

# Learning as we grow: Supporting children and families during the early years in Nova Scotia

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# Early childhood development

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- Critical period for supporting lifelong health and learning
- Supports for families with young children can be difficult to navigate across multiple systems





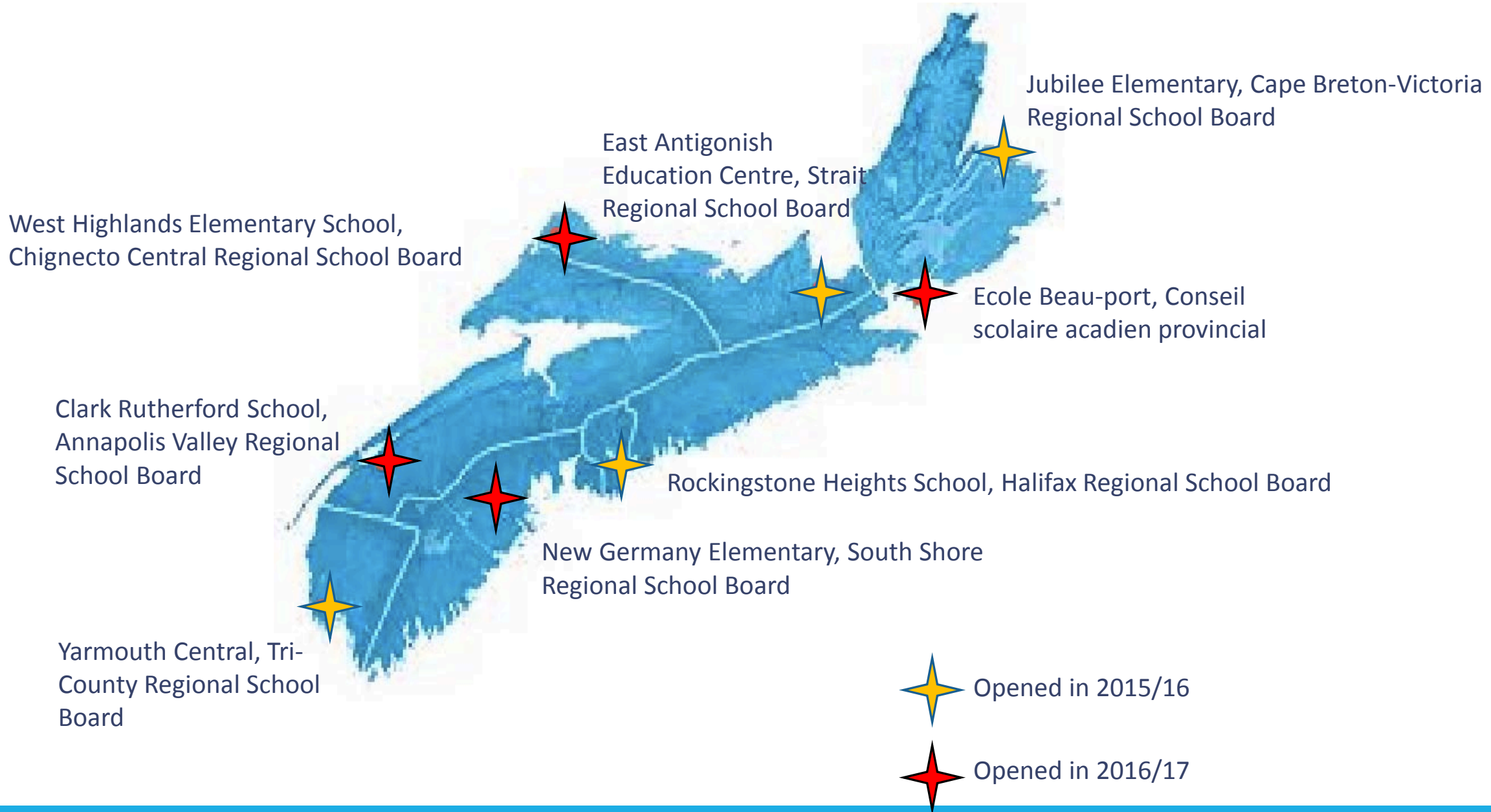
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- First centre opened in April 2014
  - Located in schools and are for children age four and under and their families
  - Each is tailored to meet the needs of its community and is guided by a Site Management and Community Advisory Committee

# Early Years Centre Core Services

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- A no fee, play based Early Learning Program for 4 year olds
- Family supports and resources
- Regulated child care responsive to the needs of families and communities





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LEARNING AS WE GROW...



# Evaluation

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Funded by the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation

Participatory 4-year evaluation led by core evaluation team, supported by steering and research advisory committee

Process and outcome evaluation design guided by a program logic model and evaluation framework



# Process Data Collection

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Document Review

Key Contact Interviews

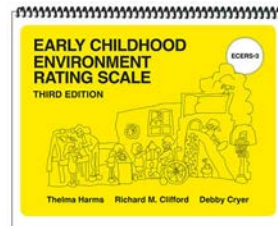
Partner Interviews





# Outcome Data Collection

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**Indicator of Change  
Progress Measurement Tool**



Program Quality

System and Service Integration

Early Child Development

EYC Administrative Data (intake, participation, registration data) also collected

# Outcome Data Collection

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Family focus groups and survey



Team survey



'Story Sharing'

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# EARLY FINDINGS: YEAR 1

# Key accomplishments

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Building trust and relationships

Strengthening partnerships and community linkages

Building awareness and understanding, linking families

*“... the tremendous positive response we’ve gotten from other service providers around sharing the space, being part of the program, promoting the program and the engagement to work at something together.”*

# Key enablers

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School and school board commitment

History of collaboration, willingness, commitment and shared vision

Flexibility

*“I think as we meet and as we get to know each other better, and get to know what people are doing, it’s amazing to see what people want to do, and how much they want to give, and support and be there”*

# Key challenges

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Linking to regulated childcare

Lack of clarity

System barriers

*“... people sort of hadn’t really clear information around what exactly was the role of the Early Years Centre. As soon as you hear the word centre, you start thinking about childcare.”*

# Year 1 recommendations

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Clarify Early Year Centre model description

Define more clearly expectations and roles of partners

Ensure policies are in place to support implementation

Support Early Childhood Educators in school settings

Professional development opportunities

# Next steps

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Data collection for Year 2 complete – analysis in progress

Sense-making and reporting will help to mobilize results to inform changes in policy and practice

Building research capacity to promote evidence-informed policy and practice





Any  
questions ?

Thank you to the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation for their funding and support and all families and partners from the EYCs in NS for their ongoing participation in the evaluation.



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