



*Autism Nova Scotia acknowledges that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. We are all treaty people. We also acknowledge that people of African descent have been in Nova Scotia for over 400 years and we honour and offer gratitude to those ancestors of African descent who came before us to this land.*



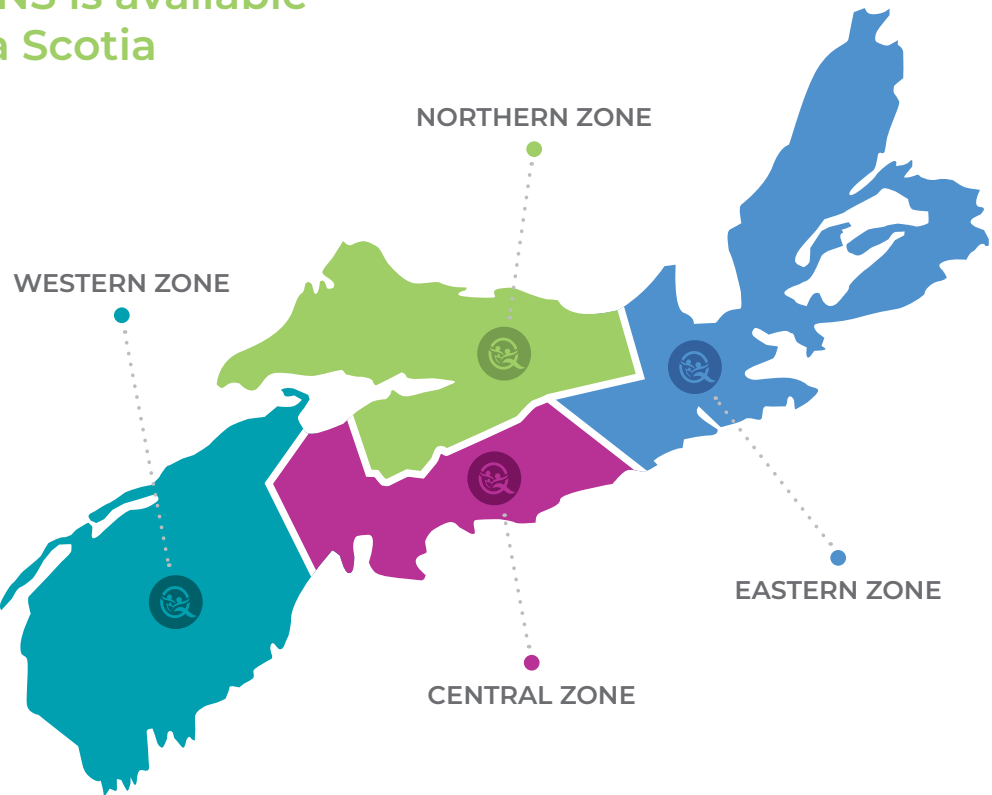
APRIL 2024 - MARCH 2025

QuickStart Nova Scotia is a parent mediated coaching program designed to empower caregivers of toddlers with a suspected, provisional, or confirmed diagnosis of autism to teach and support their child’s development. Utilizing an interdisciplinary team of Board Certified Behaviour Analysts, Speech Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, and Parent Coaches, this program involves an individualized approach unique to each family’s needs and provides a naturalistic teaching framework that is flexible, accessible, collaborative and supportive.

With the 2022 announcement from the province of new and enhanced intervention services to support preschool autism services in Nova

Scotia—including the establishment of the Provincial Preschool Autism Service (PPAS)—a key high-level transformation deliverable was to provide province-wide access to the QuickStart NS program, with annual targets of 75 children in the Central Zone, and by the second year at full capacity, 25 in the Eastern Zone, 25 in the Northern Zone, and 33 in the Western Zone. The program achieved province-wide delivery in January 2023. For the fiscal years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025, the program exceeded the annual targets for each zone, as shown in the graph below. Since its launch in April 2022, the program has reached 461 families—surpassing the target of 427 families across the province.

QuickStart NS is available across Nova Scotia



**PROVINCIAL PRESCHOOL AUTISM SERVICE**

A partnership between IWK Health, Nova Scotia Health, Hearing and Speech Nova Scotia, and Autism Nova Scotia providing services and support for preschool-age children and families across Nova Scotia.



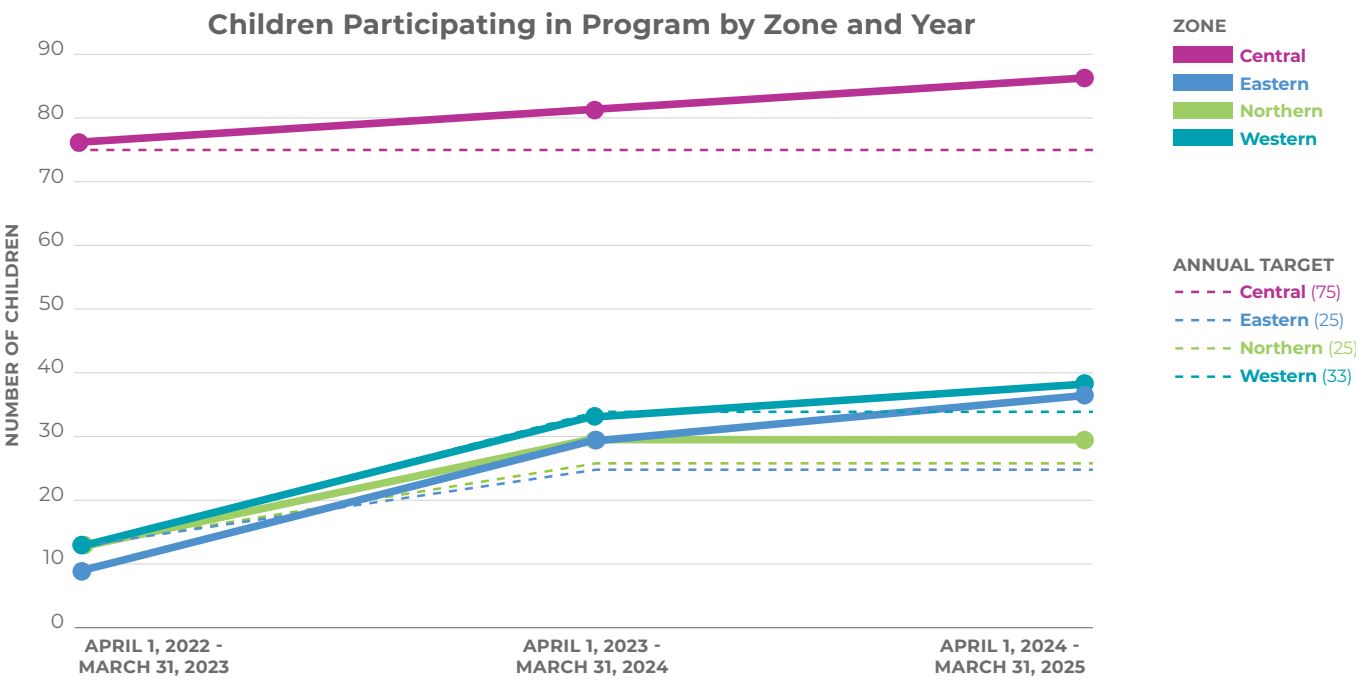


QuickStart Nova Scotia is made possible with support by the Government of Nova Scotia

\*All info in this section is total from all provincial zones, unless noted.

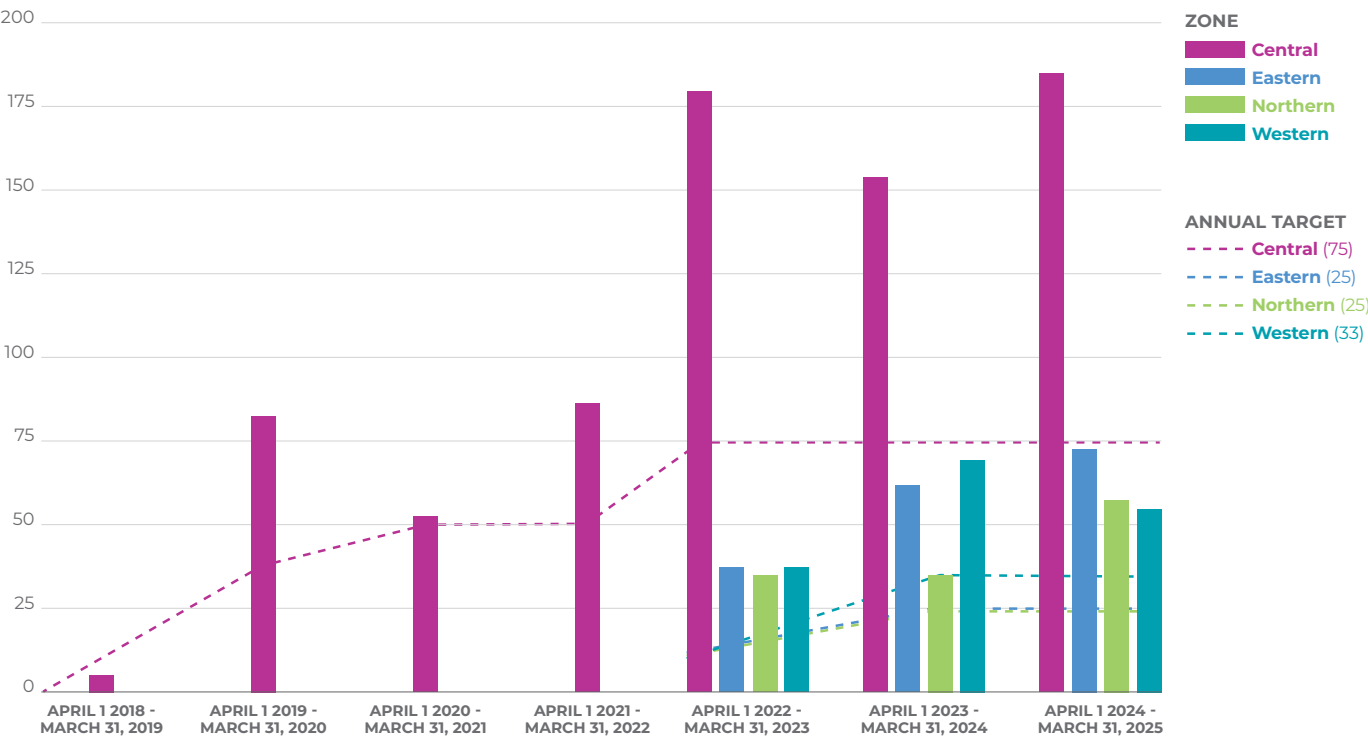


Summary of Program’s Success  
(from May 21, 2019 – March 31, 2025)

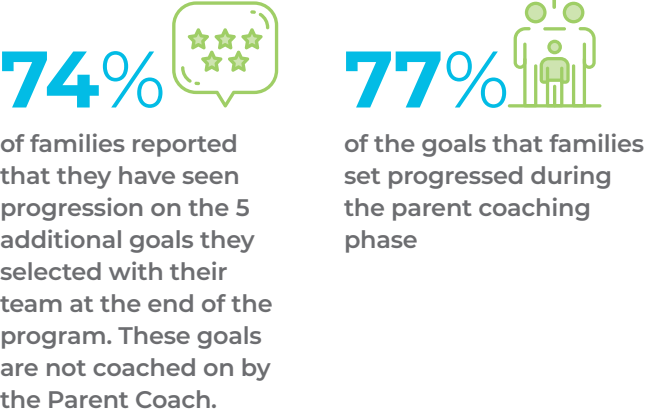


\*Target outcomes in Year 1 of the expansion for the Eastern, Northern, and Western zones were lower (12) than the full annual capacity targets due to the time required for hiring and training new staff. \* In 2024-2025, additional limited funding increased # of children seen in Central zone.

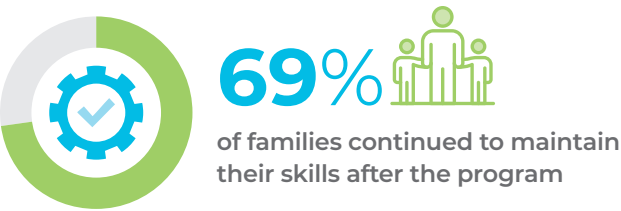
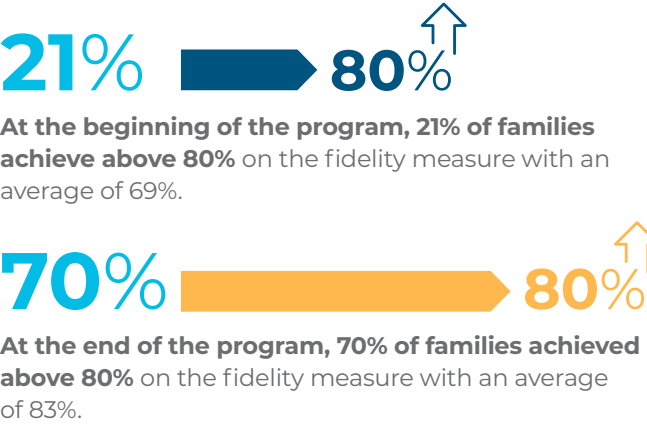
Program Referrals



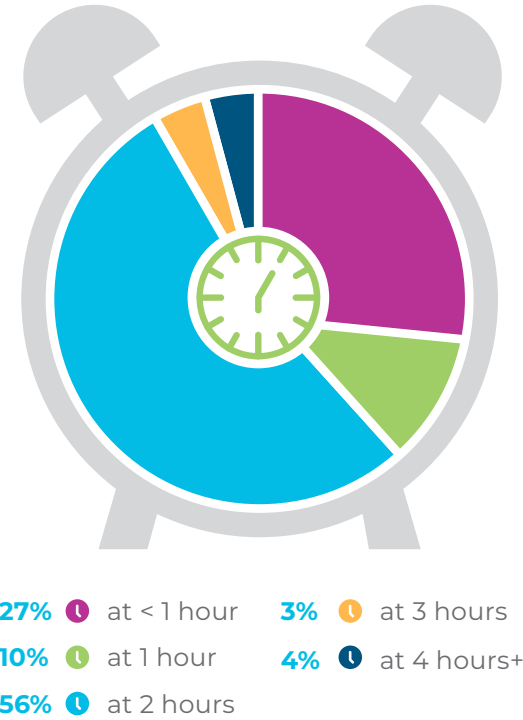
Goal Attainment



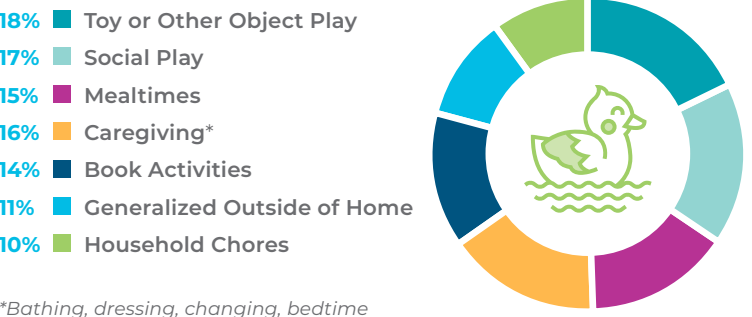
Parents’ Skills & Growth



Average Number of Hours Parents Report Practicing Each Day



Activities Parents Reported Using the Strategies Within Their Everyday



\*Bathing, dressing, changing, bedtime







### Enhanced Supports

Enhanced supports continue to focus on ESDM families, addressing staff training for program expansion. This year, the program extended support to 84 families through services like ESDM, targeted sleep, and behaviour support.

Additionally, the program expanded the Play and Connect drop-in program for caregivers to Truro, Sydney, Yarmouth, and the Halifax Regional Municipality.

This year, the tiered structure of QuickStart NS supportive services allowed the team to respond more effectively to a broader range of a family’s needs. By offering differentiated levels of support, the program ensured families received the right intensity of service at the right time, resulting in expanded access and more successful outcomes



TIER 1	TIER 2	TIER 3	TIER 4
Core ESDM-Based Programming	Increase in Understanding & Knowledge	Individualized Recommendations	Individualized Intervention Plan

### Parent and Caregiver Voices: What Families Liked Best

#### In-Home Convenience with Comfort and Care

Families valued the ease and calm of home-based sessions, which supported participation and reduced stress.

*“The in-home visits made it easy—and being able to reschedule when needed helped a lot.”*

#### Personalized, Needs-Based Support

Parents emphasized how tailored and responsive the program felt, focusing on their unique goals and their child’s specific needs.

*“It wasn’t generic—it focused on my child only and his needs.”*

#### Supportive, Goal-Oriented Coaching

Coaches were praised for being caring, consistent, and empowering. Weekly visits helped build trust and confidence.

*“The advice and direction changed my interactions with my child and made me a more confident parent.”*

### Parent Voices on How to Strengthen QuickStart NS

Feedback from families confirms that QuickStart NS is not only effective—it’s essential. It supports families during one of the most vulnerable times in their parenting journey, often while they are still waiting for a diagnosis.

- Reach more families earlier
- Offer more flexible timelines to fit busy lives
- Add specialist and mental health support
- Support social-emotional learning for both children and caregivers
- Ensure equitable access across all family types and communities

### Help While Waiting for a Diagnosis

Families appreciated emotional and practical guidance during the uncertain wait for a diagnosis.

*“The support while waiting for a diagnosis made a big difference—I felt less overwhelmed.”*

#### Interactive, Hands-On Learning for Both Parent and Child

Sessions were described as practical and engaging, with real-time coaching that helped both parents and children connect and learn together.

*“The program gave me a safe, low-stakes environment to test out parenting techniques... and helped me connect with my child.”*

#### Visible Progress and Family Growth

Parents noticed improvements in their child’s development and in their own parenting confidence.

*“Seeing my son’s progress over the last couple months has been amazing.”*

