



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# Community Services Plan for Francophone Early Childhood Health in Nunavut





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# Overview of Early Childhood Health project

The Early Childhood Health (ECH) project is part of an initiative funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and coordinated by the national organization Société Santé en français (SSF). This initiative seeks to explore and develop innovative solutions to improve access to quality French health services for young children (ages 0-6) in Francophone and Acadian minority communities (FAMC).

The RÉSEFAN is coordinating this project in Nunavut. The RÉSEFAN retained the services of François Fortin Consultant to assist in identifying early childhood needs and priorities and developing this *Community Services Plan for Francophone Early Childhood Health in Nunavut* for the next five years.

The project is made up of two major phases: a planning and consensus phase, the approach and outcomes of which are set out in this plan, and a projects, programs and services implementation phase. The PHAC's ECH project covers a three-year period (2019-2022) with a possible two-year extension (2023-2024). This plan was established to ensure that the PHAC project requirements can be met.



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# Development of a Community Services Plan for Francophone Early Childhood Health in Nunavut

The RÉSEFAN retained the services of François Fortin Consultant to assist in carrying out a consultation for the purpose of developing the Community Services Plan for Francophone Early Childhood Health in Nunavut with the objective of promoting early childhood health among Francophones living in Iqaluit.

Through this consultation, planning and awareness activities were held to support the early childhood development sector in Iqaluit in evaluating its strengths and needs, and in identifying tangible priority actions for the next five years. This consultation effort consequently also helped to rally community members and make contact with additional prospective partners to support successful implementation of the project.

## **THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES WERE CARRIED OUT AS PART OF THE CONSULTATION:**

- 20 one-on-one meetings with early childhood practitioners
- A survey completed by 19 parents of Francophone children
- A survey completed by six early childhood practitioners
- A focus group bringing together 15 parents of Francophone children
- A day-long work session bringing together nine key practitioners and parents
- An order placed with Statistics Canada to assist in creating a portrait of Francophone families with young children (ages 0-6)
- Bibliographic research

The consultation took place between November 7, 2019, and February 20, 2020. It reached close to 80 practitioners, professionals, parents and partners associated with organizations from the Canadian Francophone community and/or the early childhood development sector in Nunavut.

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# The Francophone Community's Vision of Early Childhood

At the day-long work session, participants agreed on a shared vision for the Francophone early childhood sector in Iqaluit.

## STATEMENT:

A dynamic Francophone community supported by proactive, sustainable structures working to promote the health and well-being of its young children.

## ASPIRATIONS:

The Francophone community in Iqaluit has the desire and potential to contribute to:

- Making early childhood development a priority;
- Supporting children's overall development, including prenatal, perinatal and postnatal;
- Improving access to French health care services for Francophone parents and children;
- Rallying and engaging a strong Francophone community;
- Developing proactive and sustainable structures.



# Ideas for programs, services and activities to promote early childhood health in Iqaluit

During the consultation, local parents and community players identified a diverse range of projects, all of which were interesting and realistic. The goal of all these ideas is to meet the specific needs identified by the parties involved. A summary of these ideas is appended to this document for reference. At the day-long work session on February 15, the community identified 10 priority projects, basing its choices on the preliminary consultation outcomes as well as the work achieved together. However, some of the ideas in the attached list can be incorporated into projects that move forward, while other ideas not finding approval could still be adopted by the project proponents and evaluation committee over the next five years, particularly in years 4 and 5, for which funding has not yet been confirmed.



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## Priorities identified

The priority reported most frequently is, clearly, **the need to create more daycare spaces**. There also appears to be an urgent need for drop-in daycare or other drop-in services for parents. Assisting with this should be a priority for the Government of Nunavut and the federal government, since it is ultimately a matter of funding. In Iqaluit, Carrefour Nunavut may also be able to play a role in this area, since it has a mandate to create daycare spaces.

The second unanimous finding was **the need to develop Francophone community services in the areas of prenatal and perinatal support and support for parents with children ages 0-2**.

Three main priorities were clearly identified through consultations with parents:

1. A need for better understanding of the resources available to families
2. A desire to create more opportunities to interact with other families with young children
3. An interest in participating in workshops or information sessions on specific topics related to the health of young families

The early childhood practitioners consulted also saw a need to create more opportunities for community members to meet and share as well as to offer more information and educational workshops. **They also emphasized the importance of a healthy diet and physical activity**, a concern also expressed by parents.

It is further noted that nearly all the Anglophones and Inuit consulted wished that children and parents could have easier access to French classes and more opportunities to practise French as a second language.

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Finally, the following topics were identified through the survey of parents and practitioners concerning information that should be more easily available locally in French:

- Prenatal information and classes
- Managing food allergies
- Preparing healthy meals
- Playing safely outdoors
- Building children's resilience
- Parent-child attachment
- Reducing screen time
- Increasing children's physical fitness through age-appropriate activity
- Understanding the importance of sleep
- Applying principles of positive discipline
- Encouraging language skills development
- Helping parents find more time for themselves





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# Flagship projects proposed

These flagship projects have been proposed by the Francophone community, which is also responsible for bringing them to fruition. Individuals and organizations from Iqaluit's Francophone community will be the proponents developing these new programs and services. They are able to implement all of these projects during the three-year period prescribed by the ECH project. The RÉSEFAN plays a coordinating role in the project in Nunavut and, as a result, officially supports the development of these initiatives over the next three to five years.

## **The key projects proposed in the Community Services Plan are listed below.**

- 1** Francophone parents group at AFN
- 2** Support group for Francophone parents and children
- 3** Inventory of early childhood resources combined with a sharing and information dissemination system in French
- 4** Development of a shared position in francization and/or program development
- 5** Lobbying and representation to promote Francophone early childhood health
- 6** Train a Francophone individual or group in the *Inunnguiniq* approach to early childhood development as established by the Qaujigiartiit Health Research Centre (QHRC), adapt it to the Franco-Nunavut reality and offer it to local practitioners and parents
- 7** Develop a physical activity class at the Aquatic Centre gym that is hosted in French and designed for families with young children.

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- 8 Education in nutrition and developing healthy lunch menus for parents and daycares;
  - 9 Catering services for daycare and/or parents
  - 10 Translation and development of quality educational resources reflecting the Nunavut reality



This initiative is funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada under the auspices of the Early Childhood Health project of the Société Santé en français.

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