

NEW BRUNSWICK FAMILY PLAN

PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR PERSONS
LIVING WITH A DISABILITY

JUNE 2017



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Province of New Brunswick
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Education. Jobs. Families. Listening and getting things done.

Like the strong ties that bind families in our province together, this government has linked three major plans that – together – will improve the lives of all New Brunswickers for decades to come. Each plan is important in and of itself, but each plan also needs the others to succeed.

The **New Brunswick Family Plan** builds on the goals and achievements of our **Economic Growth Plan** and our **10-year Education Plans**. It also works in tandem with those plans to ensure that government is tackling important issues holistically and not operating in silos.

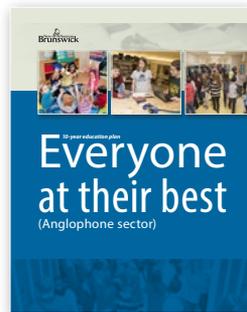
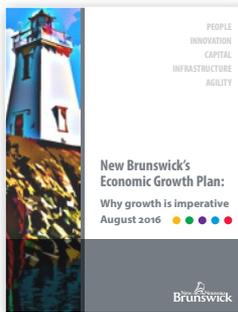
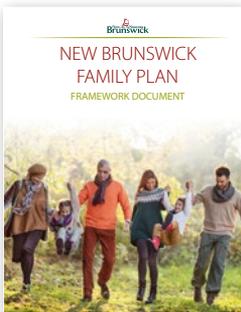
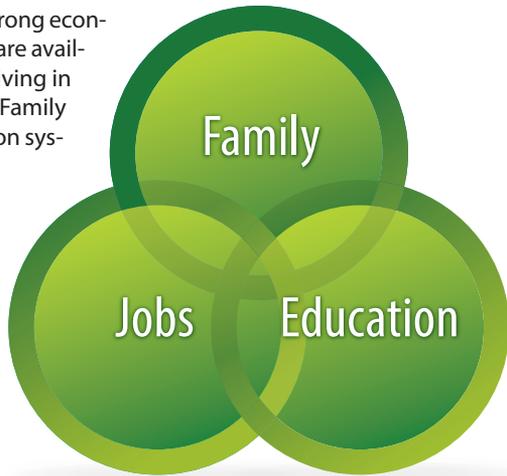
Our Economic Growth Plan must be supported by our education plans to be successful and to ensure that our workforce is well trained and innovative. Our economy also needs the social supports contained within the Family Plan in order to thrive fully.

Likewise, our education system needs a strong economy so that our graduates can find meaningful work here in New Brunswick. Our education system also needs the Family Plan so that the social determinants that impact a student’s ability to learn can be addressed early on.

Finally, our Family Plan needs a strong economy so that equal opportunities are available for women and for people living in poverty or with a disability. The Family Plan also needs a strong education system to act as a social equalizer.

An integrated approach such as this one is important, especially when a number of government initiatives cut across all three of these plans.

For example, literacy is crucial to our Economic Growth Plan that aims to maintain an educated workforce. Literacy is



also an important aspect of our education plans where students are expected to make a seamless transition between learning to read and reading to learn. And finally, literacy is a key component of the Family Plan, especially as it relates to our ability to lift people out of poverty.

Other initiatives tie these plans together as well. For example, improved access to quality and affordable daycare services is as relevant to the New Brunswick workforce as it is to the education system where more students will arrive better prepared for their first year of learning. Of course, the expansion of daycare services supports various initiatives in the Family Plan, such as reducing poverty in our province.

Your government has laid the foundation for these plans to work together to achieve our collective goals. We achieve the best results when we work together and create interconnected plans focused on what matters most to New Brunswickers and their families.

These three plans work in tandem to create a unified vision that will guide your government in delivering results based on the priorities that you have shared with us.

Our collective efforts will make New Brunswick the best place to live, work and raise a family.

New Brunswick Family Plan

It is clear that individuals' socioeconomic circumstances have significant bearing on their health – and vice versa. The *New Brunswick Family Plan* is based on the premise that an integrated system of health and social care will help vulnerable populations lead independent, healthy and productive lives.

Integrating care can be particularly beneficial for the vulnerable segments of society that have difficulty accessing care due to social isolation or other barriers. This can include disadvantaged groups, persons with chronic conditions and persons with mental health problems.

The Family Plan also recognizes that health is much more than health care and that all partners must work together to address the social, economic and environmental determinants of health. Taking action on these factors builds communities and benefits society - good health matters to every person, family and community and is essential for economic and social development.

Just as the Family Plan is part of an integrated approach to help improve the lives of New Brunswickers, each of its pillars works in tandem with the others to provide a unified vision for program development and service delivery. For example, compassionate care and home and community-based care are also important components of healthy aging and support for seniors, and wellness plays an integral role in disease management and prevention.

Similarly, food security and healthy food availability, as well as affordable housing and transportation, have a deep impact on well-being; working toward equal pay for work of equal value and promoting inclusivity in the labour market are essential for reducing barriers that prevent individuals from participating fully in their communities; and advancing gender equality is critical to all aspects of a healthy society, from reducing poverty to promoting the health and well-being of all individuals.

Each pillar is a starting point for the development and implementation of effective policies, programs and strategies. Their success will be ensured by undertaking a comprehensive approach within and across all sectors and by providing opportunities for all stakeholders to take coordinated action at various levels of influence, and in a variety of ways.

The seven pillars of the New Brunswick Family Plan:

- 1 Improving access to primary and acute care
- 2 Promoting wellness
- 3 Supporting those with addictions and mental health challenges
- 4 Fostering healthy aging and support for seniors
- 5 Advancing women's equality
- 6 Reducing poverty
- 7 Providing support for persons living with a disability

Introduction

As the Family Plan builds on the objectives and achievements of the Economic Growth Plan and the 10-year Education Plans, so too does it build on existing initiatives and strategies of government, such as the Disability Action Plan, Employment Action Plan for Persons with a Disability, Wellness Strategy, Action Plan for Mental Health, the Economic and Social Inclusion Plan, Home First Strategy, and the Aging Strategy.

Providing Support for Persons Living with a Disability is a combination of efforts undertaken in these areas. It is based on current initiatives, ongoing commitments and stakeholder feedback, and delineates the goals and actions that will address the needs of persons living with a disability in New Brunswick and the opportunities for them to work and lead productive lives. It focuses on ensuring equal access to education, literacy, training, appropriate supports and employment.

The lack of attachment to the labour market has a significant impact on poverty for persons with a disability. Additionally, they face serious challenges in education and training. The goals and actions of this plan will help persons living with a disability increase their independence and enable people to participate and be included in their communities. This is achieved through change initiatives and effective policies, enhanced services, and a culture of collaboration.

Providing Support for Persons Living with a Disability is also furthered by initiatives underway as part of the Priority Delivery Unit on Families. The priority delivery units oversee cross-departmental initiatives to significantly reduce silo thinking and improve access to quality services and programs. One initiative in particular has an overall impact on enhancing employment opportunities for persons living with a disability. The focus is on completing the work of the *Employment Action Plan for Persons with a Disability* to impact positively the employment gap and provide effective supports.

These initiatives set the stage for a robust action plan on achieving the areas of focus outlined in the following pages.

Areas of focus

Although significant progress has been made in addressing the needs of persons living with a disability in New Brunswick, much is left to do. Persons living with a disability often face complex issues and effective solutions require a coordinated approach between diverse stakeholders across each sector of the province. By ensuring equal access to education, literacy, training, support and employment opportunities, many persons living with a disability can work and lead productive lives.

Removing barriers to living a healthy, engaged and well-balanced life. To ensure persons living with a disability are afforded all the same opportunities, it will be essential to foster good mental and physical health and overall wellness from an early age. Further actions are required to ensure accessible and affordable transportation, housing, and mental health services are available throughout New Brunswick. Effective support and services will only be achieved through collaborative and strategic planning across government departments, communities, service providers, professional associations and individuals as the province moves towards a vision of inclusive communities that consider changing needs across an individual's lifespan.

Actions

- Reducing the overall level of poverty among persons with a disability and their families, and enabling persons with a disability to access affordable housing and transportation wherever they live in New Brunswick through housing initiatives such as the portable rent subsidy and the modification program.
- Increasing the number of persons with a disability of any type and at any age participating regularly in health, wellness and recreational activities.
- Addressing specific issues around access to services for persons with a disability wherever they live in the province.



Removing significant barriers to finding and maintaining employment. People with a disability represent an underused talent pool. The employment gap can effectively be reduced by retaining individuals who are as diverse as are their capabilities. Research demonstrates that the benefits of enhanced employment opportunities for persons with a disability are clear, economically and socially, since leveraging diversity leads to improved revenues and enriches the lives of an underutilized group who makes a meaningful contribution to society. Additionally, efforts must be made to recognize and support entrepreneurship opportunities for persons living with a disability.

Actions

- Helping ensure that service providers are accountable for quality assurance and fair delivery of all employment programs and services, and these are made available for persons with a disability.
- Exploring options to give employees opportunities to request flexible work arrangements.
- Working with community organizations to help support persons with a disability to transition and achieve employment goals.
- Exploring options for enhancing opportunities for self-employment.

Preparing for successful transitions and improving access to employment or further education/training. Recognizing the importance and value of preparing young people to work or seek further education will be underscored by strong policies and programs that support successful transitions. Additionally, providing greater access to continuing education and employment opportunities will contribute to improved outcomes for persons living with a disability.

Actions

- Increasing opportunities for persons with a disability to access, transition and participate in post-secondary and employment opportunities.
- Working with communities and service organizations to more effectively support persons with a disability to achieve educational and employment goals.

Enhancing public awareness and promoting best practices that can help individuals achieve their goals. Generating awareness with the public, and employers in particular, about the potential of persons living with a disability as employees and/or business owners will increase opportunities for employment. This can be achieved through meaningful dialogue, information and training with employers on the benefits, opportunities and responsibilities of employing persons living with a disability.

Actions

- Increasing knowledge about innovative and effective inclusion practices within the labour market.
- Increasing awareness and promotion of employment supports and services for both persons with a disability and their employers.

Reducing barriers to access. Ensuring that persons living with a disability, government and community service organizations have up-to-date information on effective programs, services, and evidence-based practices, will reduce barriers to access and lead to better outcomes. A holistic approach to service delivery based on the individual's needs will support successful outcomes, in the community and in the workforce.

Actions

- Helping ensure that persons with a disability have equitable access to needed services and supports, with a focus on underserved populations and geographic disparities.
- Supporting those in need to better navigate government programs and services by ensuring information on supports and resources is readily available.

Conclusion

Persons with a disability want to be recognized as valuable, contributing members of society. They want opportunities to participate in employment opportunities and in their communities. Achieving the goals and actions outlined in this plan will work toward **Providing Support for Persons Living with a Disability** and every other pillar of the Family Plan, as they work in tandem to maximize results and opportunities.

Providing Support for Persons Living with a Disability strives to ensure people are recognized for their skills and potential, are valued members of the workforce and have access to the services and supports they need to participate fully in society. When barriers are removed to allow for community engagement, the acts of individuals participating in their communities will promote the extensive contributions of persons living with a disability.