



SUPPORTING THE CARE & SETTLEMENT OF YOUNG IMMIGRANT CHILDREN

How CMAS Makes a Difference

Newcomer families need support.

Each year, more than 250,000 newcomers arrive in Canada—and many of them are families with young children. As these families strive to find suitable housing and employment, and to develop a sense of belonging in their new community, settlement services (like language training and job search workshops) can make the difference between a successful transition and an experience filled with isolation, frustration and financial difficulty.

Newcomer families need safe, reliable child care that's tailored to their unique needs.

Many newcomer parents cannot access settlement services without access to affordable child care. Most newcomer families can't afford to pay for a space in a traditional day care centre, so many settlement service providing organizations choose to provide Care for Newcomer Children (CNC). CNC is free, on-site child care that is available while parents are getting the information, language skills and assistance they need to be able to successfully settle in this country.

CNC is focused on the unique needs of children who are new to Canada, and features high safety standards as well as specialized programming that includes: language learning; creating an inclusive environment; managing the effects of culture shock, and more.

To support immigrant serving organizations in offering this specialized type of child care, CMAS—an organization funded through Citizenship and Immigration Canada—was founded in 2000.

CMAS supports immigrant serving organizations in offering newcomer-focused care for children.

CMAS' original role was to monitor and support the childminding services offered alongside Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) English as a second language programs. Since that time, however, the organization has continued to evolve and work with service providers to better meet the needs of newcomer families.

In 2007, CMAS worked with settlement organizations to develop Occasional Child Care Requirements (OCCR) so that care could be offered with short-term settlement services in Ontario. This was a new type of child care support that allowed immigrant serving organization to assist more parents.

Then in 2009, CMAS was contracted to work with stakeholders from across Canada to develop the flexible model that exists today—Care for Newcomer Children (CNC). Now, settlement service providing organizations can choose from three different types of care (Long Term, Short Term and/or Combined) and customize their CNC program to suit the needs of the newcomer families in their community.



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Supporting Child Care in the Settlement Community/Soutenir les services de garde d'enfants dans la communauté d'accueil

“Your commitment and dedication to providing the best possible experience for newcomer children is evident and your support to organizations clearly demonstrates that.” – K.T.



More than 3000 children are served by CNC on any given day by more than 500 skilled caregivers!

CMAS supports professionals who wish to better serve immigrant families.

Today, CMAS is well known in the settlement community for their expertise in:

1. Identifying gaps in service and working to create solutions
2. Establishing and measuring standards of care for newcomer children
3. Supporting services for newcomer children and families through the development and delivery of training and resources

We work with partners to identify gaps in services and create solutions.

CMAS saw the need for a flexible model of care that would help better serve newcomer families.

The development of Care for Newcomer Children (CNC) was a direct response to feedback from

settlement serving organizations that wanted to assist parents in their settlement, but found that a lack of child care kept parents from using many of their services. For years, programs had the option of providing childminding in conjunction with their LINC programs, but found that most parents (mothers, in particular, as primary caregivers) were unable to access other services.

Settlement agencies found that many parents could not attend workshops on information critical to their settlement and also to their role as parents (sessions about school readiness and accessing health care) because of the lack of child care. Programs saw lower enrolment in their programs because of this gap in service.

CMAS worked in partnership with experts to ensure the use of current best practices in CNC.

The model and its requirements were developed in consultation with representatives of stakeholder groups from across the country, and with the guidance of experts in the fields of early childhood education (ECE), health and safety. These experts included committee members from settlement agencies, heads of ECE departments from Bow Valley College in Calgary and Ryerson University in Toronto, as well as representatives from Citizenship & Immigration Canada.

In developing CNC, CMAS and its partners worked to create a model that would meet the specific needs of immigrant children. The concepts of inclusion, cultural sensitivity and diversity are reflected in the programming, as is the need to meet the individual needs of each child.





“Thank you for the great ideas you suggested for our infant program. You covered all areas of development (physical, intellectual, language, emotional and social). Since your visit, our two caregivers have been busy preparing all the activities and I have witnessed obvious changes in our infant room.” – S.V-K.

CMAS worked with immigrant serving organizations to provide a smooth transition to CNC.

While the CNC model represented an exciting change and opportunities to better serve newcomer families, as with any organizational change, implementing it carefully and supporting staff every step of the way were important goals. CMAS approached the change by piloting the model at two settlement service providing organizations in 2011/2012. A third-party assessment was then undertaken in January 2012 before the model was rolled out across the country.

Implementation began in April 2013, at which time CMAS provided a range of supports to programs. These included:

- A CNC Guide that explained the new model in detail
- Resources to support implementation (such as a CNC Checklist)
- Sample policies, procedures and forms
- An on-site visit for each program to review their implementation plan and to provide guidance as-needed
- A risk-review of each program to help ensure the safety of children



Care for
Newcomer
Children

We work with organizations to help them establish and measure standards of care.

CMAS conducts program reviews to ensure that health, safety and program quality standards are met.

One of CMAS's most important roles is to conduct a yearly review of all CNC programs that operate in conjunction with CIC-funded settlement services.

The yearly reviews measure each program's adherence to a set of health, safety, facility, staffing and program standards. These standards were carefully developed through a process that included consultation with stakeholders and feedback from an advisory committee of experts in the fields of early childhood education and settlement.

What happens at a yearly review?

On the day of their assessment, a CMAS consultant visits the immigrant serving organization to observe the CNC program in action. Each consultant has a minimum of five years experience in a supervisory capacity in a child care program. Consultants receive extensive training to conduct effective assessments and regularly participate in professional development related to health, safety and the care of newcomer children.

During the assessment visits, in addition to observing the programs, consultants interview staff members and review documentation (such as the site's fire safety plan, enrolment forms and

“Our annual assessment turned out to be a very enjoyable event. Even though we were a little nervous at the beginning, you managed to create a very comfortable and relaxed atmosphere. The staff is pleased with your review and we also agree that there is always room for improvement. Your advice, support and recommendations are always appreciated.” – N.B.

policies and procedures). Through an in-depth checklist, all aspects of care are reviewed. If a settlement service providing organization has failed to meet one of the program requirements, the consultant works with them to develop a plan of action. Following the assessment, CMAS follows up with Citizenship and Immigration Canada to communicate the results and continues to work with the settlement service providing organization to get concerns related to the requirements addressed.

“I received the New in Canada Parenting Support Child Safety Series and I am thrilled. They are so informative and appropriate for persons new to Canada. I love that there are different languages for the handouts. I will definitely be using them at parent conferences and as handouts in the monthly newsletter we send home to parents.” – Amy McEwen, Public Health Nurse, Alberta Health Services



CNC IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST FOR ADMINISTRATORS

Master Implementation Checklist

If you are assigning the implementation of major steps to different team members, you can use this chart to document and manage the implementation process.

Area of Implementation	Who is responsible	Target date for completion	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> SPACE			
<input type="checkbox"/> STARTING			
<input type="checkbox"/> DOCUMENTATION			
<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATION			
<input type="checkbox"/> PARENTS			
<input type="checkbox"/> PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT			

We design resources and systems to support organizations that serve newcomer families

CMAS creates high quality newcomer-focused resources.

CMAS understands the unique needs of newcomer families and works to develop resources that not only contain the information they need, but that also speak their language—literally!

One of CMAS’ most popular resources is *All about Child Care*, a brochure that settlement service providing organizations can hand out to parents to inform them of the rules and expectations of CNC programs. It is available in 20 languages. Another resource that is used widely across the country is the *New in Canada Parenting Support Child Safety Series*—a series of newcomer-focused health and safety brochures that are available in English, French, Arabic, Cantonese, Korean, Mandarin, Farsi, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Tamil and Urdu. These easy-to-read brochures address safety issues that affect newcomers to Canada, including how to dress for winter weather, water safety, sudden infant death syndrome and more.

CMAS shares the latest information on caring for newcomer children with professionals working in the field.

CMAS maintains a comprehensive CNC website that caters specifically to the immigrant child care community. The CNC website is update weekly and offers ‘experts corner’ articles on hot topics in child care,



“On behalf of myself and all of our TCDSB LINC sites, I would like to thank you for the wonderful toys we received as part of the multicultural shipment. They will surely be put to good use and are much appreciated.” – C.S.

informative videos and a variety of newcomer-focused child care resources that can be downloaded free of charge!

CMAS also works to develop specialized resources that combine their expertise with the practical knowledge of other experts in the field. Once such resource is a book called *Supporting the Settlement of Young Immigrant Children and their Families*. Written by newcomer-child-care-expert and consultant Julie Dotsch, it is a comprehensive resource guide that covers topics ranging from managing culture shock to encouraging the use of a family's home language.

CMAS provides programs with high quality program materials and supplies.

Over the years, CMAS has also provided programs with a variety of program materials and supplies to support staff and children. For example, programs have received copies of *Well Beings*, a guide to health in child care published by the Canadian Paediatric Society. Many programs have also been provided with toys and books that were selected to support literacy, physical and cognitive development. Dual language books that reflect the languages of the children using the programs have also been distributed on a regular basis.

CMAS develops and delivers training for professionals who work with newcomers.

“The content of Supporting the Settlement of Young Immigrant Children and their Families is very relevant to my daily work. The language style is clear and thoughtful and the book enhanced my understanding of family involvement. Now I realize that we as professionals not only need to empower parents, but we also have a lot to learn from them.” – L.P.

CMAS designs and develops a variety of training programs for the newcomer child care sector. This training covers a range of topics, from creating inclusive environments and supporting the use of home languages, to managing life-threatening allergies and helping to prevent child abuse.

When the need for training in a given subject is identified, CMAS conducts research on the topic, develops a presentation and accompanying resources, and then facilitates the training. In some cases, experts are called in to help develop the curriculum and/or to train the trainers.

Some of the training programs are made available in English and French and can be accessed as e-learning modules to eliminate travel costs for programs and make training as accessible as possible.

"I just wanted to thank you and your team for the wonderful opportunity we had to take part in the anaphylaxis training. We are very appreciative of this important and informative presentation and look forward to working with CMAS again!" – B.D.



CMAS training currently available online includes:

- **Anaphylaxis Readiness Course:** Raises awareness of the issues faced by children at risk of anaphylaxis and helps caregiver develop the skills needed to reduce the risks and to respond to an emergency. (Developed in partnership with Anaphylaxis Canada)
- **Child Abuse Prevention and Intervention:** Reviews key information and strategies, and provides practical activities to help caregivers feel more confident and knowledgeable about child abuse prevention and intervention. (Developed in partnership with BOOST)
- **Language Rich Environments:** Designed to help caregivers recognize the importance of a child's first language...not only to their self-esteem, but also to acquiring a new language.
- **Responsive Curriculum in your Child Centred Program:** Teaches caregivers about responsive curriculum—a highly researched method of teaching and interacting with children to help them succeed in the future.
- **Separation Anxiety and Culture Shock:** Helps caregivers to understand separation anxiety in newcomer families and the impact of culture shock on the separation process.
- **Working with Newcomer Families:** Gives caregivers the knowledge and tools to collaborate with and gain the trust of newcomer families.

CMAS helped caregivers to access subsidies for training through the Training Opportunities Program (TOP):

From 2006-2013, CMAS ran TOP, a program that provided financial support for program staff who wished to pursue first aid and CPR training or studies in early childhood education. Through the program, many child care staff were able to upgrade their education, resulting in a higher percentage of qualified staff in programs. Along with the reimbursement for individual training, CMAS also provided more than a 150 workshops to caregivers working in CNC programs.

CMAS co-hosted a Conference with The Learning Enrichment Foundation (LEF).

CMAS worked with LEF to organize and host eleven professional development conferences for caregivers and administrators from 2001-2012. Over the course of the two-day conference, attendees learned about subjects like Meeting the Distinctive Needs of Newcomer Children, Helping Children and Families Who Have Experienced Trauma, Understanding Newcomers, and Building an Inclusive Classroom.

CMAS provides tailored consultations and on-site support.

Of course, there's no one-size-fits all approach to supporting programs. For this reason, CMAS consultants are always available to offer one-on-one support by phone, email, and skype. We also make



“Our funds this year didn’t allow for more professional development days, therefore I took advantage of your wonderful videos. They worked great! After each video we did interactive questions and answers and shared our own thoughts on the different topics. Thank you for giving us this extra help to do our jobs.”
– P.A.

site visits upon request to help programs address specific issues related to space selection, room set-up and more. A special needs consultant is also available to offer guidance and support in assisting children who are suspected of having a special need or who have an identified special need.

“There’s a child who has achondroplasia (is a “little person”) in a program we provide support to. Previously, he wasn’t able to engage in the routine because he couldn’t sit up or walk without support. As a result, he was unable to access most of the toys. With support from CMAS, the CNC staff went above and beyond making physical modification and providing activities to FULLY include this child in every aspect of the program.”
– A.Y.



Sharing expertise in newcomer child care & supporting settlement...

As one of Canada’s leading organizations with a focus on newcomer child care, CMAS takes a great deal of pride in sharing their expertise on working with newcomer children with settlement service providing organizations and other professionals in the field.

As they identify gaps in service and work to create solutions, establish and measure standards of care, and support services for newcomer families through resources, training and consultations, their goal is always to support those who work with newcomer families. In doing so, CMAS is able to help newcomer families make a difficult transition easier; to settle successfully and to become fully contributing members of Canadian society. ■