance and policy (e.g., program statements, documented shared vision), however, the “powerful” relationships within the community allow the SMT to collaboratively move early years work forward.

Overall both Phase 1 and 2 sites described coordinating planning processes, and as previously described, some sites discussed joint planning with partners to offer family supports and services. Some sites noted that joint planning was not consistent and/or

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix C: EYC Site and Provincial Report Template, which includes listed partners for each site.

occurred with just a few partners. A few sites noted that greater support from school administration was needed to facilitate greater connection, planning and programming with Grade Primary. Some sites indicated partners are reviewing and using data to help identify gaps in programs/services and to plan. This includes ECERS, Ages and Stages, literacy, and NSECDIS data.

There was variability in terms of coordination related to intake, registration and tracking. Some sites indicated that there is cooperation with reviewing of information (e.g., usage patterns), but there is not a common intake protocol for joint activities. It was noted that a common intake protocol across partners may not be realistic, although ELP children are integrated within the school registration and tracking system (PowerSchool) for all sites. A few sites indicated a common intake protocol for some programs but noted that this is not used consistently by all partners and that issues related to privacy/confidentiality are challenges to a common intake protocol.

Both Phase 1 and 2 sites indicated that monitoring program quality is generally individual to each partner with cooperation among some partners to review one another's tools. It was noted that integration in terms of program monitoring and evaluation may be unrealistic as organizations have different requirements, and provincial policy or system supports would be needed to achieve greater collaboration across organizations.

### ***Awareness and Engagement***

Phase 1 and 2 sites described joint communication strategies including: promoting one another's programs and services (e.g., through social media, the school calendar and bulletin board, school open houses and orientations, and the media); sharing programs at the SMT or through the community advisory committee; linking to other organization's websites; and joint communication activities). Some of the sites noted expansion of joint communication to other programs/organizations in the last year.

Sites discussed coordinating and/or collaborating with partners to engage the community in programs and services (e.g., the community advisory committee working together to identify and address barriers to programs and services for families, discussions among partners to identify needs and gaps in services, developing actions plans to address the gaps, conducting surveys to gather community input). The sites also described coordinating and/or collaborating to link families to services and programs in the community (e.g., Early Intensive Behaviour Intervention Program, Family Resource Centre, Community Health Team, Public Health). Challenges to working collaboratively to engage the community include lack of physical space (loss of a room for family support programs), lack of engagement of some partners due to organizational issues (restructuring), lack of time due to the focus on the ELP.

Generally Phase 1 and 2 sites described coordinating or collaborating to engage families and obtain parent input through various mechanisms including: the community advisory

committee; participation of parents on the SMT; gathering parent/family input informally using social media, surveys, suggestions boxes, message boards, one on one or group meetings; orientations to the EYC; the EYC attending school events; and linking the EYC to the School Advisory Committee and Home and School associations.

### ***Building Capacity***

There was variability in terms of collaborating to support staff development among Phase 1 sites, with greater consistency across Phase 2 sites. Some sites described joint learning opportunities between partners as well as with other school staff such as primary teachers (e.g., Collaborative Learning Days; school professional development; PATH training with ECEs and Family Resource Centre staff; Loose Parts for ECEs, teachers, support workers and community workers). A few sites indicated that professional development is on the agenda for discussion at SMT meetings and some sites indicated they are hoping to expand joint professional development next year.

There is less coordination in human resource (HR) policies and practices, although a few EYCs described reviewing and sharing policies (e.g., sharing HR policies with a community partner so that staff can be shared, sharing human resources between the ELP and childcare, reviewing roles of staff, partnering to hire staff). Overall, Phase 1 sites reported greater coordination with partners in defining and sharing team roles with one site describing “swapping” of roles within the team, and greater comfort sharing responsibilities. Phase 2 sites noted some sharing and review of roles and responsibilities but there has not been coordination of roles or responsibilities between partners. As found in previous evaluations, the sites generally indicated that common HR policies and practices across organizations is not feasible due to the complexities of various unions and HR system issues.

Most sites discussed working with partners to seek out additional resources to support expanded activities and address gaps in services. In addition, partners are contributing resources when they deliver joint programs or services.

## Section 2: How are services at EYCs coming together?

As previously described, the EYC model in Nova Scotia consists of three components including the early learning program (ELP), family services and supports, and onsite regulated childcare. The intent of the model is to bring together programs and services for families to help ensure access to quality early learning and childcare options in the community. Ensuring families have seamless access to these components of the EYC model requires different sectors and partners to find ways of working together.

As found in previous evaluations, the focus for all EYCs (both Phase 1 and 2 sites) continued to be on implementation of the ELP over the last year. Over the last 2 to 3 years, some EYCs have expanded the reach of the ELP and, overall, improved the quality of programming. Enrolment has increased over time among most sites and attendance has also remained high with average participation in the last year ranging from 71% to 99% with a mean of 87% and median of 90%. The ECERS-3 findings reveal ongoing improvement of program quality across phases and sites. Combined Phase 1 and Phase 2 Average Total Score rate as “good” at Year 3 data collection. Annual increases across most subscale scores reflect consistent progress and alignment of values, content, activities and general environmental conditions for learning within the ELPs. The inclusion of the ECERS-3 as an evaluation tool provided valuable information not only around program quality but also to inform investment in early learning environments as they are adapted in Nova Scotia.

Over the last year, all EYCs offered family resources and supports (the second component of the EYC model), with the majority collaborating with partners such as Family Resource Centres to offer joint programs. However, based on other markers of integration, partners were still tending to function more independently, thereby not yet able to offer the seamless services that the model strives for. For example, few EYCs reported a shared philosophy between partners in terms of curriculum, and although educators (from partner organizations, the ELP, and early elementary) were coordinating to organize learning environments, differences in pedagogical approaches remained. This is a similar finding from Year 2 (2015 to 2016), which identified play-based learning as a new approach for many including some ECEs, partners and early elementary teachers. The findings from this Year 3 evaluation reveal that some gains have been made in building awareness and understanding of play-based learning through shared professional development and learning opportunities. However, continued capacity development with partners is required to further enhance competencies in play-based learning approaches. Previously identified as an important support to foster understanding, knowledge and skills in play-based learning, the Nova Scotia Early Learning Curriculum Framework is being piloted in two EYCs. This government policy framework will be disseminated across the province after piloting and will be an important enabler to effective implementation of pre-primary programming.

As noted above, all EYCs were coordinating and/or collaborating with partners to offer family resources and supports (although the range and number of programs was variable across sites). Engagement of partners was slowed in Year 3 which limited EYCs ability to support other forms of partnership development. Sites continued to coordinate to engage families and communities, although in the last year just two sites made progress in terms of greater collaboration in this area. While EYCs and partners value working together to help ensure alignment of early learning supports and services, the feasibility of integration, which would include the establishment of a common program for children from 0 to 8 years of age and their families was questioned by most EYCs. Just two sites had established onsite regulated childcare – the third component of the model. Challenges related to government policies (e.g., requirements for licensing for regulated childcare), together with a lack of interest and need in some communities due to seasonal work and the cost of child care remain challenges to implementation of this element of the model. Given the community development approach underlying the EYC model, it may be that the establishment of onsite regulated childcare is neither realistic nor important in some communities. What is important is that local child care and early learning program partners work together to ensure accessible quality options for families. As was noted in last year’s evaluation – development of minimum implementation standards related to the core components of the model (what is expected and how it is to be operationalized) would help to provide consistency and accountability. This represents a systems-level support or enabler to help ensure a balance between standardization and recognition of local context.

The Early Childhood Development Consultants (ECDCs) provided support to sites however their connections with sites varied. Most ECDCs felt welcomed at the EYC however some felt underutilized and felt sites could reach out more. Other ECDCs felt very involved with their sites through regular support, frequent visits, and regular presence at meetings. Support from the ECDCs (or someone similar) may be important to enhance play-based learning and pedagogical approaches at EYCs.

## Section 3: What is the impact on children and families?

Previous research has shown that similar integrated service delivery models have the potential to support families and child development (McCain, Mustard, & Shanker, 2007; Patel, Corter, Pelletier, & Bertrand, 2016). More specifically, an outcome of the EYC was *strengthened family capacity* to support their children during the early years, including their involvement in their child’s learning, confidence with parenting, ability to access supports for their child and connections with other families. Improved *outcomes for children* can be determined by consistent and long-term changes in childhood development among the child population of the EYCs.

### ELP Attendance and Participation

Understanding the *dose* (or exposure) to the EYC model is important in being able to understand its future impact on child development (Patel et al., 2016). A total of 209 children were enrolled in the ELP across the eight sites for the 2015/2016 (Year 3) school year. The average attendance for the ELP across seven sites where data were available was 87%<sup>5</sup>.

- A total of 106 children were enrolled in the ELP for Phase 1 sites in Year 3, with a range of 14 to 44 children per site. Average participation in the ELP was 88% for Phase 1 sites in Year 3.
- A total of 103 children were enrolled in the ELP for Phase 2 sites in Year 3, with a range of 19 to 37 children per site. Average participation in the ELP was 86% for Phase 2 sites in Year 3.

For Phase 1 sites, an overall increase in ELP enrollment occurred at all four sites across Years 1 to 3. Average participation was 89.7% for Phase 1 sites across Years 1 to 3. Phase 2 sites had an overall increase in ELP enrollment at three of the four sites across Years 1 to 3. At one Phase 2 site, ELP enrollment decreased for Year 3 (2016 - 2017). Average participation was 89.2% for Phase 2 sites across Year 1 to Year 3.

Phase	Early Year Centre	2014-15		2015-16		2016-17 Sep 1 2016 – Jul 21 2017	
		ELP enrollment	Average % participation	ELP enrollment	Average % participation	ELP enrollment	Average % participation
I	East Antigonish	13	84	12	94	25	93
I	Jubilee	27	100	38	87	44	N/A
I	Rockingstone Heights*	9	86	10	86	14	80

<sup>5</sup> For Year 3, attendance data was incomplete for one site.

	Early Year Centre	2014-15		2015-16		2016-17 Sep 1 2016 – Jul 21 2017	
Phase		ELP enrollment	Average % participation	ELP enrollment	Average % participation	ELP enrollment	Average % participation
I	Yarmouth Central	15	100	18	87	23	90
II	Beau-Port*	22	99	31	94	19	99
II	Clark Rutherford	N/A	N/A	18	80	20	71
II	New Germany	N/A	N/A	17	89	27	82
II	West Highlands	N/A	N/A	13	95	37	94

Attendance information from the support programs and services continues to be reported differently for each site, which makes it challenging to evaluate and interpret. Overall, all sites reported offering a variety of programs with community partners, with attendance varying across all programs and sites (Appendix E). Several sites provided comprehensive information on participation in programs by individual families which could be used in the future to understand the *dose* of the EYC model.

To be able to evaluate the dose of the EYC model as it relates to child development, the Offord Centre for Child Studies combined data from the 2013 and 2015 EDI results for the 8 EYC catchment areas. This created a baseline of the developmental health status of children during this timeframe that we will thus be able to use in future as a comparison for children who attended the 8 EYCs<sup>6</sup>. Data from two years was combined to provide a larger sample size than would otherwise be available, given the small number of children residing in the catchment area of the EYC sites. Because the EDI is completed on children in Grade Primary, we can be confident that the 2013 and 2015 combined data reflects child development before any exposure to the EYC model (ie., the baseline). When the EDI is repeated in subsequent years, it will include children who attended the EYCs. Then we will be able to assess whether exposure to the EYC model leads to improved EDI scores for children in the catchment area.

### **Perceived impacts on children and families**

While we cannot directly measure the impact of the EYCs on children and families in the Year 3 evaluation, members of the SMT reflected on this question during the Indicators of Change session. SMT members perceived that the EYCs had better relationships with families, allowing them to pass along relevant information and connect families to services and supports in the community. Phase 1 sites reported benefiting from relationships with outside supports and partners (e.g. Early Intervention, Boys and Girls

<sup>6</sup> See, Offord Centre for Child Studies. (2017). *Nova Scotia Early Years Centres: Early Development Instrument Baselines*. Internal Document.



Clubs), although the different processes used by partners to support and measure progress in child development were identified as limitations. Some Phase 2 sites also reported joint programs/initiatives that support child development (e.g. speech pathologist screenings, literacy programs, collaborative learning time) as well resources and support provided by external community partners.

SMT members felt that the EYCs supported the transition to school for children who attended. For phase 1 sites, the transition from the ELP to early elementary was supported through communication and knowledge sharing with early elementary teachers. For instance, at some Phase 1 sites, ECEs and teachers discussed the progress of specific children and collaborated on transition day activities. Phase 1 sites reported being able to connect with early elementary to varying degrees. This was felt to be challenging if there were different understandings about child development between the EYC and the school staff. Phase 2 sites also supported the transition from ELP to early elementary through similar means, e.g., from portfolio binders or progress reports, although this information was not always fully integrated across programs at each site.

Some SMT members reported observing impacts related to greater capacity among families and enhanced child development. Parents were perceived to feel more comfortable coming into the EYC to ask for support and SMTs felt that they could better identify needs of families and connect with them earlier. For example, one SMT reported they now had a better idea of what families needed, resulting in greater uptake of community services. Another SMT noted that there were more opportunities for families to participate and connect with other families, allowing them to pursue activities that met their needs and interests. Some SMTs also perceived that children's needs were being met through the EYC and that they were developing important life and learning skills. Further, qualitative data from all three years of the evaluation reveals that the ELP has helped to improve transitions to and readiness for Grade Primary among children and families. This is an important to note given the recent investment in a universal Pre-primary Program. The findings from the EYC evaluation reveal that enablers to successful implementation of pre-primary programming will be investment in capacity building and tools such as the Early Learning Curriculum Framework and support from the EDCs.

Despite the reported positive impacts on children and families, SMTs also reflected on persisting challenges that may prevent the impacts from being fully realized and influenced the overall climate within the centres. Further, as noted in the previous section, administrative processes, such as the lack of a common intake form or concerns regarding the sharing of data across different sectors, were viewed as preventing the EYCs from tailoring programs and services to meet the needs of families and children.

It is important to consider that the above reflections of the SMT may not accurately reflect the experiences of all families participating in the EYCs. Although the Year 2 evaluation reported positive impacts from families accessing the EYCs, there is a gap in our understanding of how the EYCs are affecting families that are not accessing the EYCs. The

literature suggest that various barriers (e.g., poverty, employment demands, parental health problems, and limited time and/or resources) can make it difficult for families to access supports for early childhood and these are particularly relevant for those experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage (Moore, McDonald, Carlon, & O'Rourke, 2015). Therefore, it will be critically important to further understand the experiences of marginalized families and children to ensure the EYCs are responsive their needs.

## Section 4: Conclusions

This year 3 evaluation represents the mid-point of the evaluation of the EYC model in Nova Scotia and sought to assess how schools, school boards and their partners are developing the EYC model, how services at EYCs are coming together, and how the EYCs are improving outcomes for children and families. From data collected across all three years of the evaluation, it is clear that the components of the EYC model - the ELP, family resources and supports and onsite regulated childcare – have been accomplished across the eight sites in different ways. Allowing the EYC to develop naturally and providing enough flexibility in its development to meet the individual needs of communities has repeatedly been identified as important across sites.

Overall, the ELP has been well implemented across the sites, and has been a core focus since the EYCs were established. Enrollment into the ELP has increased overall, reflecting a high degree of readiness for this component of the model within communities. Capacity to adopt the pedagogical approach of play-based learning is increasing, although understanding of play-based learning is not yet consistent across all stakeholder groups. The quality of the early learning environment is also increasing overall in both phase 1 and 2 sites, demonstrating that investment in this component of the model is working well. The success of the ELP is important considering the current focus of the Department on implementing the Pre-primary Program across the province. This investment provides an opportunity to study an alternative model for delivery of early childhood education in schools.

In contrast, the implementation of family resources and supports has been more variable across sites, which was evidenced by the limited progression toward integration for these components and has been a consistent finding throughout the evaluation. The evaluation has identified challenges that may have influenced the implementation of this component. One is the limited capacity of EYC ECEs to build partnerships, given their primary role in establishing and delivering the ELP. Although the ECEs were originally envisioned to have a role in building partnerships across the community, this expectation may be unrealistic.

Capacity has also been an issue for school staff, who were expected to build connections with a new group of partners as a result of the EYC model being implemented in their school. This seemed to be easier in some schools than others and leadership appeared to be a key factor in its success. Partnership development was limited, if not stalled, in 2016-17 for many schools. This stalled progress of EYCs points to the model still being very school driven. If true integration was evolving then perhaps work could have continued with community partners.

In addition, variations in services available in different areas served by the EYCs, and system level structures that hinder partnership working, challenged this component of

the model. System level structures identified included the lack of a common intake form across service providers, and different organisational processes across systems that were not originally designed to work together (e.g., health, education, community services).

The third component of the model, onsite regulated childcare, has also been a consistent challenge over the course of the evaluation, reflecting the variable contexts of the communities in which the EYCs are situated. In some sites, this component of the model has not been implemented at all, in others, different childcare configurations have been established, including family-based day-care or unregulated childcare options, as noted in section 1 of this report.

In addition to the above, there continue to be challenges with the overall integration of the EYC within the school day, such as the variable hours of operation, differing levels of understanding of the EYC model, play-based learning and varying degrees of buy-in across the school system. Together, these challenges suggest limited readiness and capacity among sites to adopt the model as originally envisioned. The implementation may have been further challenged in sites where links between schools and community partners were not already in existence.

Data systems for registration and tracking attendance for family supports programs as well as regulated child care continue to be a challenge. Early learning programs are tracked in PowerSchool and data is readily available and reliable. Tracking participation in other programs is especially important given the desire to study the impact of EYCs on later development of children.

Moving forward with year 4 of the EYC evaluation, it will be important to continue to monitor its implementation as well as the impact of the EYC model on child development outcomes using the established baseline developed as part of this year 3 evaluation. As the ELPs transition into the pre-primary model, alongside the implementation of new pre-primary programs across the province, it will be important to continue to monitor how childcare and family resources and supports evolve. The implementation of the Pre-primary Program also provides a unique opportunity to observe if these components evolve naturally as a result of the needs expressed by families across NS communities.

## Appendix A: Organization of short-term and intermediate outcomes with the evaluation report components

Evaluation Themes	Short-Term Outcomes	Intermediate outcomes
Child Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved developmental outcomes for children</li> <li>- Strengthened capacity of family members to support their children in the early years</li> </ul>	
Early Years Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Integrated infrastructure to support improved access to quality early years programs and services</li> </ul>	
Collaboration and Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase collaboration between EYC staff, service providers and other partners to deliver programs and services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved quality of early learning and childcare options in the community for children and their families</li> </ul>
Awareness and Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EYC programs and services based on local community context</li> <li>- Increased participation of families and communities in EYC programs and services</li> <li>- Increased community awareness of EYC programs</li> <li>- Increased awareness and understanding of the EYC model among EYC staff, service providers, other partners and families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved access to quality early learning and childcare options in the community for children and families</li> <li>- Sustainable EYC model for delivering integrated early years programs and services</li> </ul>
Building Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased knowledge and skills among EYC staff, service providers and other partners to support the EYC model</li> <li>- Increased capacity (knowledge, skills, confidence) among EYCs to support program development and implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased recognition among the public of the role and value of Early Childhood Educators</li> <li>Improved outcomes for children</li> </ul>

## Appendix B: Methods and Limitations

**Indicators of Change:** The Indicators of Change (IOC) tool, developed by the Toronto First Duty project (TFD) was adapted for the Nova Scotia context for this evaluation. IOC is a self/assisted assessment tool for reviewing and benchmarking progress towards integration of services and can assist in planning. Each indicator has benchmarks from 1 to 5 that provide a quantitative measure related to integration: 1. community co-location; 2. cooperation; 3. coordination; 4. collaboration; and 5. integration. In the evaluation, the IOC was emailed to sites for completion online by Site Management Team<sup>7</sup> members as well as being completed in a facilitated session at each site. In addition, a form that included the three key questions was completed with each Site Management Team at the same time as the IOC tool was completed.

**Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-3):** The third edition of *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale*, or ECERS-3 is a revision of the widely used and researched *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale*, Revised Edition (1998), designed to assess the overall quality of early childhood programs<sup>8</sup>. This comprehensive assessment tool measures environmental factors as well as teacher-child interactions that affect the broad developmental needs of young children. It also emphasizes the role of the teacher in creating an environment conducive to developmental gains. The scale provides a Total Environment Rating Score as well as subscale scores in each of six areas: Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Language and Literacy, Learning Activities, Interaction and Program Structure. Two trained ECERS-3 administrators visited the four Phase 1 sites in May 2015 (Year 1) and May 2016 (Year 2) and May 2017 (Year 3) to conduct the ECERS-3 in the ELP. In addition, the four Phase 2 sites were visited in December 2015 (Year 1; a different date selected to perform this measure as close to the date that the sites were established) and November/December 2016. The reported scores correspond to the following scale: 1 (inadequate) 3 (minimal) 4 (adequate) 5 (good) 7 (excellent). The baseline measure of the quality of the learning environment, from ECERS-3, provides a valid and reliable measure of program quality, and thus quality experience for children.

**Early Development Instrument (EDI):** The EDI is a population-level tool, which is implemented for children in Grade Primary that measures developmental change or trends in populations of children by geography. Developed at the Offord Centre for Child Studies at McMaster University, the EDI assesses developmental health across five

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<sup>7</sup> Each EYC has a Site Management Team comprised of the participating school and school board staff (principal, ECEs and School Board lead), SchoolsPlus, Early Childhood Development Consultants (Department), developmental interventionists (Nova Scotia Early Childhood Development Intervention Services), community partners (other government departments, not-for-profit) and community advisors manage each EYC.

<sup>8</sup> Andersson, M. (1999). The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) as a tool in evaluating and improving quality in preschools. *Studies in Educational Sciences*, 19.

domains: Physical Health & Well-Being, Social Competence, Emotional Maturity, Language & Cognitive Development, and Communication Skills & General Knowledge. In Nova Scotia, the EDI has been implemented across the province in 2013 and 2015 and in schools with an EYC in 2016. A baseline for each site was developed using the 2013, 2015 and 2016 EDI results.

**Program Participation:** Attendance for the Early Learning Program was recorded through PowerSchool, an internet-based system used province-wide that allows teachers and school administration to manage student attendance. Templates for recording attendance at programs within the EYCs were provided by the Department. All EYCs were responsible for collecting information on family/child attendance across all programs and services offered throughout the year. Data from the Statistics Canada Census of Canada, 2016, was mapped to catchment areas provided by each EYC site to develop an estimate of the number of eligible children within each catchment area.

**Early Childhood Development Consultant (ECDC) Focus Group:** A focus group was conducted with ECDCs, who provide expertise and specialized consultation in planning, development, and implementation of early childhood development programs and initiatives supported by the Department. An interview guide was used to help guide the discussion and collect information based on the three key questions for the evaluation.

**EYC Site and Provincial Report Template:** A site report template was provided by the Department in the Project Charter to outline characteristics to be collected from all sites. These templates were sent to each EYC's lead(s) to be completed. A template for the provincial report was also developed by the Evaluation Team and completed by the Department.

**Limitations:**

- There are limitations with the Indicators of Change tool, as this was developed primarily as a planning tool not as an evaluation tool. Therefore, using it for comparative analysis without adequate validation is a moderate risk. In addition, the time taken to complete the tool may preclude a fulsome discussion to address all aspects of the key questions. This risk will be moderate to high.
- There are limitations with participation data as sites are not collecting participation in programs and services consistently or completely. A subcommittee has been established with representation from DEECD, the Evaluation Team and EYCs to develop an effective tool to support data collection. Ongoing challenges for data collection include the time it takes to gather the data is burdensome for sites, and some partners as well as parents

do not wish to provide the required information for privacy reasons. This risk will be moderate to high.

- There are limitations with the data methods to be able to assess how EYCs are improving outcomes for children and families. This risk will be moderate to high.



## Appendix C: EYC Site and Provincial Report Template

Phase 1 Sites (blue) and Phase 2 sites (red).

EYC	PHASE 1 SITE	PHASE 1 SITE	PHASE 1 SITE	PHASE 1 SITE
	East Antigonish	Jubilee	Rockingstone Heights	Yarmouth Central
<b>Number of ECEs in EYC</b>	3	3	5	3
<b>ELP status</b>	9:00AM-2:00PM  1 classroom	8:30AM-11:30 AM and 12:30PM-3:30PM (Two half day sessions)  1 classroom	8:50AM-2:00PM  1 classroom	8:00AM-2:00PM  1 classroom
<b>No. of Children in ELP</b>	27	49	19	24
<b>Family Resources &amp; Supports - Status</b>	<p>Family Resource Room offers a variety of programming in collaboration with community partners including positive parenting programs, play groups, and drop-in health services.</p> <p>Partnerships include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family Resource Centre</li> <li>• NSECDIS</li> <li>• Public Health</li> <li>• Library</li> </ul> <p>Examples of programs:</p>	<p>Cape Breton Family Place Resource Centre provides programming and services in collaboration with community partners including playgroups, parenting education, family support groups, and a range of print materials for families about services and supports in the area.</p> <p>Partnerships include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NSECDIS</li> <li>• Pediatrician</li> <li>• Family Resource Centre</li> <li>• Family Services of Eastern NS</li> </ul>	<p>Family support “classroom” provides a variety of programming in collaboration with community partners including drop-ins for families and infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.</p> <p>Partnerships include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Years Junior Mentorship program</li> <li>• Dalhousie Family Medicine</li> <li>• Public Health Nurse on-site</li> <li>• SchoolsPlus</li> <li>• NSECDIS</li> <li>• Community Health Team</li> <li>• IWK Community Navigators</li> </ul>	<p>Community Resource Room provides a variety of programming in collaboration with community partners including support groups.</p> <p>Partnerships include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NSECDIS</li> <li>• Family Resource Centre</li> <li>• Recreation</li> <li>• Women’s Centre</li> </ul> <p>Examples of programs:</p>

EYC	PHASE 1 SITE	PHASE 1 SITE	PHASE 1 SITE	PHASE 1 SITE
	East Antigonish	Jubilee	Rockingstone Heights	Yarmouth Central
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive Parenting</li> <li>• Storytime for parents and children</li> <li>• Music, games and physical activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NSHA</li> <li>• NSHSC</li> </ul> <p>Examples of programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play group</li> <li>• Parenting education and support group</li> <li>• Incredible years</li> <li>• Parent 'n Tot Developmental Intervention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eastern Chebucto Hub Organization – ECHO</li> <li>• Family Resource Centre</li> <li>• Canadian Mental Health Association</li> <li>• Library</li> </ul> <p>Examples of programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coffee Tea and Me</li> <li>• Walking Group</li> <li>• Creative Art</li> <li>• Stories and Songs</li> <li>• New to the Rock</li> <li>• Knitting Circles</li> <li>• Early Risers</li> <li>• Families as Partners</li> <li>• Healing Stitches</li> <li>• Parenting Circle</li> <li>• Infant Massage</li> <li>• First Aid/CPR</li> <li>• Low Cost Cooking / Budget Baking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coffee and Chat</li> <li>• Mothers Group</li> <li>• Strengthening Families 11 week program for families with children ages 7-11 who may be at risk for substance use, depression, violence and school failure</li> </ul>
<b>Onsite Regulated Childcare Status</b>	Onsite, unregulated before and after school childcare (ages 4-10)	No onsite regulated childcare Four offsite family homes providing home care through licensed Family Home Agency CB Family Place Resource Centre is in the process of becoming licensed Family Home Childcare Agency so services will be co-located at EYC	No onsite regulated childcare  Child Care Needs Assessment completed in June 2015.	Onsite, regulated before school, after school and full day childcare to children in ELP and students grades P-2 in partnership with Boys and Girls Club Successfully lowered program fees for 2016-2017 school year

EYC	PHASE 1 SITE	PHASE 1 SITE	PHASE 1 SITE	PHASE 1 SITE
	East Antigonish	Jubilee	Rockingstone Heights	Yarmouth Central
<b>Formal Partnership Agreements (e.g. MOUs, Charters, etc.)</b>	None	3 <sup>rd</sup> party agreement with Cape Breton Family Place Resource Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Health</li> <li>Dalhousie Family Medicine</li> <li>Eastern Chebucto Hub Organization (ECHO)</li> <li>In progress: Dalhousie Dentistry</li> </ul>	Partnership with (YMCA) Boys and Girls Club to provide regulated child care
<b>Site Management Team Representation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principal</li> <li>Vice-Principal</li> <li>Early Childhood Development Consultant</li> <li>School Board Lead (Coordinator of Student Services)</li> <li>Lead ECE</li> <li>Family Resource Centre</li> <li>NSECDIS</li> <li>Public Health – Early Years Manager</li> <li>Paqtn’kek First Nation (Community Rep)</li> <li>Schools Plus</li> <li>Parent</li> <li>Primary Teacher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principal</li> <li>Early Childhood Development Consultant</li> <li>Family Resource Centre</li> <li>Early Years Consultant-Public Health Services, NSHA</li> <li>Schools Plus Facilitator</li> <li>Prevention &amp; Early Intervention Specialist, DCS</li> <li>Coordinator of Elementary Programs CBVRSB</li> <li>NSECDIS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead ECE for Family Support Classroom</li> <li>School Guidance Counsellor</li> <li>Public Health Nurse</li> <li>School Principal</li> <li>Vice Principal</li> <li>HRSB Program Coordinator</li> <li>NSECDIS</li> <li>Early Childhood Development Consultant</li> <li>HRSB School Social Worker</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principal</li> <li>Early Childhood Development Consultant</li> <li>NSCC Coordinator</li> <li>Lead ECE</li> <li>Public Health</li> <li>Coordinator of Programs and Assessments TCRSB</li> <li>NSECDIS</li> <li>School Advisory Council Chair and Parent Representative</li> </ul>
<b>Community Advisory Team Representation (2016/2017)</b>	The North Eastern Network for Children and Youth serves as the community advisory team and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EYC Site Management Team</li> <li>Director of Programs from the school board</li> </ul>	The Cape Breton- Victoria County Advisory Committee serves as the community advisory team and includes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EYC Site Management Team</li> <li>Family Place</li> <li>YMCA</li> </ul>	The ‘Hub’ Committee serves as the community advisory team and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EYC Site Management Team</li> <li>Lead for Early Learning Opportunities</li> <li>SchoolsPlus</li> <li>Dalhousie Family Medicine - Physician</li> </ul>	The Tri-County Early Years Partnership serves as the community advisory team and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EYC Site Management Team</li> <li>NSCC</li> </ul>

EYC	PHASE 1 SITE	PHASE 1 SITE	PHASE 1 SITE	PHASE 1 SITE
	East Antigonish	Jubilee	Rockingstone Heights	Yarmouth Central
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SchoolsPlus</li> <li>Recreation</li> <li>Mental Health</li> <li>Library</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mental Health and Addiction Services</li> <li>SchoolsPlus</li> <li>NSECDIS</li> <li>Municipal Recreation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NSECDIS</li> <li>MSVU School of Psychology</li> <li>Halifax Regional Police</li> <li>HRM Community Development</li> <li>IWK Mental Health &amp; Wellness</li> <li>Metropolitan Regional Housing Authority (Greystone area)</li> <li>Chebucto Connections/ ECHO</li> <li>Family Resource Centre</li> <li>Family SOS</li> <li>Community Health Team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Autism NS</li> <li>Department of Justice</li> <li>Department of Community Services</li> <li>Public Health</li> <li>Kids First Association</li> <li>NSHSC</li> <li>Library</li> </ul>
<b>Summer programming</b>	There is no summer programming. The Early Learning Program will begin one week before P-12 students return to school.	Early Learning Programming continues for July. Community programming at the centre continues throughout the summer.	None	There will be summer programming in August of 2017.

EYC	PHASE 2 SITE	PHASE 2 SITE	PHASE 2 SITE	PHASE 2 SITE
	Clark Rutherford	New Germany	West Highlands	Beau-Port
<b>Number of ECEs in EYC</b>	1 ECE (in training) and 1 P/T Educational Assistant	2	4	2
<b>ELP status</b>	8:00AM-2:15PM 1 classroom	9:00AM-3:00PM 1 classroom	9:00AM-2:45PM 2 classrooms	8:00AM-2:00PM 1 classroom
<b>No. of Children in ELP</b>	19	26	38	19

EYC	PHASE 2 SITE	PHASE 2 SITE	PHASE 2 SITE	PHASE 2 SITE
	Clark Rutherford	New Germany	West Highlands	Beau-Port
<b>Family Supports / Services - Status</b>	Partnerships include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Health</li> <li>SchoolsPlus</li> <li>Family Resource Centre</li> <li>Digby Area Learning Association</li> <li>YMCA</li> <li>Mental Health</li> <li>NSECDIS</li> </ul> Examples of programs offered include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoting Positive Behaviours (8 Week course)</li> <li>Family Literacy night</li> <li>Parent and child play group</li> </ul>	Partnerships include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SchoolsPlus</li> <li>Health Partners</li> </ul> Examples of programs include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play group</li> <li>New Mommies Group</li> <li>Lively Munchkins</li> <li>Cooking classes</li> <li>Summer literacy program</li> <li>Family literacy night</li> </ul>	Partnership include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NSECDIS</li> <li>Hearing &amp; Speech</li> <li>Family Resource Centre</li> <li>West Highlands Parent group</li> <li>SchoolsPlus</li> </ul> Examples of programs offered include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transition to school program</li> <li>Preschool outreach program utilizing play</li> <li>One-time school community events like Easter Extravaganza and Winter Coats for Kids</li> </ul>	Partnerships include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Health</li> <li>SchoolsPlus</li> <li>Family Resource Centre</li> <li>EIBI</li> <li>APSEA</li> </ul> La Pirouette is a pre-existing community and family resource centre located on-site and offers many programs in collaboration with community partners (i.e. prenatal and infant sessions) Examples of programs offered include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Library service (French resources)</li> </ul>
<b>Onsite Regulated Childcare Status</b>	Onsite, unregulated afterschool childcare delivered by YMCA for children participating in ELP Working on licensing childcare	No onsite regulated childcare Onsite regulated childcare was initially established but discontinued	Offsite, regulated after school programming offered by YMCA and partnership with Bright Beginnings Child Care Centre (regulated childcare centre)	<i>La Garderie des Petites Etoiles</i> - onsite, regulated full day, half day, and afterschool programming Established onsite regulated childcare in October 2014 and is under direction of Richmond County Early Childhood Education Association

EYC	PHASE 2 SITE	PHASE 2 SITE	PHASE 2 SITE	PHASE 2 SITE
	Clark Rutherford	New Germany	West Highlands	Beau-Port
<b>Formal Partnership Agreements (e.g. MOUs, Charters, etc.)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal partnership with the Richmond County Early Childhood Education Association</li> </ul>
<b>Site Management Team Representation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal</li> <li>• ECE Program Lead</li> <li>• ECE Partnerships Lead</li> <li>• Early Childhood Development Consultant</li> <li>• SchoolsPlus</li> <li>• School Board Liaison</li> <li>• NSCC Coordinator of Sector</li> <li>• NSECDIS</li> <li>• Parent rep</li> <li>• YMCA</li> <li>• Family Matters</li> <li>• Family Resource Centre</li> <li>• Public Health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal</li> <li>• ECEs</li> <li>• Early Childhood Development Consultant</li> <li>• School Board Lead</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal</li> <li>• ECEs</li> <li>• Early Childhood Development Consultant</li> <li>• School Board Family of Schools Supervisor</li> <li>• CCRSB Early Years Consultant</li> <li>• CCRSB Chignecto Family staff</li> <li>• Family Resource Centre</li> <li>• NSECDIS</li> <li>• SchoolsPlus</li> <li>• YMCA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal</li> <li>• ECEs</li> <li>• Early Childhood Development Consultant</li> <li>• Family Resource Centre</li> <li>• Public Health</li> <li>• CSAP representative</li> </ul>

EYC	PHASE 2 SITE	PHASE 2 SITE	PHASE 2 SITE	PHASE 2 SITE
	Clark Rutherford	New Germany	West Highlands	Beau-Port
<b>Community Advisory Team Representation (2016/2017)</b>	<p>The Schools Plus Advisory Board serves as the community advisory team and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NSECDIS</li> <li>• RCMP</li> <li>• Restorative Justice</li> <li>• Public Health</li> <li>• Mental Health</li> <li>• AVRSB</li> <li>• YMCA</li> <li>• Family Matters</li> <li>• Department of Community Services</li> <li>• Native Council of Nova Scotia</li> <li>• Municipal Recreation</li> <li>• DALA</li> </ul>	<p>South Shore Child and Youth Network serves as the community advisory team and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information not received</li> </ul>	<p>The community advisory committee includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EYC Site Management Team</li> <li>• Cumberland Kids Managers Sub Committee</li> </ul>	<p>The community advisory committee includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EYC Site Management Team</li> <li>• NSECDIS</li> <li>• SchoolsPlus</li> </ul>
<b>Summer programming?</b>	None	EYC will offer ELP program 3 day/week for one month in the summer	None	SchoolsPlus provides programming over the summer

## Appendix D: ECERS-3 Subscales

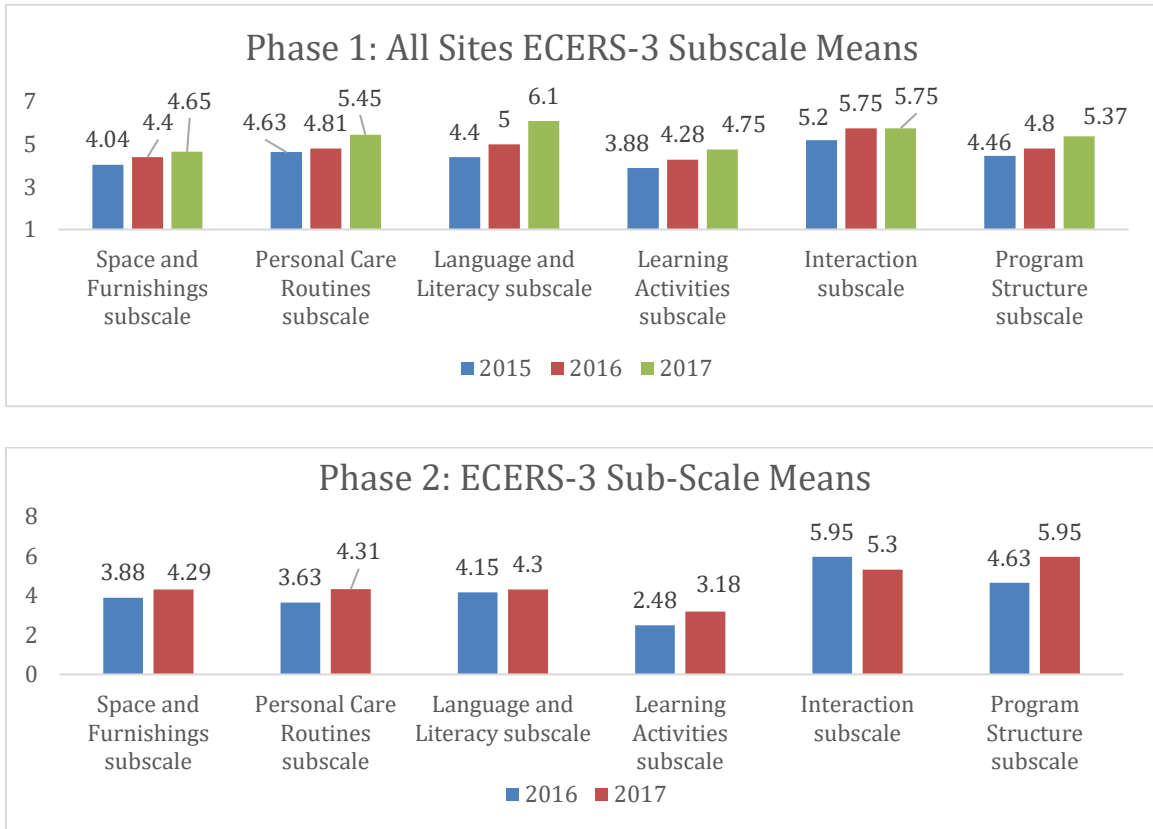


Figure 2. ECERS-3 results by subscale scores for Phase 1 EYC sites (top) and Phase 2 EYC sites (bottom).



## Appendix E: Administrative Data

### Early Years Centre – Additional programs and services information and attendance

\*Comprehensive participation information available for Rockingstone (2014-17), East Antigonish (2015-16) and Jubilee (2016-17)

EYC	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Beau-Port	N/A (Phase 2 site)	N/A	N/A
Clark Rutherford	N/A (Phase 2 site)	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Family Matters night: 5 registered with an average of 1 family attending consistently</li> <li>- Family Literacy Night: An average of 4-6 families a night</li> <li>- Mental Health &amp; SchoolsPlus, -Promoting Positive Behaviours: 5 families</li> <li>- Early Intervention Referrals: 5 children</li> </ul>
East Antigonish	<p>Various family supports mentioned in partnership with other community organizations (e.g., Antigonish Pictou Library, Antigonish Guysborough Early Childhood Intervention Program, Public Health, Kids First Family Resource Centre). Programs through EYC included a Meet and Greet, Parent Education and Outreach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Before and After School Care: Daily program for children 4-10 years old; about 19 children registered.</li> <li>- Positive Parenting: Offered once/week for 7 weeks (2 hours in duration) run by EAECA EYC and Guysborough Kids First; 4-6 families attended.</li> <li>- Storytime for parents and children: Run by Pictou Antigonish Regional Library, 1.5 hours/week during March, April and May; 4-10 families attended.</li> <li>- Music, games and physical activity: Run by Antigonish Kids First, for children up to 4 years old, 1.5 hours per week for 7 weeks.</li> <li>- Drop in with Nurse Practitioner to discuss primary health care: 1 hour/week for 6 weeks.</li> <li>- Parenting program: To provide families with information about areas of parenting that might be challenging, offered once a month for 1.5 hours; poor attendance reported.</li> <li>- Income tax support: no registration for program*</li> </ul>	N/A

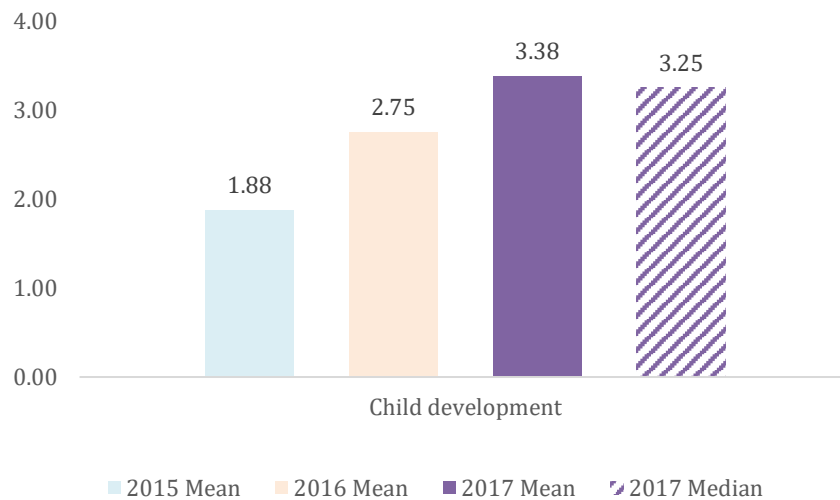
EYC	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Jubilee	Weekly play group and Parent education support group. NS Hearing and Speech offered 4 week 'Toddler Talk' session. Additional parenting education sessions held on different topics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Play Group: about 50 different families participation ranged from 1 session to 27 (average 7.1 sessions)</li> <li>- Parenting Education and Support Group: about 16 different families ranged from 1 to 28 sessions (average 13.4)</li> <li>- Incredible Years: 7 different families ranged from 1 to 12 sessions (average 5.6 sessions)</li> <li>- Playgroup: 2-5 families attended each playgroup (no unique individual information)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Almost 10 different programs offered. Examples included: Play Group, Parent Support, Baby Building Club, Roots of Empathy, Fun Friends, Reading and Rhyme Storytime</li> <li>- Ages and Stages Screening: 48 families registered, attending an average of 2 of 2 sessions</li> <li>- Play Group: 45 families registered, attending an average of 9-10 sessions of 36</li> <li>- Parent Support: 14 families registered, attending an average of 11 of 35 sessions</li> <li>- Baby Building Club: 11 families registered, attending an average of 9 of 34 sessions</li> <li>- Roots of Empathy: 20 families registered, attending an average of 10 of 11 sessions</li> <li>- Little Learners: 9 families registered, attending an average of 3-4 of 4 sessions</li> <li>- Fun Friends: 48 families registered, attending an average of 7 of 9 sessions</li> <li>- Reading and Rhyme Storytime: 12 families registered, attending an average of 3 of 6 sessions</li> <li>- Wee Ones: 20 families registered, attending an average of 3 of 15 sessions</li> <li>- Participation ranged from 9 to 48 families registered, with average attendance at 57%.</li> </ul>
New Germany	N/A (Phase 2 site)	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Playgroup had a total of 17 family members and 22 children participate from Apr 2016 – June 2017.</li> <li>- 13 families who participated in Playgroup, attending between 1 and 19 sessions</li> <li>- 25 Playgroup sessions between September 2016 and June 2017.</li> <li>- Average of 3-4 families attended each session</li> </ul>
Rockingstone Heights	- About 12 different programs offered by the EYC. Examples include: Early Bird explorations Ready, set play &	- About 20 different programs offered by the EYC. Examples include: Coffee, Tea and Me, Walking Group, Creative Art, Stories and songs, Knitting	-Over 25 activities were offered by the EYC. Examples include: Afternoon Drop In, Coffee, Tea, and Me, Budget Baking, Infant Massage, Nature Walk, and Life of a Parent.

<b>EYC</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>
	grow, Coffee, tea and me, Incredible Years parenting, Families as Partners, Healing Stiches. Attendance information not summarized.*	Circles, Gym with ELO, Early Risers, Families as partners. - Each month had between 44 and 96 children attended across all programs with between 0 and 7 new students for a total of 660 child attendance counts overall (visits).*	- Each month had between 28 and 79 children attend across all programs with between 0 and 16 new children for a total of 374 child attendance counts (visits) overall between September 2016 and March 2017. - The programs were attended most by families with infants (164 visits) followed by preschoolers (128 visits) and toddlers (102 visits). *
West Highlands	N/A (Phase 2 site)	- Transition to School: Play-based to allow students to become familiar with school, 16 children attended. - POP-UP (Preschool Outreach Program Utilizing Play): Play-based for parents and preschoolers offered on weekly session for 2 hours; 24 sessions offered with 40 different adults and 50 different children attending. - Easter Extravaganza: School community 2 hour event with 153 children and 110 adults in attendance	- Programs included: Coffee and Conversation, Options to Anger, Social Skills, Parenting an Anxious Child, Friends for Life, Zones of Regulation, Go Girls!, Banjo Kids Social Group, Clothing Exchange, Kool Kats - Other activities: Immunization, Spring Fair, Winter Coats for Kids, Food Distribution, Child Protection, Consultation, Trauma Behaviour Training, Physical Therapy for Child with CP - Two evening sessions for families re: EYC concept in May and June
Yarmouth Central	Programs included 'Ready Set Go' partnership with Parent's Place Family Resource Centre and additional programs for families that were not specific to the early years. Community and family Support Room used by multiple community partners.	- Coffee and Chat: Weekly community outreach program run by Parent's Place from February to April. 7 individuals from 6 different families participated overall. Each person participated in one or two sessions, with the exception of one that attended almost all sessions. - Mothers Group: Offered weekly by the Tri-County Women's Centre. 11 sessions were conducted. 10 different families attended with either one or two members of each family.	- Boys & Girls Regulated Childcare Sep - June: An average of 6 children attended full time and average of 12 children attended part-time. - Strengthening Families Program offered in partnership with Mental Health & Addictions Services March - May had five families participate (7 adults and 6 children).

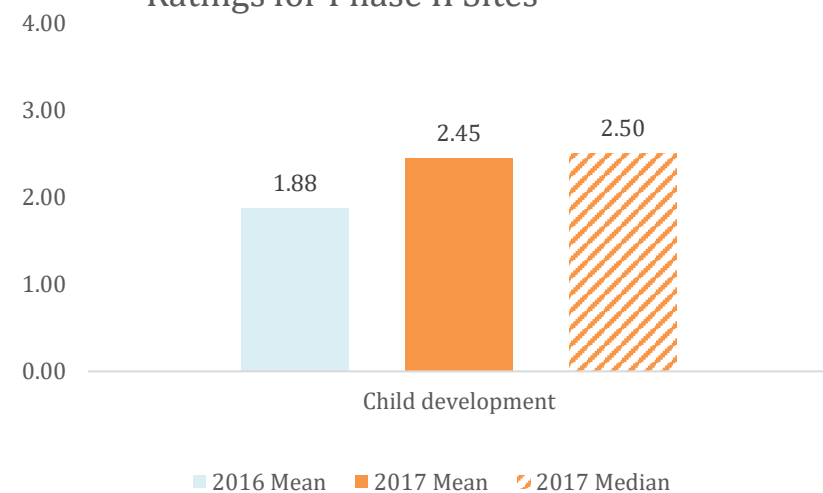
## Appendix F: Indicators of Change

### Child Development

Indicators of Change - Child Development Ratings for Phase I Sites



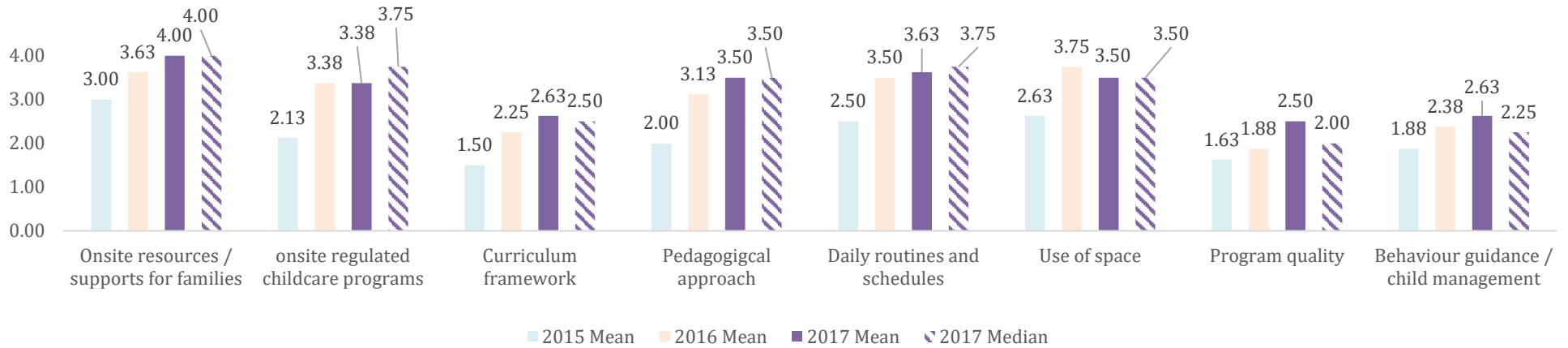
Indicators of Change - Child Development Ratings for Phase II Sites



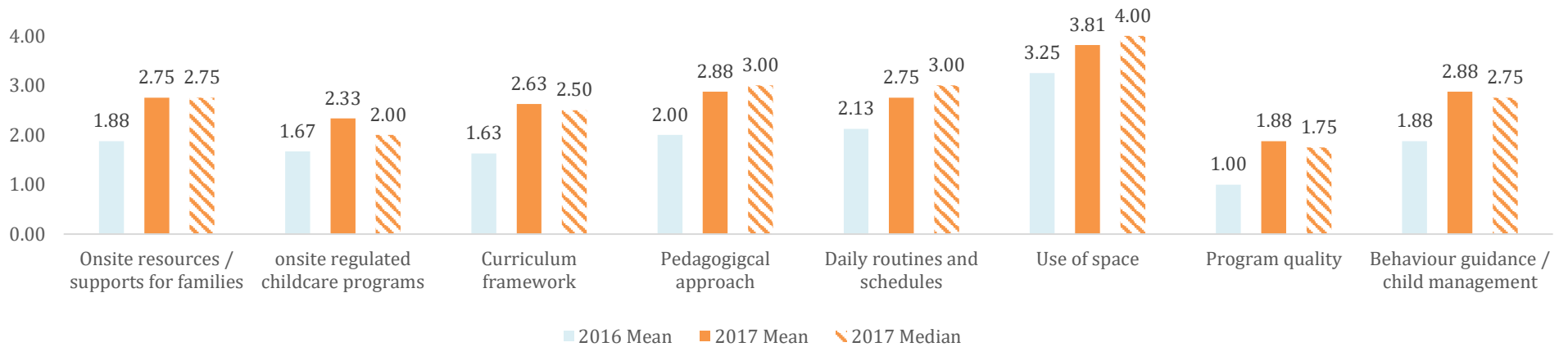
Indicator	Phase 1	Phase 2	Change from Previous
Child Development	Ratings ranged from 2 to 5; mean 3.38; median 3.25	Ratings ranged from 1.8 to 3; mean 2.45; median 2.5	Seven sites progressed and one stayed the same

## Early Years Environment

### Indicators of Change - Early Years Environment Ratings for Phase I Sites



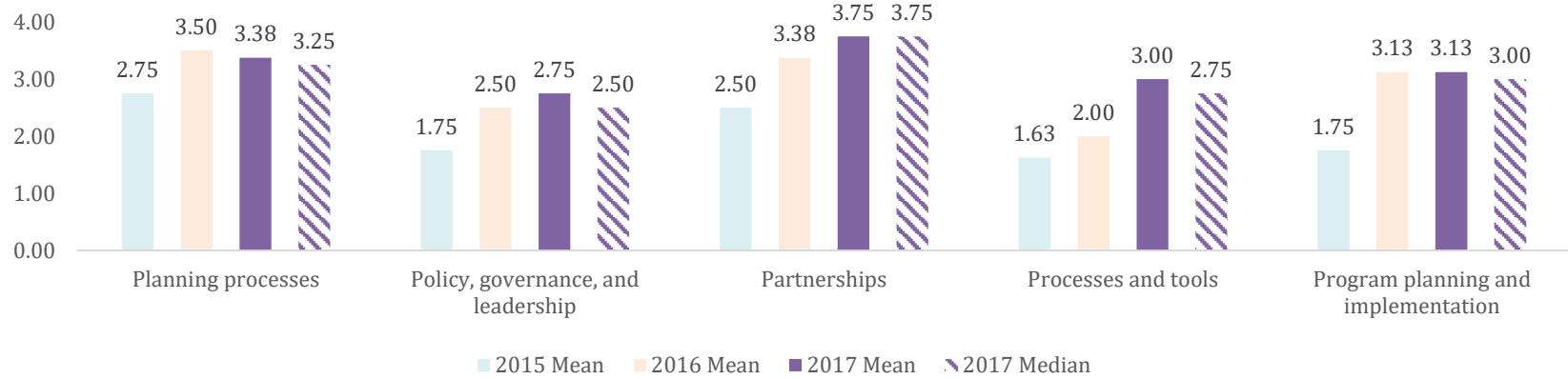
### Indicators of Change - Early Years Environment Ratings for Phase II Sites



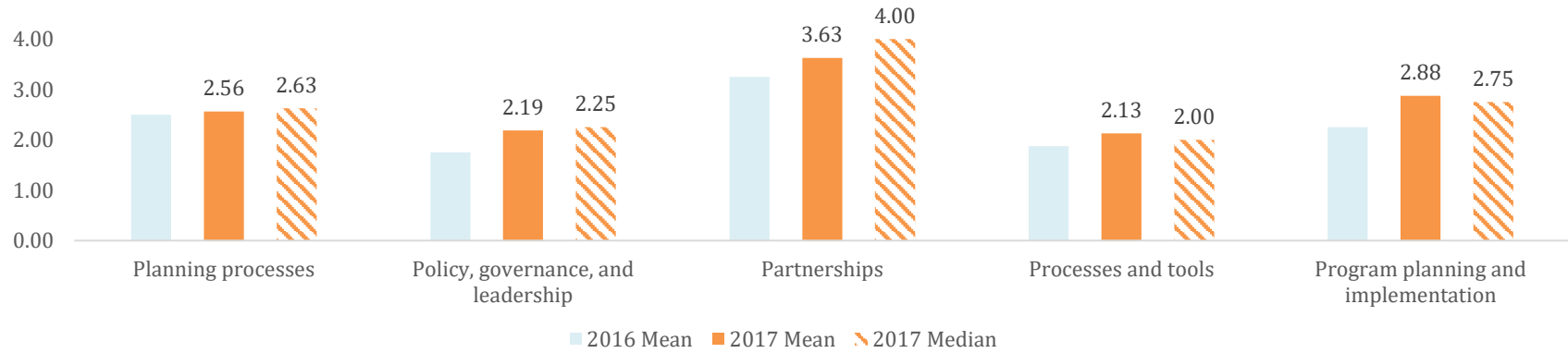
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Phase 1</b>	<b>Phase 2</b>	<b>Change from Previous</b>
Onsite resources / supports for families	<i>Ratings ranged from 3 to 5; mean 4.00; median 4.00</i>	<i>Ratings ranged from 1 to 4.5; mean 2.75; median 2.75</i>	<i>Four sites progressed and four stayed the same</i>
Onsite regulated childcare programs	<i>Ratings ranged from 1 to 4.5; mean 3.38; median 3.75</i>	<i>Ratings ranged from 2 to 3; mean 2.33; median 2.00</i>	<i>Two sites progressed and six stayed the same/declined</i>
Curriculum framework	<i>Ratings ranged from 1 to 4.5; mean 2.63; median 2.50</i>	<i>Ratings ranged from 2 to 3.5; mean 2.63; median 2.50</i>	<i>Five sites progressed and three stayed the same</i>
Pedagogical approach	<i>Ratings ranged from 2.5 to 4.5; mean 3.50; median 3.50</i>	<i>Ratings ranged from 2 to 3.5; mean 2.88; median 3.00</i>	<i>Six sites progressed and two stayed the same/declined</i>
Daily routines and schedules	<i>Ratings ranged from 2 to 5; mean 3.63; median 3.75</i>	<i>Ratings ranged from 2 to 3; mean 2.75; median 3.00</i>	<i>Five sites progressed and three stayed the same</i>
Use of space	<i>Ratings ranged from 2.5 to 4.5; mean 3.50; median 3.50</i>	<i>Ratings ranged from 3 to 4.25; mean 3.81; median 4.00</i>	<i>Four sites progressed and four stayed the same/declined</i>
Program quality	<i>Ratings ranged from 1.5 to 4.5; mean 2.63; median 2.25</i>	<i>Ratings ranged from 1 to 3; mean 1.88; median 1.75</i>	<i>Six sites progressed and two stayed the same</i>
Behaviour guidance / child management	<i>Ratings ranged from 1.5 to 4.5; mean 2.63; median 2.25</i>	<i>Ratings ranged from 2 to 4; mean 2.88; median 2.75</i>	<i>Four sites progressed and four stayed the same</i>

## Partnerships and Collaboration

Indicators of Change - Partnerships and Collaboration  
Ratings for Phase I Sites



Indicators of Change - Partnerships and Collaboration  
Ratings for Phase II Sites

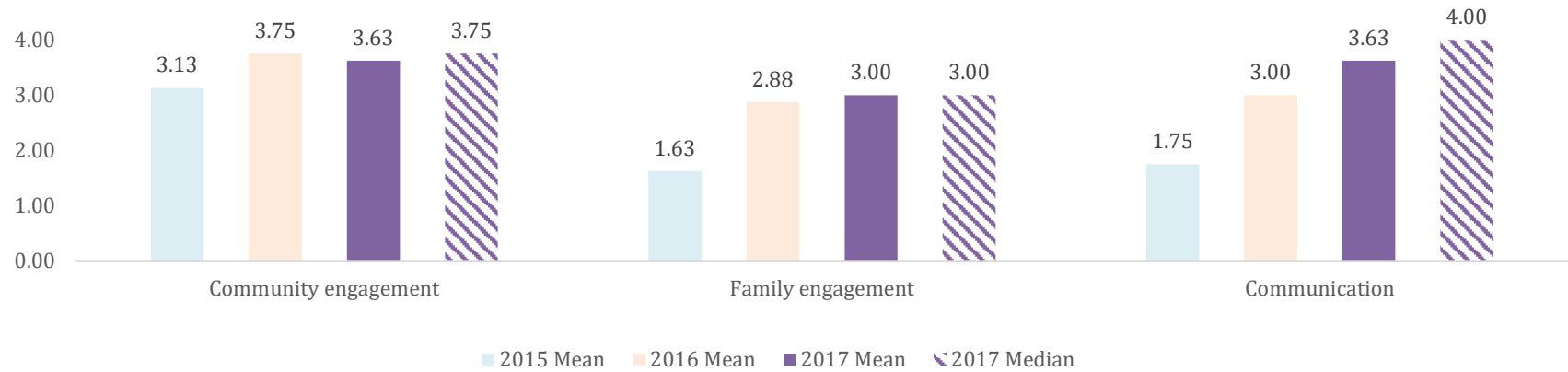


<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Phase 1</b>	<b>Phase 2</b>	<b>Change from Previous</b>
Planning processes	<i>Ratings ranged from 2.5 to 4.5; mean 3.38; median 3.25</i>	<i>Ratings ranged from 1 to 4; mean 2.56; median 2.63</i>	<i>Three sites progressed and five stayed the same/declined</i>
Policy, governance, and leadership	<i>Ratings ranged from 2 to 4; mean 2.75; median 2.50</i>	<i>Ratings ranged from 1.5 to 2.75; mean 2.19; median 2.25</i>	<i>Four sites progressed and four stayed the same</i>
Partnerships	<i>Ratings ranged from 2.5 to 5; mean 3.75; median 3.75</i>	<i>Ratings ranged from 2.5 to 4; mean 3.63; median 4.00</i>	<i>Four sites progressed and four stayed the same</i>
Processes and tools	<i>Ratings ranged from 2 to 4.5; mean 3.00; median 3.00</i>	<i>Ratings ranged from 1 to 3.5; mean 2.13; median 2.00</i>	<i>Five sites progressed and three stayed the same</i>
Program planning and implementation	<i>Ratings ranged from 2 to 4.5; mean 3.13; median 3.00</i>	<i>Ratings ranged from 2 to 4; mean 2.88; median 3.75</i>	<i>Five sites progressed and three stayed the same/declined</i>

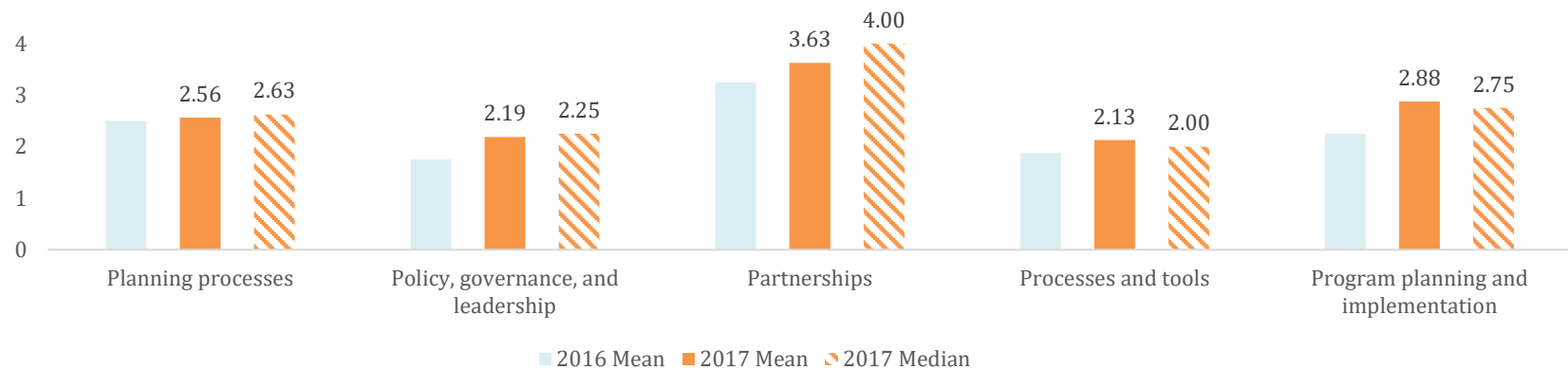


## Awareness and Engagement

Indicators of Change - Awareness and Engagement Ratings for Phase I Sites



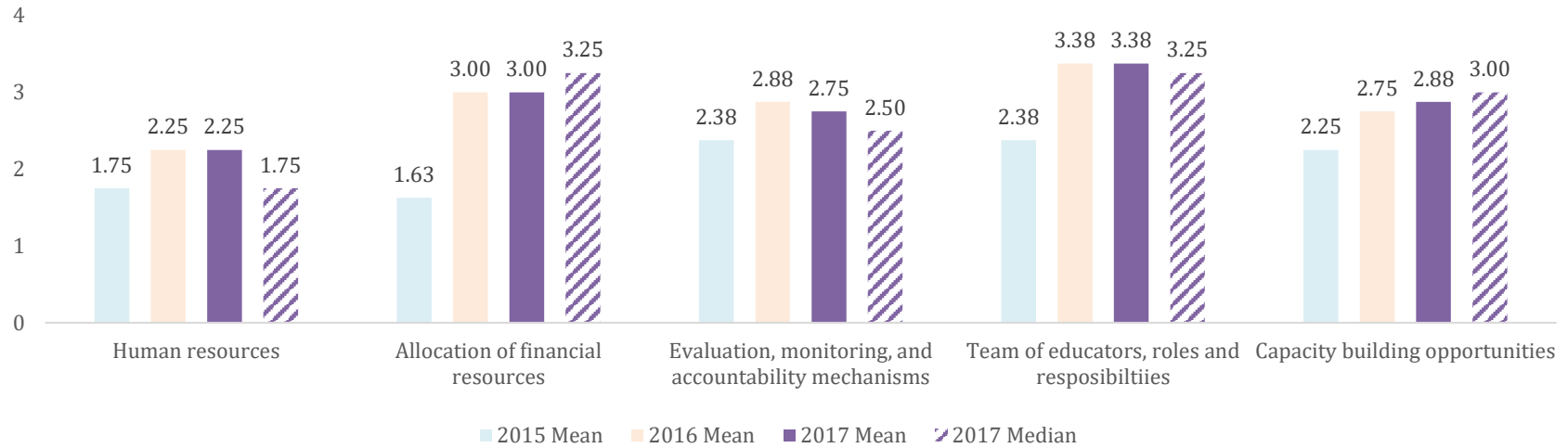
Indicators of Change - Awareness and Engagement Ratings for Phase II Sites



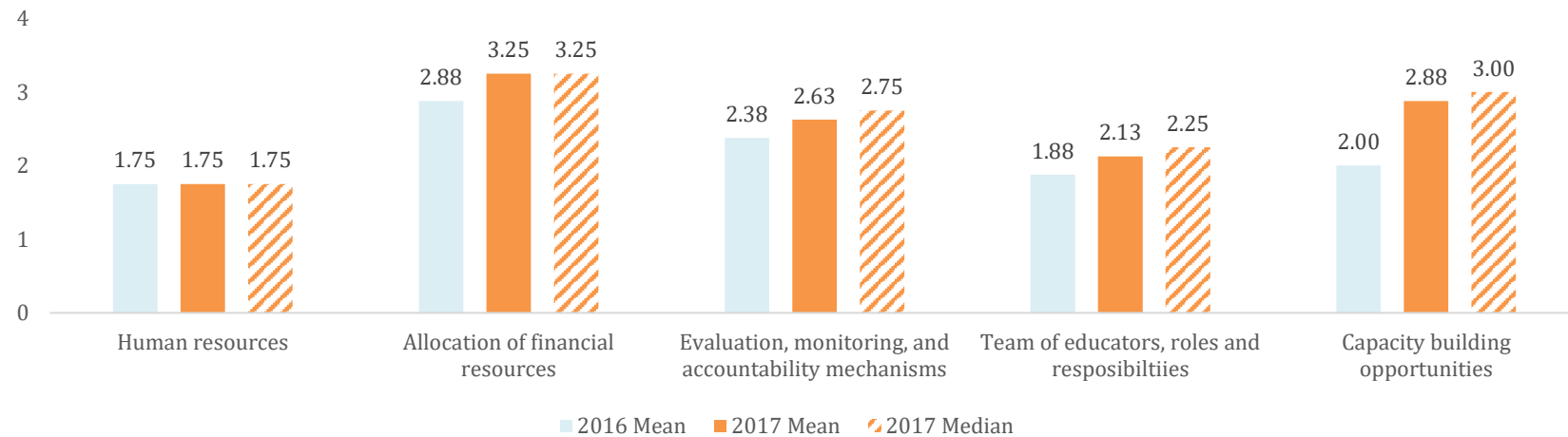
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Phase 1</b>	<b>Phase 2</b>	<b>Change from Previous</b>
Community engagement	<i>Ratings ranged from 2.5 to 4.5; mean 3.63; median 3.75</i>	<i>Ratings ranged from 2 to 4; mean 3.13; median 3.25</i>	<i>Two sites progressed and six stayed the same/declined</i>
Family engagement	<i>Ratings ranged from 1.5 to 4.5; mean 3.00; median 3.00</i>	<i>Ratings ranged from 3 to 3.5; mean 3.13; median 3.00</i>	<i>Two sites progressed and six stayed the same</i>
Communication	<i>Ratings ranged from 2.5 to 4; mean 3.63; median 4.00</i>	<i>Ratings ranged from 2 to 4; mean 2.70; median 2.40</i>	<i>Five sites progressed and three stayed the same</i>

## Building Capacity

### Indicators of Change - Building Capacity Ratings for Phase I Sites



### Indicators of Change - Building Capacity Ratings for Phase II Sites



<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Phase 1</b>	<b>Phase 2</b>	<b>Change from Previous</b>
Human resources	<i>Ratings ranged from 1.5 to 4; mean 2.25; median 1.75</i>	<i>Ratings ranged from 1 to 2.5; mean 1.75; median 1.75</i>	<i>All sites stayed the same</i>
Allocation of financial resources	<i>Ratings ranged from 1 to 4.5; mean 3.00; median 3.25</i>	<i>Ratings ranged from 2.5 to 4; mean 3.25; median 3.25</i>	<i>Four sites progressed and four stayed the same/declined</i>
Evaluation, monitoring, and accountability mechanisms	<i>Ratings ranged from 1 to 5; mean 2.75; median 2.50</i>	<i>Ratings ranged from 2.5 to 3; mean 2.63; median 2.75</i>	<i>Two sites progressed and six stayed the same/declined</i>
Team of educators, roles, and responsibilities	<i>Ratings ranged from 2.5 to 4.5; mean 3.38; median 3.25</i>	<i>Ratings ranged from 1.5 to 2.5; mean 2.13; median 2.25</i>	<i>Two sites progressed and six stayed the same/declined</i>
Capacity building opportunities	<i>Ratings ranged from 1.5 to 4; mean 2.88; median 3.00</i>	<i>Ratings ranged from 2 to 3.5; mean 2.88; median 3.00</i>	<i>Four sites progressed and four stayed the same</i>