

Métis Nation of Ontario

# EARLY LEARNING & CHILD CARE (ELCC)

5-YEAR PROGRAM OVERVIEW  
2019-25

Métis Nation  
of Ontario 

## TIMELINE: MARCH 2019 - MARCH 2025

**March 2019:** The Métis National Council and the Federal Government sign the Métis Early Learning and Child Care Accord, the first federal accord between the Métis and Canada.

**January 2020:** The Métis Early Readers Book Program is launched in partnership with the Dolly Parton Imagination Library.

**February 2020:** The Child Care Subsidy Pilot is launched.

**February 2020:** The Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE) Support Program and the College of Early Childhood Educators (CECE) Reimbursement Program are launched.

**March 2020:** The first Early Learning and Child Care Conference is hosted.

**July 2020:** The Child Care Stipend Program is launched to support families accessing child care while working during the pandemic.

**October 2020:** The Baby Bundle Program is launched.

**December 2020:** The Christmas Program is launched.

**January 2021:** The Extra-Curricular Reimbursement Program is launched.

**March 2021:** The Council Camp Funding Program is launched.

**November 2021:** The first ELCC written book, *The Hunt for the Perfect Métis Christmas Tree*, is released.

**February 2023:** The Early Learning Education Support Advocate Team changes their name to the Early Learning Developmental Resource Consultants.

**May 2023:** The Story Bag Program is launched.

**March 2024:** The Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) initiative reaches Royal Assent and becomes law in Canada.

**June 2024:** The Developmental Supports and Services Program is launched.

**September 2024:** The MNO Education Hub app is released.

**February 2025:** The Book Working Group changes its name to Métis Tales and has released 10 books by this time.

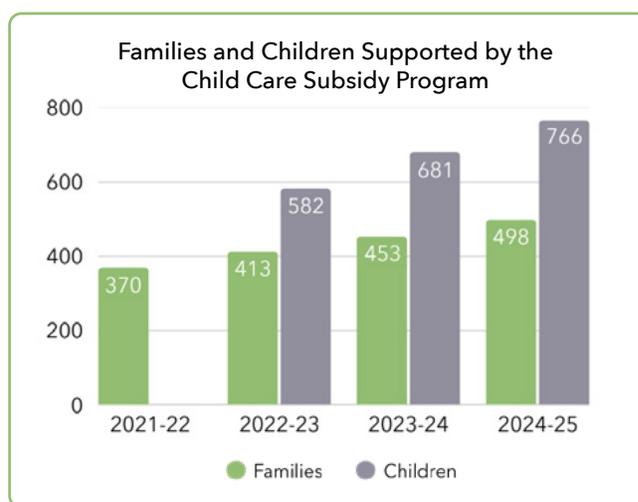
## CHILD CARE SUBSIDY PROGRAM

Launched in January 2020, the Child Care Subsidy Program was the first initiative introduced by the Early Learning and Child Care team. Less than two months after the program's launch, COVID-19 forced the closure of child care centres across the province. This brief pause allowed the team to ensure the program would fulfill citizens' needs, including providing families access to private child care options within their communities. Private child care has remained a vital option for families facing long waitlists, shift work schedules, or limited options in rural and remote areas. Five years on, more than 700 children across the province now benefit from affordable, high-quality child care due to the program.

When child care centres and schools began reopening, the Child Care Subsidy Program supported Métis families by covering child care costs. Importantly, the program does not require applicants to provide a reason related to work or school attendance to receive coverage. The program adopts a wholistic approach when calculating subsidies, considering income and expenses, with no income cap, to ensure all Métis children can access child care that meets their families' needs.

### Key Statistics:

- 370 families accessed the **Child Care Subsidy Program** in the 2021-22 fiscal year, including **275 families** who had 100% of their child care costs supported
- In the 2024-25 fiscal year, the family support team worked with **264 licensed child care centres** across the province and **\$1.5 million in child care support**.



## CHILD CARE STIPEND PROGRAM

The Child Care Stipend Program was introduced in summer 2020, when child care options were limited due to the COVID-19 pandemic. When child care and school

reopened, the team continued supporting families who lacked access to formal child care services, providing up to \$30 per day to assist families. Families benefiting from this program are often on waitlists, live in communities with few or no child care options, work irregular hours such as nights or weekends, and/or require after-school care with limited availability.

### Key Statistics:

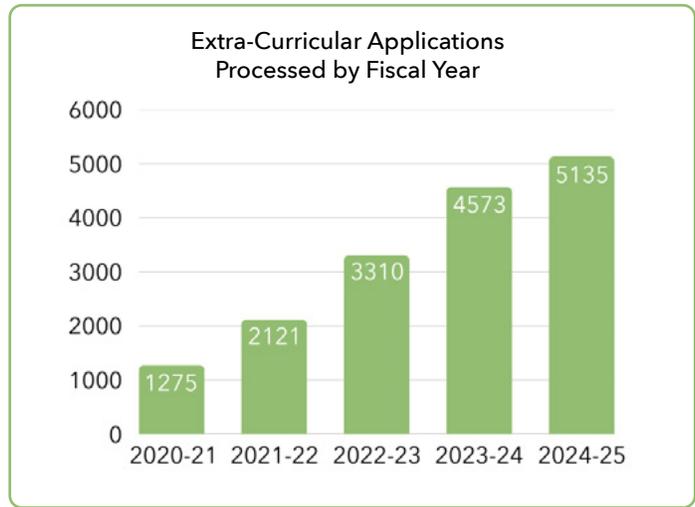
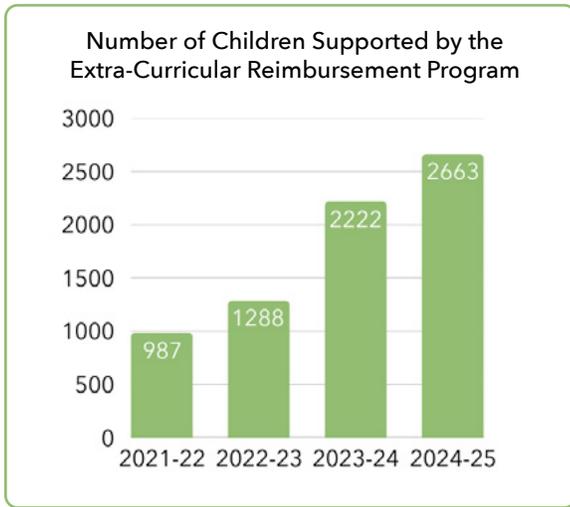
- The **Child Care Stipend Program** has consistently supported around **200 families** annually since it began.
- The program provided **\$475,000 in child care stipend support** during 2024-25.

## EXTRA-CURRICULAR REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

Learning does not end in child care or school environments. Established in 2020, the Extra-Curricular Reimbursement Program provides families with access to financial support for activities and equipment that support their children's mental, physical, and social well-being needs. The program is not limited to sports; it also allows children to explore and learn about the arts, community groups, summer camps, and activities that promote the Métis way of life. While the program initially only supported children aged 0-6 with covering activity fees, it expanded to support children aged 0-12 and with equipment purchases by 2021.

### Key Statistics:

- In 2021-22, the team processed **1,275 applications**. In 2024-25, the team processed **5,135 applications**.
- Since 2021-22, the **Extra-Curricular Reimbursement Program** has supported more than **7,100 children** have received support from the program. More than **2,500 of these children** were supported during 2024-25 alone.
- Hockey, dance, gymnastics, soccer, and swimming lessons continue to be the most popular activities children participate in. Other activities include theatre programs, circus school, diving, skiing, guiding, scouting, and art classes.
- In 2024-25, the MNO provided more than **\$2 million in extra-curricular support**.



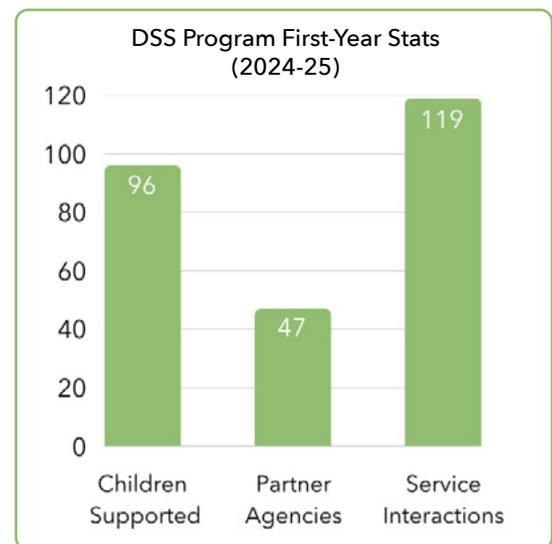
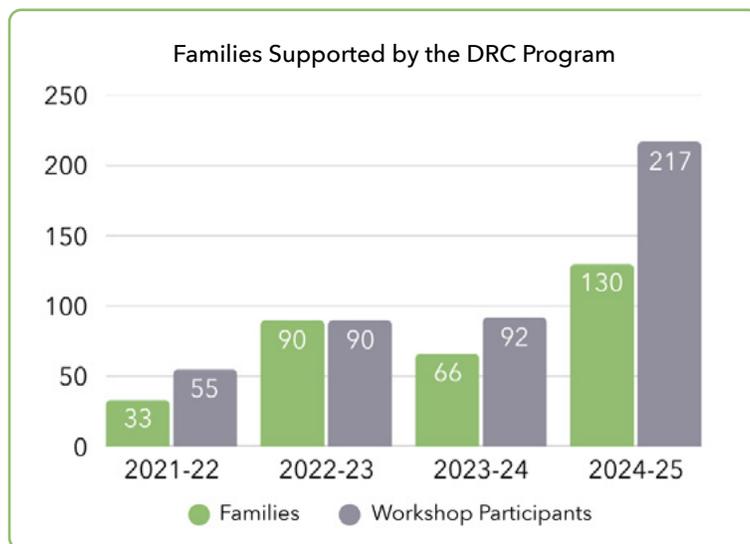
## DEVELOPMENTAL RESOURCE CONSULTANT (DRC) PROGRAM

Over the past five years, the Development Resource Consultant (DRC) Program has evolved from a small advocacy initiative providing targeted family supports into a holistic, province-wide service model recognized for its innovation, collaboration, and measurable impact on Métis children and families. First launched in 2021 as the Education Support Advocacy Program to support young families, it became clear that they required more than advocacy – they needed comprehensive, family-centred services. By 2023, the program evolved into the DRC Program, broadening its focus to children’s social, emotional, communicative, and cognitive growth across home, child care, and school settings.

DRCs help parents and caregivers understand developmental milestones, streamline referral processes, provide case management through community partnerships, and promote inclusion by equipping educators with resources and professional learning. The program ensures continuity through key transitions like entering grade school. Beyond one-on-one services, the program also fosters community through virtual early learning groups and workshops. These sessions reduce isolation, build resilience, and equip families and educators with inclusive, culturally relevant strategies. As an extension of the DRC Program, the team also launched the Developmental Services and Support (DSS) Program in 2024, which helps families access early intervention and clinical supports, including access to speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, parent coaching, and autism supports.

## Key Statistics:

- Since 2020-21, **321 clients** have been served one-on-one through the **DRC Program**.
- In 2024-25, DRC workshops had **210+ participants**.
- In 2024-25 – the first year of the program – the **DSS Program** supported **96 children**, engaged with **47 partner agencies**, and hosted workshops with over **150 participants**.



## SPECIAL PROJECTS

Since 2019, the Early Learning and Child Care Special Projects team have delivered culturally relevant and inclusive programming for Métis children (ages 0-12) and their families across Ontario. Through resource kits, books, and virtual and in-person events, the team ensures learning reflects Métis traditions, culture, and way of life. Free resource kit initiatives include sending families backpacks and school supplies through the Back to School Program, infant supplies and toys in Baby Bundle Kits, themed and developmentally appropriate gifts through the Christmas Gift Program, and creative and cultural activities in Culture Kits.

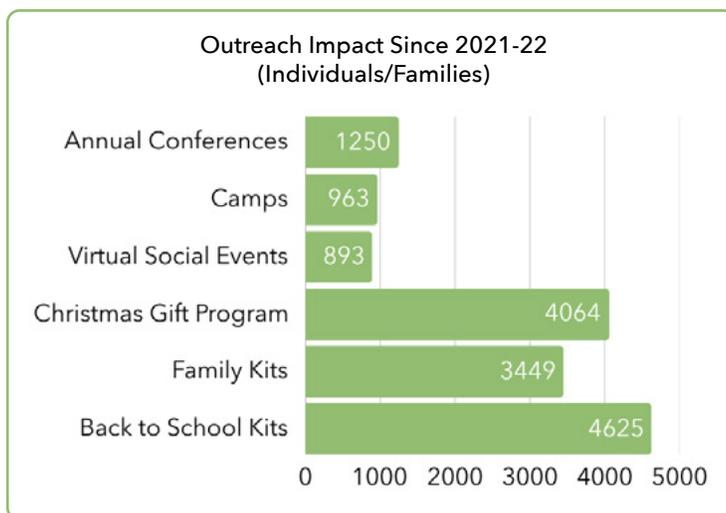
The team's first initiative – the Early Learning Book Program, created in collaboration with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library – provides monthly free books to children aged 0-5. The team has also established a book working group, which have published books – like *A Real-Life Métis Superhero: The Powley Family* and *Louis Riel* – bringing

the stories of Métis heroes and culture to early learners.

The team is committed to high-quality, family-centred programming – launching its first in-person camp in 2020, adapting to virtual delivery, and reaching thousands of families by 2024 with events like family socials and Camp AGA. The team also hosts annual Early Learning Conferences, which bring hundreds of educators together for keynote sessions, networking, and professional development on integrating Métis culture into classrooms. These efforts provide meaningful experiences that build connections, inspire learning, and create lasting memories for Métis families.

### Key Statistics:

- Since 2019-20, the **Early Learning Book Program** has supported **760+ children**.
- Since 2020-21, thousands of families have received resource kits, with the team distributing **1,300+ Baby Bundle Kits**, **4,600+ Back to School Kits**, and more.
- In response to the pandemic, **1,000 Learning at Home Kits** were sent to families in 2020-21. Since then, **890+ children** have also participated in **28 virtual social events**.
- Since 2020-21, **4,000+ children** and **2,250+ families** have been supported through the **Christmas Gift Program**.
- Since 2021-22, **960+ children** have participated in **13 camps** (five in-person, eight virtual), while **Camp AGA** and **Family Rendezvous** events reached 250+ children.
- Since 2020, **1,250+ educators** have attended annual **Early Learning Conferences**, with **250+ educators** attending each year.



## INFRASTRUCTURE & PARTNERSHIPS (I&P) TEAM

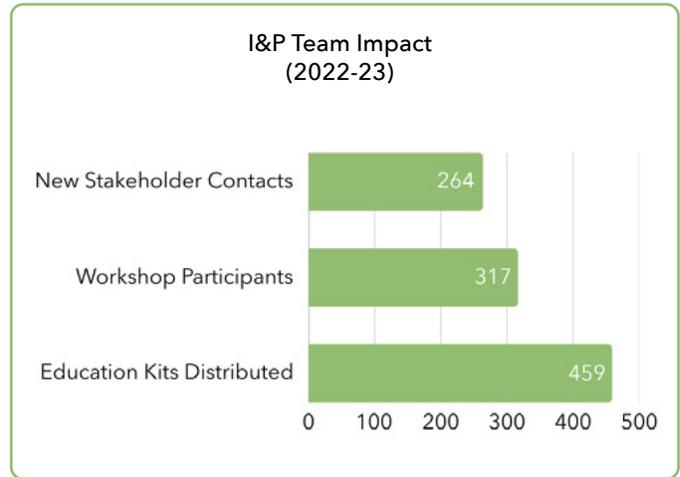
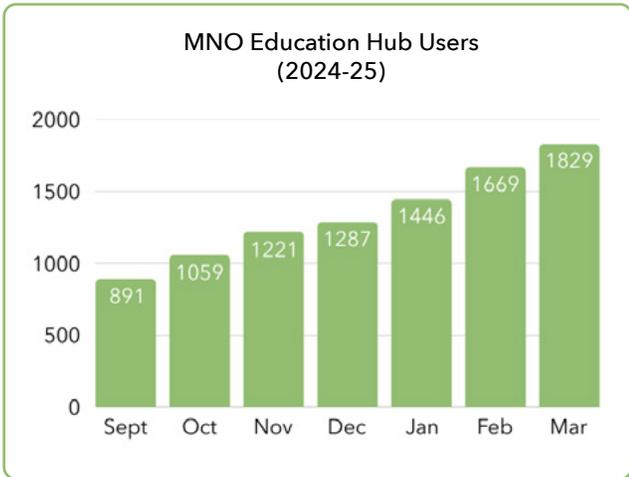
The Early Learning & Child Care Infrastructure and Partnerships (I&P) team has developed into a cornerstone of innovation, collaboration, and advocacy within Ontario's early years sector since its establishment in 2021. The team strengthens Métis representation and leadership in early years spaces by building connections with early years partners, providing funding to MNO Community Councils for cultural programming, and supporting early years educators through hosting workshops, providing financial aid, and distributing education kits. In addition to planned openings of new Métis ELCC centres in Penetanguishene and Thunder Bay, the team purchased land for the Burk's Falls Children and Youth Camp, which will soon open for Métis children and families.

Integral to the team's support of educators is the Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE) Support Program, which provides financial aid to RECEs for membership fees and professional development. The team is also dedicated to fostering a Community of Practice through the MNO Education Hub, a mobile app launched in September 2024 that provides educators with support resources, virtual workshops and events, and a moderated discussion space – encouraging educators to share knowledge and culturally relevant programming ideas, collectively improve practices, and build relationships with like-minded professionals. This ethos is also promoted through the recurring *Advisors' Newsletters* and *Book Club* series, which encourage further discussion among educators on incorporating Métis culture into classrooms.

### Key Statistics:

- In 2022-23, the I&P Advisors made **260+ new stakeholder contacts** across child care, education, and community sectors. The Advisors also hosted **15 workshops**, reaching **315+ participants** with additional educational video content reaching **200+ educators**.
- In 2022-23, the team provided **\$15,000 in funding** provided to **20 MNO Community Councils** for cultural programming, **totalling \$300,000 in local support**. This was done again the next year (2023-24), with eight councils receiving additional top-up support.
- From 2022-24, the team distributed around **1,000 ELCC Education Kits** to educators, colleges, child care providers, partners, and more.

- By April 2025 and within six months of release, the **MNO Education Hub** accrued over **1,800 users** and has grown exponentially since.
- In 2024-25, the monthly **Advisors' Newsletter** was distributed to **345 educators and partners**.
- During 2024-25, the **RECE Support Program** supported **55+ educators**.



## ADDITIONAL READING

- Métis Nation Early Learning and Child Care Accord: [www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/indigenous-early-learning/accord-metis.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/indigenous-early-learning/accord-metis.html)
- Métis Nation of Ontario ELCC Programs: [www.metisnation.org/programs-and-services/education-training/early-learning-and-child-care/](http://www.metisnation.org/programs-and-services/education-training/early-learning-and-child-care/)



Métis Nation  
of Ontario 