

# **OECD Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care Canadian Background Report**

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## Executive Summary

This background report was commissioned by the Government of Canada as part of Canada's participation in the OECD's Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care. Its purpose is to present a picture of the state of early childhood education and care (ECEC) in Canada at a pan-Canadian or national level.

### The Canadian context

Most of Canada is sparsely populated with the majority of its 30 million people living close to the United States border. Canada's Indigenous people, and the waves of immigrants who settled in Canada, are reflected in today's pluralistic society. Key current demographic and social trends with implications for ECEC include: (1) a declining birth rate in the population as a whole; (2) a large number of immigrants with a high proportion coming from non-European countries; (3) high labour force participation of mothers of young children; (4) an increase in the proportion of lone-parent families with young children; (5) significant rates of child poverty; (6) increased incidence of non-traditional work hours; and (7) a high birth rate in the Aboriginal community and Aboriginal urban migration.

A description of Canadian ECEC services and programs touches on 14 jurisdictions, a number of service types, many auspices and an array of goals. The state of ECEC is, to some extent, a product of Canada's political organization, a federation. In the Canadian federal system, the arrangements between the federal government and the provinces/territories are fundamental to defining roles and responsibilities for ECEC.

There is no national policy or national approach to ECEC, or national ECEC legislation. The Canadian federal government has no direct responsibility for education, health or social services (with the exception of programs for First Nations people living on reserve)<sup>1</sup>; however, historically it has had an important role in shaping some of these provincial/territorial responsibilities through its fiscal power. The federal government does not pay for public education (it is funded by the provinces/territories and in some cases also municipalities) and there is no national department of education. Currently, the federal government's main role in ECEC consists of transferring money to the provinces/territories through the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST), an intergovernmental funding arrangement. A federal/provincial/territorial agreement in March 2003 is the first such intergovernmental initiative specific to child care.

Almost all ECEC services are under the jurisdiction of the provinces/territories. Each province/territory has a program for child care which includes a system of regulation, funding arrangements and policy; nursery schools/preschools are part of this program if they are regulated. Each province/territory also has a separate program for kindergarten.

This report uses three categories to discuss Canada's ECEC programs:

- ECEC under public education (kindergarten);
- ECEC under child care legislation (child care centres, regulated family child care, school-age child care in most provinces/territories and, in some provinces/territories, part-day nursery schools or preschools); and
- unregulated child care arrangements.

The frame for ECEC includes paid maternity/parental leaves and public education. The federal government provides partial payment for maternity and parental leave, the length and conditions of which are determined by the provinces/territories. Taken sequentially, maternity and parental benefits cover almost a year of leaves for eligible new parents. Public education is entirely a provincial/territorial responsibility. Several other key social programs also have an impact on children and families. Health

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<sup>1</sup> A reserve is a defined geographical territory governed by the federal *Indian Act* that has been set aside for the exclusive use of First Nations people (previously known as Indians).

care is a provincial/territorial responsibility with a national policy framework and is publicly financed. Generally, young children have access to necessary health services. A national child benefit, introduced in the late 1990s, provides supplementary income for eligible low-income families. Social welfare policy, income security and housing are under provincial/territorial jurisdiction.

## **Policy concerns: quality and access**

### *Quality*

There are multiple goals for ECEC in Canada. In kindergarten, child development is the primary goal right across the country, as it is for nursery schools and preschools. In contrast, whether the primary goal for child care is child development, supporting parental attachment to the paid labour force, or some combination of these two goals depends upon the province/territory.

Conceptually, the idea of ECEC quality tends to be associated with enhancing school readiness. There is little specific evidence about the quality of Canadian kindergartens. Research on regulated child care indicates that while ECEC in centres and regulated family child care is generally provided by supportive adults who protect children's health and safety, many programs fail to provide the types of experiences necessary to support children's development (Goelman, Doherty, Lero, Goelman, LaGrange and Tougas, 2000; Doherty, Lero, Goelman, Tougas and LaGrange, 2000a). The main policy approaches that have been taken by provincial/territorial governments to improve child care quality are: (1) strengthening regulation; (2) encouraging training; (3) improving wages; (4) undertaking or funding projects or initiatives associated with quality; and (5) funding community institutions that can support quality initiatives.

### *Access*

For an ECEC service to be accessible, several conditions must be met: (1) a space must be available; (2) eligibility criteria must be met (if there are eligibility criteria); (3) the parent must be able to afford to pay the fee (if there is one); and (4) the service must be appropriate (i.e. meet the needs of both the child and the family).

Every province/territory has publicly funded kindergarten for 5-year-olds. There is some kindergarten for 4-year-olds—usually those defined as at risk—in several provinces, while there is almost full kindergarten provision for four-year-olds in Ontario. Kindergarten is publicly funded and available for any 5-year-old whose parent wishes to use it and is compulsory for 5-year-olds in three provinces. In general, kindergartens operate on a part-time basis, sometimes part day (usually 2½ hours), sometimes alternate days. They are usually closed from the end of June to early September and for statutory holidays and teacher professional development days. As part of public education, kindergarten is generally guaranteed to children with special needs, usually through inclusion in regular classrooms.

Access to regulated child care in Canada is not an entitlement in any province/territory. In 2001, the overall coverage for children age 0 to 6 in regulated child care centres across Canada was approximately 15% (this includes part-day spaces such as nursery schools). Other children are served in regulated family child care homes; these account for approximately 20% of regulated child care for children age 0 to 12, but information on the proportion of such spaces used for children under age 6 is not available. Most regulated child care is privately operated, usually on a not-for-profit basis by parent groups, voluntary organizations or other non-profit entities or on a private, for-profit basis by individuals or businesses. The main method of providing government funds for child care is through fee subsidies for low-income families in all provinces/territories except Quebec. In Quebec, parents pay \$7 a day for regulated care; a supplementary subsidy program further assists very low-income families. The trend in recent years in child care has been inclusion of children with special needs in regular programs; all provinces/territories have provisions for extra supports for inclusion (although these may not always be available for eligible children). In the past decade, specific federal programs have increased access to ECEC for Aboriginal children both on and off reserve.

## **Policy approaches: regulations, staffing, program content and implementation, family engagement and support, and funding and financing**

### *Regulations*

The nature of regulation is conceptually different in kindergarten, as part of the public education system, and child care. Regulation of education starts from a premise that it is a public service mandated to provide universal access; education is regulated as a system with defined powers, roles and responsibilities. Child care is neither an entitlement nor a mandated service. It is regulated as a private enterprise, albeit usually a private not-for-profit enterprise, in which there is a public interest. Each province/territory has a set of rules (standards or regulations) that must be met for the operator of a child care program to be granted a licence to operate. Each province/territory has a system of monitoring compliance with the rules and sanctions for non-compliance.

### *Staffing*

In Canada, an historic dichotomy between programs intended to provide education and those intended to provide care continues to exist and is reflected in fundamental differences in the requirements to enter the occupation, how staff/teachers are trained, their status and their remuneration levels. Kindergarten and child care both face challenges in maintaining an adequate supply of qualified workers and reflecting the diversity of Canada's population in their workforces.

### *Program content and implementation*

Each province/territory has its own statement of learning outcomes for kindergarten. These indicate that kindergarten is a place in which children should develop a greater understanding of self, others and the local community, increase their creative abilities, and develop specific language, literacy and numeracy skills. Generally, provinces/territories have not developed philosophical approaches or specific curricula for child care. Quebec has implemented a common curriculum to be used in child care throughout the province.

### *Family engagement and support*

The extent to which parents are partners in their children's ECEC program varies both as a function of the program type and the practices of individual services. The parent role in Canada also includes parents as initiators and operators of ECEC services. Parents' expectations for their children vary with the type of program; generally, parents expect kindergartens to focus on the skills and knowledge necessary for school success and child care to provide a mix of care and activities that will support children's skill development. Parents are assisted to balance work and family responsibilities through several categories of family leave. Other family supports include Canada's national health insurance program, family resource programs, home visiting programs, government programs to help parents pay for child care, and income support for low-income families.

### *Funding and financing*

The cost of providing ECEC services is shared among parents and the federal, provincial/territorial and municipal governments. The proportion of funding from the different sources varies depending upon the kind of program and the province/territory. Kindergarten is publicly funded, primarily by the provinces/territories, with additional municipal funding in three provinces. In child care, the bulk of the operating revenue comes from parent fees. Provincial/territorial governments provide some operating funds to programs and pay fee subsidies directly to programs on behalf of low-income families. Generally, there is little public funding for child care facilities or other infrastructure. Financial contributions by businesses, social organizations or other non-government organizations (NGOs) are negligible. There are various kinds of payments to parents to help purchase child care; these funds can be used for either regulated or unregulated child care.

The federal government provides direct and indirect financing for ECEC in several ways: (1) an income tax deduction for families with young children, the Child Care Expense Deduction, which can be used for regulated or unregulated child care; (2) direct funding of a number of programs for Aboriginal children, military families

and immigrants/refugees; and (3) transfers of funds to the provinces/territories through the CHST as part of block funding for health, post-secondary education and social services. The CHST also includes some dedicated funding for the federal/provincial/territorial Early Childhood Development (ECD) Agreement and the federal/provincial/territorial Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care.

## **Evaluation and research**

Contextual information useful for planning ECEC services is available from various federal government sources and some basic information about ECEC programs is available from provincial/territorial governments. NGOs and other researchers have contributed to the knowledge about ECEC in Canada through periodic national reports and one-time-only studies. However, there are many gaps in Canada-wide data pertaining specifically to ECEC programs, their users and the impact of ECEC policies and practices.

## **Trends, noteworthy initiatives and challenges for the future**

In the past decade, the media and reports such as *The Early Years Study* (McCain and Mustard, 1999) have played a key role with the general public and with governments in increasing awareness of the relationships between children's early experiences and their later health, well-being and development. This heightened awareness is evident in intergovernmental agreements, such as the federal/provincial/territorial ECD Agreement, and in training curricula for people planning to work in ECEC.

There are four particularly noteworthy recent initiatives: the development and implementation of a comprehensive family support policy in Quebec; the expansion of maternity/parental benefits and leaves; the expansion of ECEC programs for Aboriginal children; and a federal, provincial/territorial agreement, including federal funds, to improve access to regulated child care programs (the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care). The Quebec family support initiative includes a universal approach to ECEC and public funding so that the fee for regulated child care is \$5 a day for any parent regardless of family income. The recently elected Quebec Liberal government has announced that later this summer it will review the universal nature of the \$5 a day program implemented by the previous Parti Québécois government. The January 2002 expansion of maternity/parental benefits and leaves means that an eligible parent can take up to 50 weeks off work and receive partial salary replacement from the federal government.

The main challenges pertaining to ECEC facing Canada are: (1) building a common pan-Canadian purpose and vision for ECEC; (2) creating a coherent system of ECEC that can simultaneously support parental labour force participation, healthy child development, and populations in need of additional or specific forms of support; (3) building on what is known about processes that support quality; and (4) maintaining and fostering collaboration among the federal, provincial/territorial and local governments and between these governments and Aboriginal communities.

## Preface

Canada's early childhood education and care (ECEC) situation is a product of its political organization—a federation—its history and prevailing social values about the roles and responsibilities of families and governments with respect to children. There is no national ECEC policy framework or a pan-Canadian approach to program delivery. As a result, a description of ECEC services and programs in Canada touches on 14 jurisdictions, a number of service types, many auspices, and an array of goals. While Canada's heterogeneous approach to ECEC is perhaps not unique, it presents a challenge when attempting to provide an accurate overview that adequately reflects all regions.

The purpose of this report is to provide a picture of the state of ECEC at a pan-Canadian or national level. It presents an overall summary of the situation of ECEC supported by provincial/territorial examples and some detailed information by province/territory in tables where appropriate.

## Methodology

This background report was commissioned by the Government of Canada in support of Canada's participation in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD's) Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care. The content of the report responds to a common set of questions posed by the OECD to all participating countries. The report was developed under the guidance of an intergovernmental review steering committee composed of representatives of federal and provincial governments. The writing team also benefited from the knowledge and comments of a number of individuals with expertise in a range of disciplines and issues.

The process used to develop the report relied heavily on existing materials. These materials included federal, provincial/territorial documents and reports, as well as documents from research studies. In addition, information was gathered through interviews or was provided by a number of key experts. The most current information available in print and on the Internet was used.

Much of the data on ECEC in Canada contained in this report was collected in 2002 for the most current version of the publication *Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada* (Friendly, Beach and Turiano, 2002, available on-line at <http://www.childcarecanada.org>). The Childcare Resource and Research Unit at the University of Toronto has produced this synthesis of information and data on ECEC across Canada about every two years since the early 1990s. Preparation of the current edition involved meetings with provincial/territorial child care officials and consultation with members of the child care community across Canada. As well, federal officials were contacted, officials with responsibility for kindergarten in each province/territory were interviewed, and several special runs of Statistics Canada data were commissioned.

# **Overview of the Report**

## **Section 1: Context**

This section provides an overview of Canada and the people who live in it and a brief history of Canadian ECEC. It also identifies important trends that have an impact on ECEC, describes the roles and responsibilities of the different levels of government, and provides a summary of Canada's ECEC services and supports for families with young children.

## **Section 2: Policy concerns**

The first part of this section discusses the goals and objectives associated with quality, how quality is assessed, and efforts by governments and others to improve ECEC quality. The remainder of the section examines access from the perspectives of availability, eligibility, affordability and appropriateness.

## **Section 3: Policy approaches**

Five major policy approaches are addressed in this section. They are: (1) how ECEC is regulated and trends in regulation; (2) staff training, remuneration levels and human resource issues; (3) program content and implementation; (4) family engagement and support; and (5) funding and financing ECEC services.

## **Section 4: Evaluation and research**

This section describes the types of data related to ECEC that are available in Canada and identifies gaps in evaluation, data and research.

## **Section 5: Concluding comments**

The final section summarizes the main points made in the body of the paper. It also identifies and describes four noteworthy recent initiatives, discusses the heightened awareness in Canada of the importance of the early years, and identifies four challenges facing ECEC in Canada.

## Section 1: Context

### 1. An overview of Canada

#### *Geography and population density*

Canada's most distinctive geographic characteristics are its northern location, mammoth size, low population density and proximity to the United States. All of these factors have had significant impacts on today's cultural and social realities. Occupying the northern half of the North American continent, Canada is the second-largest country in the world with a land mass of more than nine million square kilometres that encompasses six time zones.

With only 3.1 residents per kilometre, Canada is also one of the least densely populated of the industrialized nations (Statistics Canada, 2003a). Population density, however, varies considerably from one area to another. Most of Canada's inhabitants live along the southern border with the United States in a corridor of not more than a few hundred kilometres from north to south. Four regions: (1) southern Ontario centred on Toronto; (2) Montréal and its surrounds; (3) Vancouver and its surrounds and the southern part of Vancouver Island, which includes Victoria; and (4) the Calgary–Edmonton corridor account for 51% of the population (Statistics Canada, 2002a). While almost 80% of the population lives in urban communities of more than 10,000, there are rural and remote northern areas where the population density is considerably less than the average 3.1 residents per kilometre.

#### *Population*

According to the 2001 Census, Canada's population was more than 30 million—an increase of 4% since 1996. Most of this growth has occurred in the large urban areas along the U.S. border; overall, population growth in the rest of the country is essentially static (Statistics Canada, 2002a).

In 2001, Aboriginal people—First Nations, Métis (descendents of Aboriginal people and European fur traders/settlers who have developed their own Métis culture) and Inuit (the original inhabitants of some parts of the Far North) made up 3.3% of the total population. Between 1996 and 2001, the Aboriginal population increased by 22.2% in contrast to an increase of 3.4% in the non-Aboriginal population. One third of the Aboriginal population is under age 15, compared to 19% of the non-Aboriginal population. The highest concentrations of Aboriginal people live in the three territories and the two Prairie provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Almost half of all Aboriginal people, 49%, live in large urban areas, 31% live on reserves<sup>2</sup> and in settlements, and 20% live in rural non-reserve areas (Statistics Canada, 2003b).

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<sup>2</sup> A reserve is a defined geographical territory governed by the federal *Indian Act* that has been set aside for the exclusive use of First Nations people (previously known as Indians).

## Canada, provinces and territories and their main cities



**Source:** Natural Resources Canada. Available on-line line at:  
[http://atlas.gc.ca/site/english/maps/reference/national/can\\_political\\_e\\_refe](http://atlas.gc.ca/site/english/maps/reference/national/can_political_e_refe).

The first wave of settlers, primarily from France and Britain, began to arrive in Canada as early as the 16th century. Canada is officially a bilingual country with 22.9% of Canadians speaking French as their first language and 59.1% reporting English as their mother tongue (Statistics Canada, 2002b). French is the majority language of Quebec and there are, in addition, large francophone populations in Ontario, Manitoba and New Brunswick.

The immigrants who began arriving in Canada in the middle part of the 19th century came mostly from Europe. However, 58% of those who immigrated in the 1990s were born in Asia and the Middle East with only 20% from Europe (Statistics Canada, 2003c). Between 1996 and 2001, the number of Canadians reporting a mother tongue other than English or French rose by 12% to 5.3 million—more than one in six people in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2002b). The most prevalent other languages are Chinese, Italian, German, Punjabi and Spanish. Immigrants have played and continue to play a major role in shaping Canada's pluralist society. Canada's multiculturalism policy supports the diversity of Canadian society and encourages the preservation of different languages and cultural practices.



**Table 1: Provincial/territorial capitals and populations, 2001**

Province/territory	Capital city and its total population	Total provincial/territorial population	Provincial/territorial population age 0–6
Newfoundland & Labrador	St. John's (172,920)	521,986	30,305
Prince Edward Island	Charlottetown (58,360)	135,294	9,325
Nova Scotia	Halifax (359,185)	908,007	58,180
New Brunswick	Fredericton (81,345)	729,498	46,020
Quebec	Québec City (682,755)	7,237,479	462,075
Ontario	Toronto (4,682,250)	11,410,046	821,320
Manitoba	Winnipeg (671,275)	1,119,583	86,255
Saskatchewan	Regina (192,805)	978,933	73,975
Alberta	Edmonton (937,840)	2,974,807	226,900
British Columbia	Victoria (311,905)	3,907,738	252,060
Nunavut	Iqaluit (5,236)	26,745	4,035
Northwest Territories	Yellowknife (16,540)	37,360	3,720
Yukon Territory	Whitehorse (21,410)	28,674	2,070
<b>CANADA</b>	<b>Ottawa-Hull (1,063,665)</b>	<b>30,007,094</b>	<b>2,076,240</b>

**Source:** Statistics Canada. (2002c). *Age and Sex for Population, for Canada, Provinces, Territories, Census Metropolitan Areas and Census Agglomerations, 2001 Census – 100% Data*. Catalogue number 95F0300XCB01004.

### *The economy*

In the past, the Canadian economy relied heavily on resource-based industries, such as farming, forestry, fishing, mining and the production of oil and natural gas. These industries continue to be an important part of the economy in some provinces as do goods-producing industries such as the auto industry. However, resource-based and goods-producing industries represent a declining proportion of employment while the proportion of jobs in the services sector has increased substantially. In 2001, the services sector employed three out of four Canadians (Statistics Canada, 2002d).

### *Canada's political organization*

Canada is a federation consisting of 10 provinces and three territories, one of which, Nunavut, was created in 1999. Generally, the federal government is responsible for matters considered necessary for the development and maintenance of a national community (e.g. foreign policy, defence, citizenship, First Nations people living on reserve, currency, trade and commerce, the postal service, and criminal law). The provinces/territories are responsible for matters that assist in the preservation of distinctive regional communities and the conduct of everyday life. These include education, social services, health services, labour standards, property and civil rights, language rights, and the administration of the criminal justice system. Control over natural resources is divided between federal and provincial/territorial governments. The provinces/territories frequently delegate certain powers to local municipal governments.

## **2. Introduction to the question of ECEC in Canada**

For the purposes of this report, ECEC is defined as all arrangements that provide care and education for children under age 6 regardless of the setting, funding, opening hours or program content. In Canada, the main ECEC services are kindergarten and child care. Other services within the parameters of this report include Aboriginal Head Start and nursery schools/preschools in those provinces/territories where such programs are regulated under child care legislation. Young children and their families are also supported by the publicly funded health care system, public education, by various government income transfers such as the National Child Benefit (NCB), maternity and parental leave benefits, and child and family services such as family resource programs. These complementary programs are also the subject of this report.

Child care in Canada was first established as a service to enable women to engage in paid employment; this remains the primary goal for child care for governments in many provinces/territories. In contrast, nursery schools/preschools and kindergartens were established to provide educational experiences for children. This dichotomy between care to support female labour force participation and education for children continues and is central to Canadian ECEC. A third goal for child care that sometimes emerges is that of providing a developmental program for children deemed to be at risk.

Education is viewed as a societal responsibility and publicly funded education is an entitlement for all children of compulsory school age, usually age 6. Generally, kindergarten for 5-year-olds is treated as if it were an entitlement; it is widely available and publicly funded. Providing child care for young children is viewed as primarily the responsibility of the individual family. Outside Quebec, user-parents pay most of the cost of child care with the exception of low-income parents who may have their fees subsidized so that they can engage in paid employment.

In the last decade, the value of investing in children has gained considerable support. Reports such as *The Early Years Study* (McCain and Mustard, 1999) have played a key role with the general public as well as with policy makers in summarizing and popularizing research on the relationships between children's early experiences and their health, behaviour and learning throughout life. *The Early Years Study* has been influential in helping people to understand that care and education are not separate entities but instead interact with each other, and that both are important for children's well-being and development.

### 3. Demographic, economic and social trends

Key trends that have an impact on ECEC include:

- a declining birth rate;
- a large number of immigrants with a high proportion coming from non-European countries;
- high labour force participation by mothers with young children;
- an increase in the proportion of lone-parent families with young children;
- significant rates of child poverty;
- increased incidence of non-traditional work hours; and
- a birth rate in the Aboriginal community that is much higher than in the population as a whole, coupled with migration to urban areas by Aboriginal families.

#### *Canada's declining birth rate*

In the late 1970s, the birth rate dropped below population replacement levels and has remained well below it ever since. In 1999, it was 1.52 children per woman (Statistics Canada, 2002e). Overall, child populations in Canada, particularly those under age 6, declined throughout the 1990s except in the Aboriginal community.

**Table 2: Total number of children by age group, 1992, 1995, 1998, 2001 – Canada (rounded in 1000s)**

Number of children (1000s)	1992	1995	1998	2001
0–2 years	1,165	1,142	1,065	1,017
3–5 years	1,095	1,202	1,181	1,074
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,260</b>	<b>2,344</b>	<b>2,246</b>	<b>2,091</b>

**Source:** Friendly, Beach and Turiano, 2002, Table 27.

**Note:** Information for the territories is not available for 1992, 1995 and 1998; therefore, the above table includes only provincial populations.

#### *Immigration patterns*

In 2001, immigrants accounted for 18.3% of Canada's total population, up from 17.4% in 1996 (Statistics Canada, 2003c). Between 1991 and 1996, the immigrant population increased by 15.5%—more than three times the 4% expansion of the Canadian-born population (Denton, Feaver and Spencer, 1999).

Many immigrants have children and almost two thirds of the children who came to Canada between 1997 and 1999 spoke neither English nor French (Canadian Council on Social Development, 2002). The majority of new immigrants settle in Canada's largest urban areas of Toronto, Vancouver, Montréal and Calgary-Edmonton (Statistics Canada, 2003d). In some kindergarten classes in Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal, more than 50% of the students were born outside Canada or are from recently immigrated families (Larose, Terrisse, Bédard and Karsenti, 2001).

#### *A high labour force participation by mothers with young children*

In the past few decades, there has been a major shift away from the older model of the single-earner family. It is now the norm for both parents in a two-parent family to be employed while their children are young. In 2001, 65.8% of mothers whose youngest child was less than age 3 were in the labour force as were 73.4% of women whose youngest child was 3 to 5 years of age. The majority of these women were employed full time (Statistics Canada, 2003e).

#### *An increase in the proportion of lone parents with young children*

In 2001, lone-parent families represented 16% of all families in Canada in contrast to 10% in 1971. In 2001, 261,310 lone-parent families (20%) had at least one child under age 6 living at home (Statistics Canada, 2002f).

#### *Significant rates of child poverty*

Over the past few years, there has been a downward trend in the proportion of families with children living in poverty as defined by Statistics Canada's low income cut-off (LICO), from 20.4% in 1996 to 17.2% in 1999 (Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers responsible for Social Services, 2002). In 2000, 16.5% of children age 0 to 18 (1.1 million) lived in families with a total income below the LICO (statistic calculated by the Canadian Council on Social Development using Statistics Canada's *Income Trends in Canada 1980–2000*, Catalogue 13F0022XCB).

#### *Increased incidence of non-traditional work hours*

Between 1976 and 1996, service industries grew from 67% of employment in Canada to 75%, primarily in the consumer services areas such as the retail and the hospitality industries (Heisz and Cote, 1998). A burgeoning service industry and growing demand for round-the-clock services have led to a growth in non-standard work hours. In 1995, 32% of Canada's labour force worked in some form of non-day or rotating shift job (Johnson, 1997).

#### *High Aboriginal birth rate and urban migration*

The birth rate in the Aboriginal community is one-and-a-half times higher than the national average (Statistics Canada, 2003b). In 2001, 35% of the Aboriginal population was under age 15, compared with 19% of the non-Aboriginal population. There has been a steady urban migration over the past decade or so with 49% of all Aboriginal people living in large urban areas in 2001 (Statistics Canada, 2003b).

#### *The impact of these trends on ECEC programs*

Some of these trends, such as increased levels of immigration from areas other than Europe, the increased incidence of non-traditional work hours, and the urban migration of Aboriginal people influence the way in which services need to be delivered. Increasingly, ECEC services are called upon to assist young immigrant children from very different cultures adjust to Canada and learn English or French. Parents who work shifts or on weekends require child care services that operate during these hours. This has resulted in an increased demand for child care services beyond the traditional day-time, Monday to Friday mode of delivery and for increased flexibility in enrolment and attendance. The urban migration of Aboriginal families has led to a demand for Aboriginal ECEC services in large urban areas and the need for non-Aboriginal services to respect children's Aboriginal culture in their programming. Finally, in spite of a decline in birth rate, the demand for child care remains high, reflecting the influx of immigrants who have young children and an increase in the labour force participation by mothers whose children are under age 6.

#### **4. A short history of Canadian ECEC**

##### *The origins of ECEC programs*

In Canada, early childhood programs such as kindergartens, child care centres and nursery schools/preschools were originally established for different purposes. Child care programs were first established in the late-1850s in Quebec as charitable services intended to provide basic custodial care and supervision for the young children of impoverished mothers who had to engage in paid work to support the family. By the end of the 1800s, there were also several child care programs with the same purpose operated by charitable organizations in Ontario and by 1920 similar programs existed in British Columbia, Manitoba and Nova Scotia.

Initially influenced by the Child Study movement, nursery schools or preschools began to be established in the 1920s as part-day programs that would provide enrichment experiences for middle-class children through creative play. Eventually, many of these fee-paying programs were established by parent groups. The nursery schools and preschools emphasized that their purpose was the provision of developmental experiences for the children, not the provision of custodial care while parents worked.

Preceded by private kindergartens in many parts of Canada, kindergarten as part of the public school system was first established in Toronto in 1885 and started to receive provincial funding two years later. Kindergartens were initially for 3- to 5-year-olds and were full school-day programs; later, they evolved to part-day programs for 5-year-olds. Generally, kindergartens were viewed as an opportunity to prepare children for entry into the formal school system and emphasized the development of school-related skills. Following the Second World War, most school boards across Canada introduced publicly funded kindergarten. Beginning in the 1950s, Toronto began to establish public kindergartens for 4-year-olds in response to the post-Second World War wave of immigrants; eventually, these “junior” kindergartens were expanded across the province and made available to all 4-year-olds. Today, all provinces/territories provide publicly funded kindergartens that are attended by almost all 5-year-old children.

The differences in the origins and purposes of these programs set the stage for the differences in funding, required training to work in the program, worker remuneration levels, and government responsibility that continue until the present day.

##### *Child care between 1900 and 2000*

Organized child care existed in a number of Canadian provinces in the early 1900s, but there was little government involvement until the Second World War. In 1942, in response to the need for women to work in war-related industries, the federal government established the *Dominion-Provincial War-Time Agreement*. This first direct federal involvement in child care made 50% federal cost sharing available to provinces to support child care programs with the stipulation that centres established and operated under the Agreement would be used by mothers working in essential war-time industries. Only Ontario and Quebec participated in this Agreement. The arrangement was intended to be only an emergency wartime action. It was rescinded after the war ended when jobs were needed for returning service men and the employment of women was no longer deemed essential. All six Quebec wartime child care centres closed as did many in Ontario.

Between the end of the Second World War and the late 1970s, the prevalent family model in Canada was that of a single earner whose salary was sufficient to support the family and a stay-at-home mother who looked after the children. In the 1980s, a number of economic and social changes resulted in an increased need for non-parental care for young children. Family incomes adjusted by the rate of inflation declined steadily during this decade and fewer families were able to get by on a single income. Throughout the 1980s, the labour force participation of mothers with young children increased each year. By 1990, 60% of women whose youngest child was under age 3 and 66% whose youngest child was under age 6 were engaged in paid employment (Friendly, 1994). Greater mobility within Canada and extensive immigration meant that fewer young parents lived near extended families whose members could provide child care.

The second federal government venture into child care began in 1966 with the introduction of the *Canada Assistance Plan* (CAP), the national welfare program. Under this program, the federal government reimbursed the provinces/territories for up to 50% of their expenditures on programs intended to ameliorate or prevent poverty (e.g. the provision of child care so that low-income parents could engage in paid employment). While it took until the mid-1970s for all provinces/territories to begin to use CAP's provisions for cost-sharing expenditures on child care, eventually they all did—which meant that they were all using some of their own money to fund child care. Initially, government funds were used primarily for fee subsidies, but by 1989 the two territories and all provinces except British Columbia were providing some form of annual operating grants to regulated child care services.

In 1995, there was a reduction in the amount of federal transfer payments to the provinces/territories for health, post-secondary education and social services. At the same time, federal funding for these programs was collapsed into a single block grant, the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST) and CAP ceased to exist. The period of Canada-wide expansion of regulated child care spaces that had occurred between 1973 and 1993 stopped. Rapid expansion began again in Quebec in 1998 when the provincial government established a multi-year plan for the development of new spaces.

### *The growth of public support for child care*

At the beginning of the 1980s, child care was generally perceived by the public as the responsibility of parents with government's role being limited to licensing and the provision of fee subsidies for a narrow segment of the population—low-income, needy or high-risk families. By the time the federal government undertook broad consultation through 31 public hearings across Canada in 1986, opinion had shifted toward a much broader role that included direct government funding of child care services (Friendly, Mathien and Willis, 1987). This shift may in part reflect the economic and social changes identified above that occurred during the 1980s, such as the increased workforce participation by mothers of young children. A subsequent study that gathered data from focus groups and round-table discussions across Canada reports that participants expressed the view that jobs are the best answer to poverty and that child care is an important enabler of parental workforce participation. Overall, there was strong support among the study's participants for a family policy mix that would include enhanced parental leaves and a more comprehensive and accessible system of child care (Michalski, 1999). A Canada-wide survey conducted in November and December 2002 found that 90% of respondents either strongly agreed (44%) or agreed (46%) with the need for government to ensure that all Canadians have access to quality child care (Canadian Child Care Federation/Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, 2003).

### *ECEC on the national agenda*

In 1970, the Royal Commission on the Status of Women identified child care as essential for women's equality and made the first official recommendation for a national, universal child care program. This recommendation was repeated by the 1984 Royal Commission on Equality of Employment and by the national Task Force on Child Care that reported in 1986. Between 1984 and 1995, there were three attempts by successive federal governments to develop a national approach to child care. For different reasons, none of these resulted in a national child care strategy.

A new chapter was opened in 1997 when the federal/provincial/territorial governments agreed to work together on a National Children's Agenda (NCA) to support and enhance the health, safety and development of all young children. Subsequently, as discussed in the following section, two federal/provincial/territorial agreements pertinent to ECEC were signed, one in 2000 and the other in 2003. The 2000 Early Childhood Development (ECD) Agreement provides the provinces/territories with federal funds to be used to improve and expand services and supports for children under age 6 and their families that: (1) promote healthy pregnancy, birth and infancy; (2) improve parenting and family supports; (3) strengthen early childhood development, learning and care; and (4) strengthen community supports. The Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care, signed in March 2003, involves the transfer of federal funds to the provinces/territories to improve access to affordable, quality regulated child care.

## 5. Roles and responsibilities for ECEC

The federal government, the 13 provincial/territorial governments, municipal governments, and the voluntary sector/non-government organizations all have roles in Canada's ECEC system.

### *The federal government*

The federal government does not have responsibility for ECEC services except for those that target specific populations: Aboriginal people, military families and new immigrants or refugees. Aboriginal programs funded by the federal government include kindergarten for children living on reserve, Head Start programs for Aboriginal children on reserve or living in urban or northern communities, and child care programs, both on reserve and in far northern or Inuit communities. Federally funded military family resource centres provide a variety of family support services which may include play groups and child care. In addition, while newcomers to Canada are engaged in federally funded English or French as a Second Language training, their young children are looked after on-site in an associated children's program.

The federal government is also responsible for maternity and parental leave benefits and for the NCB (the NCA is discussed later in this section). In a sense, the federal government also supports the development of child care for the population in general through fiscal transfers to provinces/territories, such as the CHST.

### *Provincial and territorial governments*

With the few exceptions noted above where the federal government is responsible, ECEC programs—child care and kindergarten—are the primary responsibility of provincial/territorial governments. Each has a program for child care that includes a system of regulation, child care policies, procedures for fee subsidization for certain families and, in most cases, a mechanism to provide regulated settings with some operating funds through a system of grants. Each jurisdiction, with the exception of Prince Edward Island where child care and kindergarten are part of the same program, also has a separate program of public kindergarten. Child care and kindergarten are described in more detail later in this section. Provinces/territories are also responsible for income support programs for low-income families, for health care, for the employment legislation that sets the terms for maternity and parental leave, and for the post-secondary institutions that train early childhood educators<sup>3</sup> and kindergarten teachers.

### *Municipal governments and other local authorities*

In the education system, the governing body of the school board/division for a given geographic area operates under powers delegated to it by the province/territory. These elected bodies have a role to play in ECEC through their responsibility for the operation of elementary schools and the kindergarten programs within them. In three provinces, local governments levy taxes specifically to partly fund the local school system. In the territories and the other provinces, schools are funded solely through provincial or territorial general revenues. School boards in Quebec have a mandate to operate school-age child care for children 5 to 12 years attending kindergarten or elementary school.

Canadian local governments (usually municipalities) are subordinate to the province/territory in which they are located; these may delegate powers to them. Generally, they have no role or a limited role in ECEC. Local governments in Ontario have mandated roles in child care services, which include funding, managing services and policy setting. In addition to these functions, Ontario municipalities operate an estimated 10% of regulated child care services in the province. Outside Ontario, local governments do not have a mandated role in child care. However, the City of Vancouver government has generated revenue for child care through collecting levies from land developers to enable the expansion of spaces. Two municipalities in Alberta operate child care programs and a number in Alberta set standards and provide fee subsidies for school-age care.

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<sup>3</sup> Early childhood educators are people with a post-secondary certificate or diploma in early childhood education (or equivalent training).

### *Current intergovernmental initiatives*

Under Canadian constitutional conventions, social and educational programs like ECEC are the responsibility of individual provincial/territorial governments, except for those targeted at specific populations for whom the federal government has responsibility. For example, under the *Constitution Act, 1867*, the federal government has jurisdiction over “Indians and lands reserved for Indians” and therefore directly funds services such as ECEC that are provided to reserve residents. Intergovernmental agreements and federal transfer of funds to provincial/territorial governments contribute to ECEC and other programs. Currently, the 1999 Social Union Framework Agreement (SUFA) defines the intergovernmental framework for these agreements and transfers and defines how national social programs will be developed or modified.

The 1997 federal/provincial/territorial NCA<sup>4</sup> is intended to provide a policy framework for intergovernmental initiatives to support young children and their families. It sets out four broad goals: (1) all children should be as physically, emotionally and spiritually healthy as they can be, with strong self-esteem, coping skills and enthusiasm; (2) all children will have their basic needs for food, shelter, clothing and transportation met and will be protected from abuse, neglect, discrimination, exploitation and danger; (3) all children should have opportunities to reach their potential for good physical and social development, language skills, numeracy and general knowledge; and (4) all children should be helped to engage with others, to respect themselves and others, and to develop an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of belonging to a wider society (Federal/Provincial/Territorial Council of Ministers on Social Policy Renewal, 1999).

The NCB, launched in 1998, is one of the initiatives announced as part of the NCA. The Government of Canada’s contribution to the NCB initiative is through the NCB Supplement component of the federal Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB). The CCTB is a non-taxable monthly payment for families with children based on net family income and the number and ages of the children in the family. The CCTB is made up of two main parts: the base benefit which is available to over 80% of families with children, and the NCB Supplement which provides low-income families with additional child benefits on top of the base benefit. Because the NCB Supplement provides additional income support to low-income families with children, most provinces/territories and First Nations have reduced the income support they provide to children by the same amount received through the NCB Supplement. This has made funds available for reinvestments in new and enhanced benefits and services for low-income families, such as child care, child benefits and earned income supplements, early childhood services and children-at-risk services, and supplementary health benefits. The Saskatchewan Employment Supplement, paid to low-income families to offset the child-related costs that may be incurred by working, is one example of the way in which the NCB “reinvestment” funds have been used.

A third current intergovernmental agreement pertinent to ECEC is the 2000 federal/provincial/territorial ECD Agreement under which federal funding will reach an annual budget of \$500 million in 2003/04. The federal funds, which began flowing to provinces/territories in 2001, may be used in any of four areas: (1) promotion of healthy pregnancy, birth and infancy; (2) parenting and family support; (3) strengthening early childhood development and care; and (4) strengthening community supports. The areas in which these funds have been spent vary from one province/territory to another and include home visiting, pre-kindergarten for children deemed at risk for developmental problems, and child care, in addition to areas not directly related to ECEC such as parenting and literacy programs and prenatal benefits and supports.

In March 2003, the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care was agreed to by federal/provincial/territorial governments “to make additional investments in the specific area of early learning and child care. Stating that “Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers responsible for Social Services recognize that quality early learning and child care programs play an important role in promoting the social, emotional, physical and cognitive development of young children,” its stated objective is “to make further investments in the promotion of early childhood development and the support of parental

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<sup>4</sup> While generally agreeing with the principles set out in the initiatives, the Government of Quebec does not participate in these federal/provincial/territorial initiatives for children, including the National Children’s Agenda, the National Child Benefit, the Early Childhood Development Agreement and the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care.

workforce participation or employment training.” The federal government has undertaken to transfer a total of \$900 million to the provinces/territories over a five-year period to improve access to affordable, quality, provincially/territorially regulated programs (Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat, 2003).

#### *The voluntary sector and non-government organizations*

The voluntary sector and non-government organizations (NGOs) play multiple important roles in Canadian ECEC, including initiation and maintenance of child care programs and participation in policy and program development.

Several provinces/territories have community councils for public schools at the local level. Their roles are advisory but may include making suggestions for adapting provincial/territorial curricula to local needs and making recommendations as to how the school's budget should be spent. Teachers' associations at both national and provincial/territorial levels provide opportunities for professional development and endeavour to keep their members up to date about recent research and current conceptions of best practices.

Of the 77% of child care centres that are operated by non-profit boards of directors, most are delivered by voluntary, community-based or parent groups. Government-appointed bodies such as the Manitoba Child Day Care Regulations Review Committee and the Provincial Child Care Council in British Columbia are mandated to provide policy and program advice to governments. The federally funded Child Care Human Resources Round Table addresses policy and program issues related to human resources in child care. Child care organizations at national and provincial/territorial levels provide training and professional development, as well as information for the field about research and best practices. An active NGO role in advocacy for child care is well developed in Canada. Finally, child care and social policy NGOs play a key role in ECEC data and research.

## **6. An overview of ECEC provision in Canada**

### *Introduction*

The ECEC services in Canada that are attended by children on a regular scheduled basis are child care, nursery school (also known as preschool in some provinces/territories) and kindergarten. Regulated child care includes child care centres and regulated family child care homes and serves children from birth to age 12. Both types of setting operate year-round for five or more days a week and provide full-day services except for those programs that enroll only school-age children. Nursery schools/preschools, which usually serve children age 2½ to 5, are regulated under the child care legislation in some provinces/territories but are not regulated in others. Kindergarten for 5-year-olds (and for younger children where it exists) is usually the responsibility of a ministry of education and operates under its legislation. Both nursery schools/preschools and kindergarten usually operate on a part-time basis—half day or alternate days—from September to June. Parents also use unregulated situations for their children. These include unregulated family child care, an unrelated adult hired to care for the child in the child's own home, and some nursery schools and preschools.

On the basis of legislative status, Canada's ECEC programs can be categorized as follows:

- (1) ECEC within a provincial/territorial education system
  - kindergarten for 5-year-olds;
  - kindergarten for children under age 5; and
  - school-age child care in Quebec.
- (2) ECEC regulated under provincial/territorial child care legislation
  - child care centres;
  - some nursery schools and preschools;
  - regulated family child care;
  - school-age child care in all provinces/territories except Alberta and Quebec; and
  - Aboriginal child care and Aboriginal Head Start programs in some provinces/territories.



- (3) Unregulated situations used by parents for child care
- unregulated family child care by relatives;
  - unregulated family child care by others in the provider's own home;
  - an adult hired by the parents to care for the child in the child's own home (a nanny or sitter);
  - some nursery schools and preschools;
  - recreation programs, summer camp programs; and
  - child minding (e.g. when parents are engaged in the federal English or French as a Second Language program).

### *Kindergarten*

Kindergarten is almost always<sup>5</sup> part of the education system; its delivery is the responsibility of each province/territory. Compulsory school age varies somewhat across Canada but is generally between ages 5 to 7 and 16 to 18; kindergarten attendance is compulsory in three provinces. The school year is normally September to June. Ninety-five percent of Canadian children attend public<sup>6</sup> schools with about 5% attending private (or independent) schools or being schooled at home. Private schools must comply with the education legislation in their province/territory and follow its curriculum.

The language of instruction in kindergarten is almost always either English or French. Section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (part of the *Constitution Act, 1982*) ensures minority language rights in education. Thus, eligible children are entitled to schooling in the English or French linguistic minority of a province/territory.

The expressed purpose of kindergarten is education, not care. In all provinces/territories where kindergarten is part of the education system, teachers are required to have a post-secondary degree, although no jurisdiction requires specialization in early childhood. Each province/territory has its own statement of expected outcomes—the skills and knowledge children should be able to demonstrate at the end of kindergarten—and sometimes teacher guidelines or suggested activities as well. According to these statements, daily program activities generally focus on assisting children to develop a greater understanding of the world around them and the basic language, literacy and numeracy skills that are the foundation for the curriculum in the higher grades.

Kindergarten usually operates on a part-time basis for two to three hours a day or a full day on alternate days. In three provinces, it is offered for the complete school day. Generally, kindergarten is only for 5-year-olds except in Ontario where junior kindergarten for 4-year-olds is provided by almost all school boards. Other provinces offer kindergarten programs for some 4- or 3-year-olds. These programs are targeted to children or communities deemed to be at risk but are not province wide.

Public education (including kindergarten) for Aboriginal Canadians on reserve is funded by the federal government with some schooling conducted in Aboriginal languages. The operation of such on-reserve schools has increasingly been taken over by Aboriginal communities themselves.

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<sup>5</sup> In Prince Edward Island, kindergarten is regulated under child care legislation and delivered by child care centres and stand-alone programs. The Department of Education is responsible for funding and curriculum. In Alberta, kindergarten may be delivered by the school system or by private early childhood services operators.

<sup>6</sup> Three provinces and territories fund Roman Catholic schools for families that choose to use them. Five provinces provide partial funding for private and independent schools.

Table 3 provides basic information about kindergarten for children in the year prior to Grade 1. Most of these children are 5-year-olds; however, some children attending these programs may be 4- or 6-year-olds, depending upon practice in the province/territory. For example, Alberta permits 4-year-olds to attend kindergarten intended for the year prior to entry into Grade 1 as long as the child turns 5 by February 28 or if the child has a disability. The enrolment statistics in Table 3 are for all children enrolled, regardless of their age. This explains why, in Alberta and Yukon, the number of children enrolled in 2001 is greater than the number of 5-year-olds in each of these jurisdictions as reported by the 2001 Census.

**Table 3: Kindergarten for children in the year prior to Grade 1, 2001**

Province/territory	Total number of 5-year-olds, 2001	Total enrollment, 2001	Length of program
Newfoundland & Labrador	5,490	5,465	Part day, 570 instructional hours/year. Children may be required to alternate morning and afternoon attendance in blocks of time throughout the year.
Prince Edward Island	1,775	1,698	Part day, minimum 2.5 instructional hours/day. Programs may operate between 5 and 10 months/year.
Nova Scotia (called grade primary)	10,730	10,368	Full time as per primary grades—minimum of 4 instructional hours/day.
New Brunswick	8,330	Data not available	Full time as per primary grades, minimum 832.5 instructional hours/year.
Quebec (called maternelle)	86,310	77,500	Full time, 846 instructional hours/year.
Ontario	152,070	133,686	School boards decide on the schedule. Usually part day; may be full day on alternate days. Full day every day in francophone school boards.
Manitoba	15,585	13,854	School boards decide on the schedule; usually part-day, may be full-day or alternate day.
Saskatchewan	13,045	11,961	Part time. Schedules vary by school division. Legislation requires 80 full-school-day equivalents of instruction/year.
Alberta (called early childhood services)	40,455	40,948	Minimum of 475 instructional hours/year. Schedule depends on the provider.
British Columbia	46,405	38,290	2.4 instructional hours/day.
Nunavut	685	655	Minimum of 485 instructional hours/year and maximum of 6 hours/day.
Northwest Territories	715	556	Minimum of 485 and maximum of 570 instructional hours/year
Yukon Territory	380	400 <sup>1</sup>	Usually part day, 475 instructional hours/year.

**Sources:** Friendly et al., 2002, Table 8; Statistics Canada, 2002c. *Age and Sex for Population, for Canada, Provinces, Territories, Census Metropolitan Areas and Census Agglomerations. 2001 Census – 100% Data*. Catalogue number 95F0300XCB01004.

<sup>1</sup> In Yukon, some 4-year-olds are enrolled in kindergarten intended for the year prior to Grade 1, especially in situations where the child is deemed to be at risk for developmental problems.

Table 4 provides information about kindergarten for younger children in those provinces that provide this service.

**Table 4: Kindergarten for younger children, 2001**

Province	Description
Nova Scotia	One school board offers a pre-kindergarten program for inner-city schools and children deemed to be at risk. Enrolment was 140 children in 2001.
Quebec	Quebec has two programs available for some 4-year olds: pré-maternelle, a part-day program initially established for inner-city children (enrolment of 6,932 in 2001) and passe-partout, originally developed for low-income children in rural areas. Passe-partout consists of 24 sessions; 16 with children only and 8 with parents included (enrolment 8,879 in 2001).
Ontario	Most school boards offer junior kindergarten for children who are age 4 by December 31. Enrolment was 114,669 in 2001.
Manitoba	Two school divisions offer a nursery school program for 4-year olds. Enrolment figures for 2001 are not available.
Saskatchewan	Pre-kindergarten may be provided part day for 4-year-olds deemed to be at risk and living in targeted communities that meet specific criteria. Enrolment was approximately 1,400 in 2001.
Alberta	Children with special needs may attend early childhood services (kindergarten) at age 2½ if the child has a severe disability or at age 3½ if the child has a moderate disability. Enrolment in 2001 was 250 2-year-olds and 1,329 3-year-olds.

**Source:** Friendly et al., 2002, Table 8.

#### *Regulated child care*

Each province/territory has a program of regulated child care for children age 0 to 12 that includes child care centres and regulated family child care homes and, depending on the province/territory, may include nursery schools/preschools<sup>7</sup> and school-age programs. Overall, approximately 80% of these regulated spaces are centre-based and 20% are in family child care. The incidence of regulated family child care ranges from just over 1% of the total supply of regulated spaces in the Atlantic Provinces to almost 32% in Yukon.

Child care centres and nursery schools/preschools are located in a very broad range of facilities— industrial buildings, church basements, shopping malls, renovated buildings originally built as single-family homes, schools, workplaces, and the home of the operator. There are few child care centres operating in purpose-built buildings. Regulated family child care takes place in the home of a caregiver who, depending upon the province/territory, is either supervised by a licensed family child care agency or directly licensed by the government.

Each province/territory has its own set of legislated requirements for the operation of child care centres and family child care homes (e.g. standards related to staff–child ratios, and its own funding arrangements). There is wide variation in the standards for and funding of child care across the country. All the provinces/territories provide fee subsidization for eligible families for care provided in regulated child care centres or family child care homes. Some also permit fee subsidies to be used in unregulated settings. Generally, but not always, the fee subsidy is paid directly to the child care setting by the government.

The primary purpose of child care is the provision of care for children in the parents' absence, generally so that parents can be employed or engaged in training/education. However, by setting standards and by requiring or encouraging training in ECD, most provinces/territories indicate an expectation that the services will also support and enhance children's development. While, with the exception of Quebec, provinces/territories do not have defined curricula for child care, it seems that generally programs focus on play-based activities. Six provinces/territories provide part-day programs called nursery schools or

<sup>7</sup> Nursery schools/preschools are specified in child care legislation in six provinces. In three provinces/territories, nursery schools and preschools operate but are not regulated.

preschools under the child care legislation for children aged approximately 2 to 5 years. The intent of nursery schools/preschools is more related to the provision of educational or developmental experiences for children than to support parental employment or education.

Almost all regulated child care is privately operated, usually on a not-for-profit basis by parent groups, voluntary boards of directors or other non-profit entities (77%), or on a private, for-profit basis by individuals or businesses. An estimated 10% to 15% of the non-profit sub-total is run by local governments (almost all in Ontario) and school boards (almost all of these are school-age programs in Quebec). About 23% of the total supply of regulated child care is provided through for-profit (commercial or business) operations.

In 2001, there were approximately 2,091,000 children under age 6 in Canada. There were an estimated 315,000 regulated spaces for this age group in centre-based child care programs, including nursery schools/preschools. In addition, every province/territory has regulated family child care which provides additional regulated spaces for children under age 6. On a Canada-wide basis, family child care accounts for about 20% of all regulated child care spaces for children age 0 to 12. However, estimates of the number of children under age 6 served by family child care are not available.

Provincially/territorially regulated child care includes several kinds of programs specifically for Aboriginal children. The Government of Canada's First Nations/Inuit Child Care Initiative has funded the expansion of child care programs on reserves and in northern and Inuit communities right across Canada. First Nations child care is supported in Alberta and Ontario through Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. In addition, through Health Canada, the federal government funds Head Start programs both on reserve and off reserve. These services, usually managed by Aboriginal community groups or First Nations' governments, typically serve children age 3 to 5 and generally operate on a part-time basis three or four days a week. They strive to hire Aboriginal people as staff, provide programs that include content in Aboriginal culture and language, health promotion and school readiness, and involve parents and other community members in daily activities. While child care and Head Start programs for Aboriginal children are found in all provinces/territories, whether they are regulated by the province/territory in which they operate depends upon the province/territory.

Table 5 compares kindergarten in the year prior to Grade 1 and regulated child care on a number of salient variables.

**Table 5: Comparison of kindergarten in the year prior to Grade 1 and regulated child care**

Service	Kindergarten	Regulated child care (including regulated nursery schools and preschools)
Responsible government ministry or department	A ministry or department of education, except in Prince Edward Island where responsibility is split between the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Social Services.	Generally a ministry or department of social or community services. In British Columbia, multiple ministries have direct responsibility for issues pertaining to child care.
Legislation	The Education or School Act except in P.E.I. where the Child Care Facilities Act governs regulation of kindergartens.	Legislation specific to child care.
Administration	Local public school board or district or similar entity, private schools. The exceptions are Prince Edward Island, where kindergarten is provided in and administered by child care centres, and Alberta where it may be provided by stand-alone programs.	A board of directors of a non-profit program or an owner/operator of a commercial program. Municipal administration occurs throughout Ontario and in two Alberta municipalities.
Funding source	A block grant to the school board from provincial/territorial general revenue in all provinces/territories. In some provinces, funding is a mixture of the provincial block grant and local funds raised through property taxes.	Primarily fees paid by parents and government fee subsidies paid on behalf of low-income parents. In most provinces/territories, there are also application-based operating grants for eligible programs.
Location	In an elementary school building, except in Prince Edward Island where kindergarten may operate in a child care centre and in Alberta where kindergarten may be located in a school, a child care centre or have its own premises.	In a child care centre that may be stand-alone or located in part of another building such as a school, an apartment building, etc. or in the home of a family child care provider.
Type of provision	Part-day basis, usually 2½ hours, or full day on alternate days, except in three provinces where it is full school day.	Child care operates full day, usually somewhere between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Nursery schools/preschools operate on a part-day basis, usually 2½ hours a day.
Children served	Regular kindergarten serves 5-year-olds in all provinces/territories and some 4-year-olds in some provinces.	Children age 0–6 for regular child care and age 6–12 for school-age child care; age 2–5 for nursery schools/preschools.
Staffing	Teachers who must have either a four-year undergraduate degree that includes specific teacher training or a three- or four-year undergraduate degree plus one year of teacher training; teachers' assistants who work under the supervision of the teacher are not required to have any specific level of education or training.	Centres are staffed by child care staff. In 1998, 81.7% of centre staff had completed at least one year of post-secondary training in early childhood education (Doherty et al., 2000b, Figure 4.1). Family child care homes are staffed by child care providers. In 1999, 40.3% had some family child care-specific training (Doherty et al., 2000a, Table 4.2).
Program delivery	Generally delivered in a school classroom with 19 to 23 students and one teacher. In P.E.I. the child:staff ratio for kindergarten classrooms is 12:1. An assistant may be present if there is a child with special needs. The program is expected to follow a curriculum established by the province/territory.	Centres usually group children by age into different classrooms (although there is some provision for mixed-age groupings). Family child care providers operate out of their own homes and usually have a mixed-age group. Except in Quebec, child care programs are not expected by the province/territory to follow a specific curriculum.

### *Unregulated child care*

The majority of Canadian children below compulsory school age who are cared for outside their immediate family while their parents are employed or engaged in training or education are in unregulated child care arrangements in private home settings. These may be with a relative, a hired caregiver in the child's home (sometimes called a nanny or sitter) or an arrangement in a caregiver's home. These are not services or programs but private arrangements between parents and a caregiver. They are not regulated, although all jurisdictions specify a maximum number of children who may be cared for in a private home without regulation.

There are, in addition, a variety of programs that are not regulated as child care but are used by parents for child care or early childhood education. These include unregulated nursery schools/preschools and some private schools that enrol children younger than compulsory school age. Services that are intended for other purposes are also used for child care by some parents (e.g. recreation programs for school-age children operated by community centres, community organizations, school boards or local governments).

## **7. Family leave**

### *Maternity and parental leave*

Responsibility for maternity and parental leave is split between federal and provincial/territorial governments. Provincial/territorial employment legislation determines the length of the leaves except in federally regulated workplaces where this is done by the federal government. Federal benefits are provided as partial salary replacement (55% of wages up to a ceiling of \$413 a week) for a period of up to 50 weeks for eligible recipients covered through the federal government's Employment Insurance program. Benefits for the maternity leave portion are available only to a birth mother while benefits for parental leave are available to either a birth parent or an adoptive parent. Generally, provincial/territorial leave provisions provide job protection for at least as long as the period covered by federal benefits, although specific rules and requirements vary by province/territory. The combined effect of the federal and provincial/territorial programs generally means that almost a full year of partially paid leave is available to eligible families which take maternity leave followed immediately by parental leave. Family leaves are discussed in more detail in Section 3D.

## **8. Other child and family supports**

### *Health care*

Canada's national health insurance program covers the cost of treatment in hospitals and by physicians and may also cover other related health services. While health care is a provincial/territorial responsibility, the 13 provincial/territorial health care programs must meet the five principles of the federal *Canada Health Act*—universality, accessibility, comprehensiveness, portability and public administration. The principle of universality means, in this case, that user fees for basic health services covered under the provincial/territorial health care plans are not permitted. Generally, Canadian children in all regions have access to most necessary health care and procedures from birth onwards, although there are provincial/territorial variations in what is covered under the health insurance program and there may be waiting lists for some non-emergency services.

### *Family resource programs*

There are an estimated 2,000 family resource programs (FRPs) across Canada serving approximately 40% of families with a child under age 6 (FRP Canada, 2002). While some FRPs target specific populations—usually children deemed to be at risk—the majority provide support to families across the socio-economic spectrum. FRPs deliver a range of services, including information about community resources, toy and/or equipment lending, parent/child play groups, adult educational upgrading and assistance to families seeking affordable housing. They are not regulated and are funded through a variety of funding sources, both government and non-government.

The Community Action Program for Children (CAPC) is a federal family support program jointly managed by the Government of Canada and the provincial/territorial governments. It targets families living in situations that may put their children at risk for developmental problems. In 1997, there were 1,726 CAPC programs

across Canada which provided services to an estimated 28,765 children per week (Health Canada, 1998). Some CAPC programs operate as family resource programs (e.g. all CAPC programs in the Atlantic Provinces). The range of services offered by these family resource CAPC sites includes information on child development, parenting education, clothing exchanges, toy and equipment lending, parent/child play groups, and school readiness sessions.

#### *Government programs to assist parents to pay for child care*

The federal government's Child Care Expense Deduction (CCED) relieves eligible parents of part of their tax liability on earned income. The amount that can be claimed is limited to the actual child care costs or two thirds of the eligible parent's income up to a maximum of \$7,000 a year. The type of care being used to claim reduced tax liability may be unregulated or regulated, but parents have to be able to produce a receipt if asked.

Every province except Quebec<sup>8</sup> has a program of fee subsidies that pay some or all of the costs of regulated child care on behalf of low-income parents. Each province/territory establishes its own subsidy eligibility criteria that include both financial and social eligibility, such as labour force participation or engagement in training. Government fee subsidy programs are discussed in greater detail in Section 2B.

Some provinces/territories provide allowances or vouchers to parents who are engaged in training programs so that the parent can purchase child care. These allowances and vouchers may be used for either regulated or unregulated care.

#### *Income support*

Each province/territory provides welfare (social assistance) payments from its own revenues to very low-income families (note that provincial/territorial revenues include federal transfer payment funds as discussed previously).

The federal government provides direct income assistance to approximately 80% of Canadian families with children through the National Child Benefit (NCB). In 2002/03, families with net family incomes below \$22,397 received maximum federal child benefits (both the NCB and the CCTB base benefit) for the first child of \$2,444 per year or \$206.66 per month and slightly less for second and subsequent children. Partial benefits usually end at \$79,000 net family income.

#### *Affordable housing*

The provinces/territories have primary responsibility for the design and delivery of affordable housing programs within their jurisdiction. In November 2001, federal and provincial/territorial ministers responsible for housing signed an agreement to increase the supply of affordable housing for low- and moderate-income households across Canada. The federal government committed a total contribution of \$680 million over five years with the understanding that participating provinces/territories will match federal contributions (Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat, 2001).

#### *Home visiting*

Several provinces and two of the territories have home visiting programs for pregnant women deemed to be high risk and parents who are identified as needing additional support. Specially trained home visitors provide information related to parenting and child development, and other supports such as nutritional counselling, tips on how to budget, and referrals to other community resources.

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<sup>8</sup> Quebec takes a somewhat different approach to subsidizing the cost of regulated child care for very low-income parents for whom the usual \$7 a day fee is too high. (Until January 2004, Quebec parents paid \$5/day).





## Section 2: Policy concerns

### Part A: Quality

#### 1. Introduction

The main goals for ECEC programs that have been discussed in Canada in recent years are: (1) enhancing child development; (2) supporting parental employment; and (3) mitigating the risk of developmental problems. These goals have been instrumental in shaping how quality in ECEC is conceptualized. There are indications that interest in the school-readiness component of child development has grown in recent years, and generally there is a tendency to define ECEC quality as that which enhances children's school readiness. Within this context, specific concerns about quality include the extent to which ECEC programs support and enhance children's social and intellectual development and the variation in child care quality across the country. While a variety of initiatives to improve child care quality have been introduced by provinces/territories and NGOs have played an important role in defining quality, generally, specified objectives for quality have not been developed.

#### 2. Goals and objectives associated with quality

##### *The concept of quality*

Canadian discussion about the concept and elements of quality in ECEC, whether by governments, parents or experts, has tended to focus on protecting children's health and safety and enhancing school readiness. The dimensions of quality most frequently discussed have been structural elements that can be regulated and monitored, such as staff training and adult-to-child ratios. However, other dimensions of quality, including the nature of children's daily experiences (process quality), the quality of the adult work environment, and contextual dimensions such as funding level, have also been recognized as being crucial (Canadian Child Care Federation, 1991; Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, 2000). The *You Bet I Care!* studies on centre-based and family child care both explored quality from a multidimensional perspective and sought to better understand the dynamic interaction among various dimensions, such as the adult work environment and the auspice of a centre (Doherty et al., 2000a; Goelman et al., 2000). With the exception of attention to diversity, there has been little discussion in Canada that parallels the work of the European Commission Network on Child Care (1996) about broader constructs that include societal and cultural values.

##### *Goals and objectives*

Kindergartens and child care are the responsibility of each province/territory and specific goals and objectives for these programs have not been articulated at a pan-Canadian level.

Statements of desired child outcomes for kindergarten tend to exhibit commonality across the provinces/territories in their goals—assisting children to develop a positive self-concept, a positive attitude toward learning, an understanding of appropriate social behaviour with peers and with adults, communication skills that set the foundation for learning to read and write, an understanding of numbers and of basic concepts such as length and weight, and some basic understanding of the community in which they live. These goals all reflect the objective of providing children with the basic skills for success in Grade 1 and are consistent in intent with the goal of the early kindergartens established in the late 1800s.

Generally, there are no provincial/territorial written statements of goals for child care that parallel the provincial/territorial statements of desired child outcomes for kindergarten. However, the implicit goals of supporting parental attachment to the paid workforce and child development can be inferred from current practice. In most provinces/territories, a parent must be seeking work, already employed, or studying in order to be eligible for fee subsidy. This requirement suggests that enabling parental employment—at least of low-income parents eligible for a subsidy—is considered to be an important goal of child care. Research shows that training in early childhood education (ECE) is a clear predictor of quality in child care and that quality is a clear predictor of child outcomes; thus, requirements for such training suggest

that child development is a goal. Half the provinces/territories require regulated child care centres to have at least one staff person with at least one year of training in ECE with each group of children (or that at least half the staff in a centre have at least one year of training). That child development is a goal for child care can also be inferred from the fact that in some provinces/territories, children with special needs are included in child care centres regardless of parental employment. Where provincial/territorial requirements are designed to promote child development, child care moves beyond its original 1880's goal of providing safe, custodial care while parents work.

The federally funded Aboriginal Head Start program provides an example of an ECEC program that has specific written goals and objectives. Its goals include helping Aboriginal children to have a positive self-image, promoting Aboriginal culture and languages, encouraging active involvement of parents in the programs, and enhancing school-readiness.

### **3. Assessment of quality in Canadian ECEC programs**

#### *Introduction*

While it is general practice in the education system to carry out assessments of the educational abilities of all children within a grade on a province/territory-wide basis starting at about Grade 3, there is no similar assessment at the kindergarten level. Instead, the extent to which desired outcomes for kindergarten are met is assessed for the individual child by the child's teacher. Assessment of kindergarten classrooms and their quality does not usually occur.

In regulated child care, there is some limited ongoing assessment of quality in individual child care centres. Quebec has developed its own observational assessment tool and is using it to obtain a baseline assessment of quality for use in exploring the future impact of policy changes. The City of Toronto's municipally operated child care program uses the Harms/Clifford scales<sup>9</sup> on an annual basis in both centres and family child care homes to help individual settings to identify areas requiring action and develop plans for improvement. Outside of these situations, the quality of child care in general is not assessed on a regular basis although, at their own initiative, individual child care settings may periodically conduct their own forms of assessment which may include parent satisfaction questionnaires.

There has been some research by independent researchers, usually affiliated with universities, that has assessed quality in ECEC services. These studies have all been one-of-a-kind and were not undertaken expressly to inform policy development. They provide information about the level of quality in Canada and identify important issues, such as the variability of quality across the provinces/territories.

#### *Research findings related to kindergarten*

There is little concrete evidence about the quality of Canadian kindergartens other than a small study that used the *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale* (Harms and Clifford, 1980) to rate quality in 21 kindergartens and 19 child care centres spread over four provinces (Johnson and Mathien, 1998). Seventy percent of the kindergartens obtained ratings in the acceptable to good range (a total score of 4.5 or higher). The researchers observed that the variability in quality ratings was much greater in the child care sample than in the kindergarten sample.

#### *Research findings related to regulated child care*

In the past few years, three studies in Canada have used very similar methodology to rate quality in child care settings serving children under age 6. Two were regional studies that involved a small group of centres (Friesen, 1992; Lyon and Canning, 1995). The third, the *You Bet I Care!* study, involved 234

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<sup>9</sup> These rating scales, designed by Thelma Harms and Richard Clifford, are a set of three age-related observational tools for centres and a fourth tool for family child care homes. They are widely used in North American practice and research for assessing process quality.

centres and 231 regulated family child care homes spread across six provinces and one territory (Doherty et al., 2000a; Goelman et al., 2000). The three studies obtained similar findings.

The *You Bet I Care!* study used several quality measures, including the *Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale* (Harms, Cryer and Clifford, 1990), the *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised* (Harms, Clifford and Cryer, 1998) and the *Family Day Care Rating Scale* (Harms and Clifford, 1989). It found that in the centres and regulated family child care homes observed, care by warm, supportive adults who protected the children's health and safety was the norm. However, the study reports that only about a third of the centres and a third of the homes provided the children with the types of experiences that research shows support children's social, language and cognitive development. There was considerable variation in quality ratings in both centres and homes from one jurisdiction to another. Across provinces/territories, the average total score in centre infant rooms ranged from 3.6 to 5.6 while in centre preschool rooms it ranged from 4.0 to 5.6.<sup>10</sup> In family child care, the range across jurisdictions was from 3.9 to 5.5.

#### *Research findings related to unregulated child care*

There has been little research of any kind on unregulated child care in Canada, and only two studies that used standardized observation instruments to look at the quality of care in both regulated and unregulated family child care homes (Goelman and Pence, 1987; Pepper and Stuart, 1992). The finding of these two studies, that overall unregulated settings were of lower quality than regulated homes, are consistent with a large multi-state study conducted in the United States (Kontos, Howes, Shinn and Galinsky, 1995).

#### *Quality concerns related to specific groups*

While the quality of child care is of interest from the perspective of the development of all children, special concerns arise with respect to two specific groups of children—immigrant/refugee and minority children and children who have special needs. Respecting and incorporating traditional cultural elements and child-rearing practices is an expectation in programs such as Aboriginal Head Start and other ECEC programs targeted to Aboriginal children. However, research has identified the need for greater acknowledgement of cultural practices and sensitivity in community child care centres serving children from immigrant and refugee backgrounds or minority groups and their families (Bernhard, Lefebvre, Kilbride, Chud and Lange, 1998). Both the *You Bet I Care!* data and specific research on the provision of child care for children with special needs identify the need for improved training related to children with special needs for centre-based staff and for greater availability of consultation with specialists to assist workers meet the needs of specific children (Goelman et al., 2000; Irwin, Lero and Brophy, 2000).

## **4. Efforts to improve quality in ECEC services**

### *Kindergarten*

Collection of information used in this report included interviews with officials who have responsibility for kindergarten in each province/territory. None of these sources identified a province- or territory-wide effort to improve quality in kindergarten. In Canada, the responsibility for meeting provincial/territorial expected learning outcomes for students and the daily operation of the educational program is delegated to local school boards (school divisions). Some of these bodies may have instituted efforts to improve quality in kindergarten in their own local area.

All provinces/territories, except Prince Edward Island where kindergarten operates under child care legislation, require that every kindergarten teacher must have completed a four-year undergraduate

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<sup>10</sup> The three instruments all involve scoring scales that begin at 2 (poor) and go up to 7 (excellent). Scores between 3.0 and 4.9 indicate a situation where health and safety is protected and warmth and support are provided to the children but there are few activities that would stimulate children's development. Scores of 5.0 or above indicate the presence of activities that support and encourage development.

degree that includes specific teacher training courses or a three-year degree plus a year of teacher training. Some provinces/territories post lists of recommended resources for teachers, such as books and videos, on the website of the department/ministry of education.

### *Child care*

Over the past few years, a variety of initiatives intended to improve child care quality have been introduced by the provinces/territories. These have included: (1) strengthening regulations; (2) encouraging training; (3) improving wages and working conditions; (4) undertaking or funding specific projects that address quality; and (5) supporting community-based initiatives to improve quality. Generally, these have been single initiatives. Recently, Manitoba and Quebec have introduced packages of connected initiatives to support and enhance quality.

#### (1) Strengthening regulation

Newfoundland's introduction of family child care regulation, including training requirements, in 2001 is an example of a recent initiative using regulation to address quality. Other recent examples of improving quality through introducing or strengthening regulation include strengthening training requirements in several jurisdictions—Quebec (in both centres and family child care), Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and Yukon (in centre-based care) and Manitoba (in family child care).

#### (2) Encouraging training

In 2002, Newfoundland introduced an initiative intended to encourage people to take early childhood education (ECE) training. The Educational Supplement is a direct payment made to each centre-based staff person who has completed an ECE course. Payment is higher for those with a two-year diploma than it is for those with a one-year certificate. In Quebec and Manitoba, public education campaigns designed to increase enrolments in ECE training programs have been undertaken. The Quebec government also provides financial support for staff already working in the sector who do not meet the new training requirements and who enrol in a college-level course and programs with funding to cover the cost of substitute staff during training. Staff credentialing and qualification ladders, tied to the individual's level of ECE training, exist in Manitoba and some other provinces. These reward higher levels of training by granting a higher provincial classification which in turn qualifies the individual to work in higher wage positions.

#### (3) Raising wages

Provinces/territories have taken note of American and Canadian research that identifies adequate wages and working conditions as key to quality and have introduced various kinds of wage enhancement grants and payments. Since 1998, five provinces improved child care staff's wages by earmarking funds for this purpose. A unique initiative in this category occurred in the early 1990s in Ontario when staff in child care centres were included in provincial pay equity legislation through a specially designed mechanism. The provincial government provided earmarked funds for the purpose of raising wages to the specified levels.

#### (4) Specific projects

Some provinces have undertaken specific projects that address quality. One example is the *Keeping the Door Open* project involving New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan (New Brunswick Association for Community Living, 2002). The purpose of this project is to improve quality in centres that include children with special needs. The project involves assessing quality in a number of domains, identifying areas of strengths and weaknesses, undertaking to make improvements, and re-assessing. Prince Edward Island has expanded this approach to quality enhancement to all centres through the *Measuring and Improving Kids' Environments* (MIKE) project. Staff of the MIKE project assess the quality of care and identify the supports needed to make improvements in identified areas. Training is provided to supervisors and staff in the *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised* (Harms, Clifford and Cryer, 1998) and follow-up assessments are conducted to measure the impact of those supports.

(5) Supporting community initiatives

Finally, the federal and some provincial/territorial governments fund community-based organizations that contribute to quality initiatives by providing training and developing and distributing programming resources. Some of these community organizations (e.g. Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre in Vancouver and the Association québécoise des centres de la petite enfance) have become quite integral to service provision in their respective provinces.

*Assessment of the impact of government initiatives to improve child care*

Quebec has set quality objectives for child care and developed its own quality assessment tools for centres and for family child care. These tools will be used on a regular basis to determine the extent to which policy changes have made a difference to quality in child care and whether further action is required. The first round of assessments, to provide baseline information, has been undertaken. Generally, however, provinces/territories have not engaged in regular evaluation to determine the impact of government initiatives, such as increasing training requirements or raising wages in other provinces/territories.

*Non-government initiatives related to quality improvement in child care*

There are several examples of community-based attempts to define quality and to contribute to government initiatives to improve quality. Examples include the Canadian Child Care Federation's development of standards of good practice in child care settings through broad consultation with people working in the child care field (Canadian Child Care Federation, 2000), as well as its *Partners in Quality* project which explored the ways in which various partners can work together to improve quality in child care. The Manitoba Child Care Association's identification of desirable wage scales as well as the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care's work associated with the implementation plan for pay equity in the early 1990s were incorporated into government policy.

## Section 2: Policy Concerns

### Part B: Access

#### 1. Introduction

The extent to which an ECEC program is accessible for a child depends upon several factors. First, there has to be an available space and then, if there are eligibility criteria, the child or family has to be able to meet them. In addition, if there is a fee, the parent has to be able to afford it. Finally, the program must be appropriate (i.e. able to meet both the child's and the family's needs). This section uses these four factors to explore accessibility to ECEC services in Canada for children age 0 to 6 in general as well as for specific populations of children.

#### 2. Availability

##### *Kindergarten*

Compulsory schooling in Canada may start as early as age 5 but usually starts at age 6. Every province/territory provides publicly funded kindergarten (which is compulsory in three provinces) for children who are age 5. While it tends not to be a legislated entitlement, in practice, kindergarten is available to virtually all 5-year-olds whose parents wish to use it. While take-up rates are not specifically calculated, provincial/territorial officials estimate that approximately 95% of age-eligible children attend.

Ontario is the only jurisdiction that offers an extensive publicly funded kindergarten program for 4-year-olds (called junior kindergarten or JK). While it is provided at the discretion of local school boards, almost all offer it. Where JK is provided, it is available to all age-eligible children whose parents wish to use it. In other provinces/territories, there are a limited number of kindergarten programs for 4-year-olds and, occasionally, even younger children. These, however, are targeted to specific populations, usually children living in communities that are deemed "high risk" or children identified as high risk on an individual basis. (See Tables 3 and 4 in Section 1 for additional information about kindergarten.)

##### *Regulated child care*

Access to regulated child care in Canada is not treated as an entitlement in any province/territory with the possible exception of Quebec. The overall coverage in regulated child care centres across Canada in 2001 for the total number of children age 0 to 6 is estimated at 15.2% (see Table 6). There are three important notes to make about Table 6. First, nursery school/preschool and other part-time spaces for children age 0 to 6 are included as these cannot be disaggregated from full-time centre-based spaces in some provinces/territories. Based on the statistics available, it appears that 37% of centre-based spaces for children 0 to 6 are licensed as part-time spaces; in British Columbia, more than 50% of centre-based spaces for children age 0 to 6 are part day. Second, approximately 20% of regulated spaces in Canada for children age 0 to 12 are in family child care homes. However, these spaces are not included in the table because age-specific information on the children enrolled in family child care is not available. Third, the spaces for children age 0 to 6 in Quebec are under-represented. It can be assumed that most children in regulated family child care in Quebec are under age 6 as school boards are required to provide school-age child care. Regulated family child care in Quebec represents 42% of the total spaces for children age 0 to 4. In addition, child care space statistics for 5-year-olds attending kindergarten cannot be disaggregated from other school-age spaces.

There are two main ways to conceptualize the rate of coverage of an ECEC program like child care. How coverage is calculated depends in part on the goals and assumptions about the program's purposes. For example, if the goal is to support parental employment, then coverage can be considered in relation to children whose mother is in the paid labour force. If the goal is to enhance child development, then it would be appropriate to consider coverage in relation to all children, regardless of parental labour force participation, as is done for kindergarten.

**Table 6: Availability of centre spaces for children age 0–6, 2001**

Province/territory	Total number of children age 0–6	Number of children with a mother in the paid labour force, age 0–6 (rounded)	Number of regulated centre spaces for children 0–6 (full and part time)	Percent of the total child population age 0–6 for whom there is a centre space	Percent of children age 0–6 with a mother in the paid workforce for whom there is a centre space
Newfoundland & Labrador	30,305	17,900	3,632	12.0%	20.3%
Prince Edward Island	9,325	6,700	2,517	27.0%	37.5%
Nova Scotia	58,180	40,300	11,314	19.4%	28.1%
New Brunswick	46,020	31,300	5,820	12.7%	18.6%
Quebec	462,075	304,100	77,271	16.7%	25.4%
Ontario	821,320	538,800	118,110	14.4%	21.9%
Manitoba	86,255	49,200	14,130	16.4%	28.7%
Saskatchewan	73,975	46,900	4,106	5.6%	8.8%
Alberta	226,900	134,900	41,001	18.1%	30.4%
British Columbia	252,060	147,800	36,383	14.4%	24.6%
Nunavut	4,035	n/a	750	18.6%	n/a
Northwest Territories	3,720	n/a	866	23.3%	n/a
Yukon Territory	2,070	n/a	669	32.3%	n/a
<b>CANADA</b>	<b>2,076,240</b>	<b>1,317,900</b>	<b>314,477</b>	<b>15.2%</b>	<b>23.9%</b>

**Sources:** Friendly et al., 2002 for child care spaces; Statistics Canada, 2002c for total number of children age 0–6; special tabulation based on the Labour Force Survey for number of children with a mother in the paid workforce.

**Note:** The above table includes part-day centre spaces but not regulated family child care spaces because age-specific information on the number of children age 0–6 enrolled in this type of care is not available. Overall, regulated family child care accounts for approximately 20% of all regulated child care spaces in Canada for children age 0–12.

As the section on quality suggests, both of these goals are implied in Canadian child care practice. Table 6 includes the number of child care centre spaces, and both the number of children 0 to 6 whose mother is in the labour force and the total number of children aged 0 to 6.

Lack of availability of regulated child care is reported to be a particular problem for infants and toddlers, school-age children, children with special needs, children living in rural or isolated communities, and for parents who work irregular schedules.

#### *Unregulated child care*

In 1995, the most recent year for which information is available, an estimated 62% of children under age 6 who received regular, non-relative care while their parent(s) worked or studied received this care in an unregulated situation (Beach, Bertrand and Cleveland, 1998).

### 3. Eligibility and affordability

#### *Kindergarten*

Other than age and geographic eligibility, there are usually no eligibility considerations associated with kindergarten for 5-year-olds. Outside Ontario, where kindergarten for 4-year-olds is provided on a universal basis, eligibility considerations for kindergarten for younger children are usually associated with living in a community deemed to be high risk or the individual child is deemed to be high risk. In Alberta, children under age 5 may be able to attend kindergarten if they have an identified special need. Kindergarten is publicly funded, although parents may be asked to contribute to non-instructional costs such as field trips and snacks.

#### *Regulated child care*

While all children are eligible for regulated child care, its cost is often a significant barrier to participation for parents. Table 7 provides information about the median monthly fee for full-time care in a regulated centre for children age 0 to 5 in 1998, the last year for which comparable data were collected.

**Table 7: Median child care centre monthly fee for full-time care, 1998**

Variable	Infant (age 0–17 months)	Toddler (age 18 months–3 years)	Preschooler (age 3–5 years)
Median monthly fee	\$531	\$477	\$455
Median range across jurisdictions	\$440–\$783	\$380–\$603	\$360–\$541

**Source:** Doherty et al., 2000b, Table 10.6.

These data show that in 1998, the median annual fees for a family with an infant and a preschooler in full-time centre care were approximately \$12,000/year or 23% of the median 1998 family income of \$52,500 for all husband-and-wife families (Statistics Canada, 2000).

The Child Care Expense Deduction enables parents who are working or studying to claim a tax deduction<sup>11</sup> for the lesser of the actual cost of child care or two thirds of the income of the parent with the lowest earned income to a maximum of \$7,000 for each child under age 7. Parents may be asked to present a receipt verifying the amount claimed. In 2001/02, there were an estimated 1,200,000 parent claimants, which includes parents with children older than age 6 since it is not possible to isolate the expenditures solely for children 0 to 6 from the total expenditure (HRDC/Health Canada/INAC, 2002). Data on the actual range of tax benefits are not available.

Every province/territory except Quebec<sup>12</sup> has a program of fee subsidies that pays some or all of the costs of regulated child care on behalf of low-income parents (see Table 8 for specific information by province/territory). Each province/territory establishes its own subsidy eligibility criteria that include both financial and social eligibility, such as labour force participation or training.

Subsidies are sometimes also provided if a parent is seeking employment or if the child has a special need, is deemed to be at risk for developmental problems, or considered to be in need of protection. Some provinces/territories limit the availability of fee subsidy either by a cap on the number of subsidized spaces or by a fixed fee subsidy budget. Some permit child care programs to charge parents for the difference between the fee subsidy amount and the fee charged by the program to fee-paying, non-subsidized parents. This surcharge can be significant for a low-income family. For example, based on median fees and provincial subsidy rates, a fully subsidized single parent with an infant and a preschool child in Nova Scotia in 2001 could pay \$4,100/year for regulated child care.

<sup>11</sup> A tax deduction reduces the amount of taxable income.

<sup>12</sup> Quebec takes a somewhat different approach to subsidizing the costs of very low-income families for whom the usual \$7 a day fee is too high.



All provinces/territories provide some financial help for child care to parents who are on social assistance and participating in a job entry program. In some cases, parents are guaranteed a subsidy in regulated child care and the government pays the difference between the maximum subsidy and the fee. Cash payments are also provided by some provinces directly to the parent to pay for unregulated child care.

**Table 8: Child care fee subsidy eligibility levels, rates and average fees in regulated centres, 2001**

Jurisdiction	Family size	Full subsidy up to (\$)	Partial subsidy up to (\$)	Maximum subsidy in child care centres	Average fees in child care centres (per month)
Newfoundland & Labrador	1 parent, 1 child 2 parents, 2 children	14,160 15,240	20,280 25,560	0–24 months \$30/day 2–12 years, \$21.25/day	18 months–3 years \$380 3 years–5.11 years \$360
Prince Edward Island	1 parent, 1 child 2 parents, 2 children	13,440 19,200	25,440 51,040	0–2 years \$24/day 2–3 years \$20/day 3+ years \$19/day	0–2 years \$520 2–3 years \$432 3+ years \$412
Nova Scotia	1 parent, 1 child 2 parents, 2 children	16,812 17,712	24,540 34,092	\$14.95/day all ages minimum parent fee of \$2.25/day	0–17 months \$565 18–36 months \$490 3–5 years \$488
New Brunswick	All family sizes 1 child, 2 years or older 1 child, under age 2	15,000 15,000 15,000	— 23,100 24,180	0–2 years \$18.50/day 2–6 years \$16.50/day 6–12 years \$9.25/day	0–17 months \$482 1.5–5.11 years \$418 school age \$226
Quebec	Na <sup>1</sup>	—	—	—	\$5/day for all ages in regulated care
Ontario	n/a <sup>2</sup>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Manitoba <sup>3</sup>	1 parent, 1 child 2 parents, 2 children	13,787 18,895	24,577 40,475	\$4,756/child/year for full-day preschool-aged children. Programs may surcharge parents \$2.40/day/child	Infants \$560 <sup>4</sup> Preschool \$376 School age \$238
Saskatchewan	1 parent, 1 child 1 parent, 2 children	(gross) 19,668 (gross) 20,868	(gross) 31,920 (gross) 45,720	Infant \$325/month Toddlers \$285/month Preschool \$235/month School age \$200/month Parents pay a minimum of 10% of the cost	Infant \$ 481 Toddlers \$420 Preschool \$384 School age \$277
Alberta	1 parent, 1 child 2 parents, 2 children	20,520 24,120	31,680 44,520	Infants \$475/month All other ages \$380/month	\$522.84 all ages
British Columbia	1 parent, 1 child 2 parents, 2 children	18,984 <sup>5</sup> 23,016	27,816 31,846	Infants \$585/month Toddlers \$528/month 3–5 years \$368/month	Infants \$705 Toddlers \$662 3–5 years \$494
N.W.T.	n/a <sup>6</sup>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Nunavut	n/a <sup>7</sup>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Yukon Territory	1 parent, 1 child 2 parents, 2 children	20,424 30,144	31,104 51,744	Infant \$500/month Preschool \$450/month	Infant \$630 Toddler \$550 Preschool \$514

<sup>1</sup> Quebec provides publicly funded programs for all and additionally subsidizes parents who cannot afford the \$5 a day fee. Note in January 2004, this fee was raised to \$7/day.

<sup>2</sup> Eligibility for subsidy is determined by provincially determined needs tests with income being only one of a number of items considered. Each municipality can determine the rates paid to service providers on behalf of parents, a situation which creates some variation across the province. There are no province-wide maximum income levels for full or partial fee subsidies.

<sup>3</sup> Data for Manitoba is based on the children in the sample families being preschool children (aged 2-6 years) and not infants (under 2 years). In Manitoba child care fees and subsidy levels are different for infant and preschool spaces.

<sup>4</sup> Manitoba sets maximum fees for all children in funded centres and for all subsidized children in non-funded centres.

<sup>5</sup> Effective April 2002, several changes were made to British Columbia's subsidy program. Eligibility levels were reduced.

<sup>6</sup> Eligibility for subsidy varies according to the number of family members, actual shelter costs, community of residence and eligibility for enhanced benefits. These needs are based on Income Assistance Program schedules. A needs assessment is applied so there is no set break-even point. There is no territory-wide maximum subsidy. Maximums are set for type of care.

<sup>7</sup> Eligibility varies with clients' actual housing, utility and child care costs, plus social assistance rates of food and clothing. A needs assessment is applied so there is no set break-even point. There is no territory-wide maximum subsidy. Maximums are set for type of care.

#### **4. Appropriateness**

While a child may meet eligibility requirements for an available space in an ECEC program and the parent may be able to afford the fee, if the child's needs or the parent's needs are not met, the program may not be appropriate and therefore cannot be considered to be accessible. Appropriateness may be an issue for a variety of reasons (e.g. a child has special needs and an inclusive program is not available; parents work irregular hours and only weekday/nine-to-five child care is available; a parent has to work and although a kindergarten program is available for the 5-year-old, the hours are too short). This section deals with appropriateness from the perspective of parents' need for ECEC programs that are labour force sensitive; access issues for children with special needs are considered in part 5 of this section.

##### *Kindergarten*

Whether they are part day, alternate days or full school day, Canadian kindergartens do not usually meet the needs of working parents for care; in the three provinces that have full-day kindergarten, the school day is considerably shorter than the eight-hour day of many working parents. In addition, kindergartens are ordinarily closed from the end of June to early September, for winter and for spring breaks, and for teacher professional development days. Thus, parents who are working or studying—even part time—usually have to make arrangements for the other part of the child's day, week or year. While there have been initiatives to establish child care centres in schools in some locales, such programs are not widely available outside Quebec and Ontario. In addition, there are the same issues of availability and affordability with these as with other child care programs.

##### *Regulated child care*

In 1995, 32% of Canada's labour force worked in some form of non-day or rotating shift job (Johnson, 1997). Child care centre schedules have not kept pace with the decrease in the number of Canadians working standard hours of Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. In 1998, 98.7% of centres operated Monday to Friday only and most opened between 7.00 and 7.30 a.m. with the majority (92.0%) closing by 6 p.m. (Doherty et al., 2000b). Regulated family child care tends to operate similar hours with only 6.1% looking after children after 7:00 p.m. and 6.5% providing care on Saturday and/or Sunday (Doherty et al., 2000a). While a few child care programs have offered care outside normal operating hours, analysis shows that to be sustainable, this requires additional funding (Foster and Broad, 1998). A variety of "flexible hours" pilot projects have been supported by governments, unions or employers at various times, but generally these have not been able to continue operating when additional funding is withdrawn.

#### **5. Access to ECEC services for specific populations**

Specific communities and populations may experience particular difficulties in gaining access to ECEC programs. This is particularly true for families where children have special needs and for Aboriginal communities. Access problems for children with special needs arise if, for example, the physical plant does not accommodate children with mobility problems, the required adapted materials are not available, there are insufficient numbers of staff to provide the level of care and education required by the child, or if staff lack understanding of the child's specific disability. Access issues for Aboriginal people are complex and include consideration of culture, poverty and, in some cases, living in isolated communities.

##### *Children with special needs*

##### Kindergarten

Legislation or written policy in all provinces/territories guarantees children with special needs equitable access to the public school system beginning in kindergarten and requires school boards to provide these children with an appropriate educational program. While legislation or policy does not guarantee access to an inclusive program, the philosophy of normalization has been influential in the education system and appropriateness tends to be defined as inclusion in regular classes. There may be additional funding for supports such as modification of the physical plant, assistants to work with the child and special equipment. As a result, many or most children with special needs can obtain appropriate levels of support to enable them to participate in a regular kindergarten program.

### Child care

All provincial/territorial governments provide supports to children with special needs in child care; however, no province/territory guarantees children with special needs access to regulated child care. Access can be limited by inability to find a physical setting accessible for a child with mobility problems or a program that has adequate resources to support the child. In 1998, 39.8% of child care centres across Canada reported that they had been unable to enroll a child with special needs at least once in the previous three years due to lack of additional staffing, because serving the child would require structural modifications to the setting, or due to concern that centre staff did not have adequate training to care for the child (Doherty et al., 2000b).

There are a limited number of segregated centre-based child care programs for children with disabilities. However, in child care, as in the education system, the trend in recent years has been to provide supports to include children with special needs in regular programs. All provinces/territories have mechanisms to support inclusion. While these vary by jurisdiction, they usually provide funding for additional staff and equipment and adapted materials necessary for participation by special needs children. The amount of funding is usually based on the particular level of support required by the child according to the nature of the disability. Some provinces/territories do not require parents to be in the labour force to access a fee subsidy for a child with special needs. In a few jurisdictions, the cost of the additional supports required is covered by the government regardless of parental employment and socio-economic status; in others, this assistance is available only to parents with a family income below a certain level.

Access to child care for children with special needs is limited in two ways. First, there are no requirements that child care services enroll children with special needs. Second, there may be a waiting list for the additional funding required to make program modifications or to hire additional staff.

### *Aboriginal children*

Overall, the Aboriginal population in Canada is educationally disadvantaged compared to the population as a whole. Factors that contribute to this situation may include inadequate inclusion of Aboriginal values and practices in mainstream educational settings, limited access to educational opportunities in remote communities, and situations where the family's home language is neither English nor French. In 2001, there were 33,155 children age 0 to 4 and 36,945 age 5 to 9 living on reserve in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2003f). Responsibility for ECEC services for Aboriginal children living on reserve rests with the federal government which also funds some services for Aboriginal children living off reserve.

### Kindergarten

The federal government directly funds the provision of elementary education on reserve, including the provision of kindergarten in those on-reserve schools that provide this program. In 2001/02, 13,409 children attended junior kindergarten or kindergarten in one of these schools (HRDC/Health Canada/INAC, 2002). Children living on reserves where the school starts with Grade 1 (no kindergarten) are eligible to enroll in kindergarten for 5-year-olds in a nearby off-reserve provincial/territorial public school with the federal government paying the tuition fee charged to non-resident pupils. Information about the proportion of age-eligible children who attend kindergarten is not available.

There are also two Canada-wide federally funded Aboriginal Head Start programs, one for children living on reserve and the other for children living in urban and northern communities. In 2001, the First Nations Head Start program for children on reserve served approximately 7,000 children across Canada. In the same year, the Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities served approximately 3,500 children, an estimated 7% of the age-eligible Aboriginal children not living on reserve.

## Child care

The federal government funds child care for children living on reserve or in Inuit communities across the whole of Canada. While there has been a substantial expansion of child care spaces specifically for Aboriginal children during the last decade, a survey conducted in 2001/02 found that 66% of the First Nations/Inuit Child Care Initiative centres had “long waiting lists” (HRDC/Health Canada/INAC, 2002).

**Table 9: Access to Aboriginal ECEC services, 2001**

<b>Program</b>	<b>Availability</b>
First Nations/ Inuit Child Care Initiative (FNICCI)	Approximately 7,000 child care spaces across 390 First Nations and Inuit communities. In collaboration with First Nations Head Start FNICCI funds 14,237 spaces.
Child Day Care Program (Alberta)	1,069 spaces across 22 licensed centres.
Child Day Care Program (Ontario)	2,756 spaces across 86 licensed centres.
Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities	In 2001, served approximately 3,500 children living off reserve (roughly 7% of the total number of age-eligible Aboriginal children living off reserve).
First Nations Head Start	Can serve approximately 7,000 children in 168 individual projects across 305 communities.
First Nations junior kindergarten and kindergarten	In 2001/02, served 13,409 children in 387 on-reserve elementary schools.

**Sources:** Friendly et al., 2002; Health Canada, 2002; HRDC/Health Canada/INAC, 2002.

Using direct funding, the federal government has supported a substantial increase in ECEC services for Aboriginal children over the past decade. In October 2002, the federal government announced a funding allocation of \$320 million over the next five years for early child development programs for First Nations and other Aboriginal children. Subsequently, in February 2003, it announced an additional \$35 million over five years for early learning and child care programs for First Nations children, primarily those living on reserve.

## **6. The demand for ECEC**

Demand for a service is influenced not only by need but by other factors, including its availability and affordability. Kindergarten is publicly funded and projection of the need is based on the whole population of children of eligible age in the school board catchment area. The take-up, and therefore the demand, is assumed to be high.

Defining the demand for child care is more difficult. If the purpose of child care is to provide care and supervision in the parents' absence, then in a sense, all children with working parents need child care. But the demand may be moderated by availability of programs, costs for parents and individual preferences (e.g. for relative care). If child care is considered to be an educational, development-enhancing experience, then in this sense, all children can be said to need it. However, again, demand may be moderated by other considerations including cost.

Quebec's experience in projecting demand for child care is informative. When the government decided in 1997 to make regulated child care available at a fee of \$5 a day to all families, it projected the demand for child care based on a number of assumptions, including maternal labour force participation. However, demand has far exceeded predictions and waiting lists have grown despite an increase in child spaces for children age 0 to 4 from 82,302 to 139,683, the extension of kindergarten for 5-year-olds to full day, and an increase in child care spaces for school-age children from 92,600 to 152,164. In 2001, it was reported that 85,000 children were on waiting lists for a child care space (Institut de la statistique du Quebec, 2001) and the government doubled the estimated number of additional spaces required from its original demand projects. In Toronto, lists of several hundred names are reported by centres, especially those with infant and

toddler spaces; some centres report parents putting children on the waiting list who have not yet been born (Maureen Myers, Sprouts Child Care Centre, Toronto, personal communication, April 2003).

**Table 10: Child population age 0–6 with a mother in the paid labour force and number of regulated centre-based spaces for this age group in the 10 provinces, 1992, 1995, 1998, 2001**

Year	Child population age 0–6 with a mother in the paid labour force (rounded)	Estimated number of regulated centre spaces for children age 0–6 (full and part time)	Percent of coverage
1992	1,377,000	257,497	18.7%
1995	1,390,000	294,524	21.3%
1998	1,374,000	285,180	20.8%
2001	1,317,900	312,117	23.7%

**Sources:** Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 1994; 1997; 2000; Friendly et al., 2002.

**Notes:** Information on the number of children in the territories with a mother in the paid workforce is not available for 1992, 1995 or 1998. Therefore, the above table relates only to the 10 provinces. The table includes part-day centre spaces but not regulated family child care spaces as age-specific information on the number of children age 0–6 enrolled in this type of care is not available. Overall, regulated family child care accounts for approximately 20% of all regulated child care spaces in Canada for children age 0–12.

## 7. Strategies to increase access

Parents who wish to use kindergarten have good access to this service in all parts of the country in terms of availability, accessibility and affordability. Some provinces have attempted to meet the needs of working parents with various initiatives to include space for after-school care in the school building. One such initiative is the City of Toronto First Duty Project, a pilot project to develop an integrated early years learning environment in five sites by providing seamless access for children to child care and kindergarten in the same building.

Governments do not usually develop or initiate child care programs and, with the exception of Manitoba and Quebec, have not set target levels of service. In most provinces/territories, the development and operation of regulated child care depends on the ability and willingness of parents, voluntary groups, non-profit service organizations, churches and individual commercial operators. Generally, there is little government capital funding for facilities and limited start-up funds for equipment. Non-profit groups rely heavily on fund raising, acquiring donated or subsidized space, and donations of in-kind services. Commercial operators rely on private capital. Employers and unions have had limited success in developing child care spaces.

From time to time, some provincial/territorial governments have stimulated development of new programs through various capital and start-up funding programs. These initiatives have included requiring child care centres to be built into new schools, requiring space for child care to be developed when public buildings were renovated or built, and providing capital grants to non-profit groups on an application basis for a certain percentage of the costs. Where and when such programs have existed, they have usually resulted in a significant development of new child care centres.

In March 2003, the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers responsible for Social Services agreed to a Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care to invest additional funds in provincially/territorially regulated early learning and child care programs for children under age 6 with the goal of improving access to child care. The agreement includes regulated centre- and family-based child care and nursery schools/preschools. In April 2003, \$25 million of a total \$900 million over five years was transferred to the provinces/territories as the first-year installment. Future transfers will provide the provinces/territories with \$75 million for 2004/05, \$150 million for 2005/06, \$300 million for 2006/07, and \$350 million for 2007/08.



## **Section 3: Policy Approaches**

### **Part A: Regulation**

#### **1. Introduction**

In Canada, education and child care are regulated in quite different ways. Education, including kindergarten, is regulated as a publicly funded and operated system. It is provided institutionally with defined powers, roles and responsibilities. In this system, individual schools are not regulated as separate entities.

Child care is regulated as a private enterprise—albeit one that is usually a private not-for-profit enterprise—in which there is a public interest. Regulation applies to an individual child care centre or family child care agency or home rather than to a system. The standards or regulations are a set of rules that must be met for the operator of the child care program to be granted a licence or permit.

#### **2. Regulation of ECEC within education**

Each provincial/territorial legislative body, through its Education (or School) Act and regulations, defines the powers and responsibilities of the department or ministry of education and of the school boards or divisions for which it is responsible. Responsibility for ensuring the education of students and compliance with provincial/territorial legislation and regulations is delegated by the Minister to school boards or divisions (and in New Brunswick, District Education Councils) composed of locally elected trustees. The school boards, in turn, delegate much of the day-to-day responsibility to superintendents of education who establish the school district budget, are responsible for hiring teachers and other staff, supervise the schools and are responsible for ensuring that programs meet the needs of students in the jurisdiction.

Generally, the provincial/territorial legislation and its regulations define:

- who has the right to attend publicly funded schools based on age and residency eligibility;
- provisions for students with special needs;
- the required academic background for teachers;
- mechanisms for certification of teachers;
- the responsibilities of teachers and of school principals;
- the mandatory length of the school year and daily instruction period;
- the student records to be maintained and the rules for sharing these records;
- the rules governing the election of trustees to the school board and identification of the term of office;
- the role and responsibilities of the school board, including the required number of annual meetings that are open to the public;
- the duties of the school board's superintendent of education;
- rules governing the election of community advisory committees (sometimes known as school councils) and their role;
- the format of the financial records that are to be kept by the school board and the public's right to access this information;
- the obligation of the school board to submit financial and other records to the ministry; and
- the acquisition and disposal of school assets.

Most provinces/territories prescribe required courses of study for the children and give the Minister the power to establish common curricula. Some jurisdictions address safety issues in the Education Act or its regulations (e.g. by requiring all schools to have fire safety and emergency evacuation plans). Others deem health and safety issues in schools to come under the provision of the provincial/territorial Public Health Act and the Occupational Standards Act. These pieces of legislation may have provisions for regular on-site inspection of individual schools. In some situations, the local municipality in which the school operates may require regular fire and health inspections.

In all provinces/territories except Prince Edward Island, kindergarten teachers must have either a four-year undergraduate degree which includes teacher training, or a three-year degree with an additional

year of teacher training. No province/territory requires kindergarten teachers to have special training in early childhood, although one requires a kindergarten practicum. Kindergarten teachers are required to follow the curriculum for kindergarten prescribed by their province/territory. Several provinces/territories legislate a maximum class size for kindergarten while in others individual school boards set maximum class sizes for all schools in their area. While actual kindergarten class sizes are not known, suggested maximums across Canada range from 19 to 23.

### **3. Regulation of ECEC by child care legislation**

Provincial/territorial regulatory policy for child care generally rests with departments of social and/or community services. Each province/territory has its own child care legislation that defines the programs and the conditions under which it may operate and a process for monitoring child care services and enforcing the legislative standards/regulations.

Provincial/territorial child care regulations form a baseline of health and safety standards below which licensed facilities must not fall. While there are differences in the types of services regulated and the requirements for those services across provinces/territories, there are some common features. All provinces/territories regulate child care centres for children younger than school age and family child care homes. Other ECEC programs, such as nursery schools/preschools, school-age child care programs and Aboriginal Head Start, may or may not be regulated under the child care legislation, depending on the particular province/territory. Each province/territory also regulates the maximum number of children who may be cared for in an unregulated family child care home.

#### *Regulation of child care centres*

Provincial/territorial child care standards/regulations all contain definitions of the types of ECEC programs in centres that may be licensed. Most of the standards are concerned with the obligations of the licensee to ensure that the requirements pertaining to the physical space and the training level of staff are met and upheld.

The standards for child care centres typically specify:

- indoor and outdoor space, usually including a minimum square footage per child, access to outdoor space, types of equipment and furniture;
- percentage of staff who require certain levels of training in ECE;
- staff-to-child ratios;
- requirements for record keeping and management, such as registration and immunization records on children and financial and administrative records on the centre;
- health and safety measures, including hygiene practices and the storing of medication and materials hazardous to children's health;
- requirements regarding supervision of children;
- that there be a description of the program; and
- an obligation to provide evidence of compliance with specific regulations in other legislation, such as those of the local health, fire and building departments.

Each centre is licensed to operate with a maximum number of children, determined by physical space and in some provinces/territories by legislated centre maximum sizes. Some provinces/territories legislate maximum numbers of children permitted in a group (group size), and/or the maximum capacity of a given centre.

In some aspects of regulation, considerable variation exists across provinces/territories. For example:

- staff-to-child ratios in centres range from 1:3 to 1:5 for infant care;
- some provinces/territories stipulate a maximum size for each age group while other provinces do not;
- training requirements for staff vary from no post-secondary training required to a requirement that at least two thirds of the staff must have at least two years of post-secondary ECE training;



- one province requires that at least one person working with a group of infants/toddlers have specialized infant/toddler training;
- specialized training for working with children with special needs is required in two provinces;
- two jurisdictions, Manitoba and Quebec, regulate the maximum fee that may be charged in funded child care centres; and
- in some provinces, legislation specifies that a hot lunch be provided; in others, children bring their own food.

**Table 11: Child care centre regulations pertaining to children under age 6, 2003**

Province/territory	Variable	Requirements	
Newfoundland & Labrador	Ratio and group size	Ratio	Group size
		0–24 months 1:3 25–36 months 1:5 37–69 months 1:8 57–84 months 1:12	6 10 16 24
	Staff training requirements	Each group of children must have at least one staff person with a minimum of one year of ECE and at least one year of experience. All other staff must have completed a 30- to 60-hour orientation course. The centre operator must have not less than Level II certification (equivalent to a two year diploma in ECE) for the age range classification for which the child care centre is licensed and two or more years of work experience in a licensed child care centre.	
Prince Edward Island	Ratio and group size	Ratio	Group size
		0–24 months 1:3 25–36 months 1:5 37–60 months 1:10 61–72 months 1:12	6 not specified not specified not specified
	Staff training requirements	Centre supervisors and at least one full-time staff member must have a minimum of an ECE diploma from a post-secondary ECE program with three years experience, two year diploma with two years of experience or a university degree in child studies or related field with additional ECE courses and experience. All staff in ECE centres must complete 30 hours of in-service training in each three year period.	
Nova Scotia	Ratio and group size	Ratio	Group size
		0–17 months 1:4 18–35 months 1:6 18–60 months (half day) 1:12 36–60 months 1:8 5–12 years 1:15	10 18 24 24 25
	Staff training requirements	The centre director and two thirds of staff must have completed a training program in ECE or its equivalent (2 years of ECE experience; one full credit course in either human growth or development; completion of 25 hours of seminars/workshops in curriculum development and programs for young children).	
New Brunswick	Ratio and group size	Ratio	Group size
		0–23 months 1:3 24–36 months 1:5 37–48 months 1:7 49–60 months 1:10 61–72 months 1:12	9 10 14 20 24
	Staff training requirements	The director OR one in four staff is required to have one year of ECE training or its equivalent. There are no training requirements for other staff.	

Quebec	Ratio and group size	Ratio	Group size
		0–18 months 1:5 19–47 months 1:8 48–71 months 1:10 6–12 years 1:20	not specified not specified not specified not specified
	Staff training requirements	Two thirds of the staff in non-profit centres must have a college diploma or a university degree in ECE. One third of staff in commercial centres must have a college diploma or university degree in ECE.	
Ontario	Ratio and group size	Ratio	Group size
		0–17 months 3:10 18–30 months 1:5 31–60 months 1:8 61–71 months 1:12 6 – 12 years 1:15	10 15 16 24 30
	Staff training requirements	Centre supervisors and one person with each group of children must have an ECE diploma (minimum two year program) or its equivalent. Supervisors must also have a minimum of two years experience.	
Manitoba	Ratio and group size	Ratio	Group size
		<u>Mixed Age Groups</u> 12 weeks – 2 years 1:4 2 – 6 years 1:8 6 – 12 years 1:15	8 16 30
	Staff training requirements	Two thirds of staff must have at least two years' ECE training or satisfactory completion of a Child Day Care Competency-Based Assessment. Directors of full-time centres (infant and preschool) must also complete a specialization program or have a degree in an approved field.	
Saskatchewan	Ratio and group size	Ratio	Group size
		Infants 1:3 Toddlers 1:5 30–72 months 1:10	6 10 20
	Staff training requirements	All staff employed for at least 65 hours a month must have completed a 120-hour child care orientation course or equivalent provided through a community college.	
Alberta	Ratio and group size	Ratio	Group size
		0–12 months 1:3 13–18 months 1:4 19–35 months 1:6 3–5 years 1:8 5–6 years 1:10	6 8 12 16 20
	Staff training requirements	One in four staff is required to have at least one year of ECE training. All other staff must have completed at least the government's 50-hour child care orientation course. In addition, a full-time program director with Level 3 (two years or its equivalent) must be on staff at the centre at all times.	
British Columbia	Ratio and group size	Ratio	Group size
		0–36 months 1:4 30–72 months 1:8	12 25

	Staff training requirements	<p><u>Under age 36 months:</u> a group of one to four children must have one infant/toddler educator (10 months of ECE training plus 500 hours of supervised work experience and special infant/toddler training). A group of 8 children must have one infant/toddler educator and one early childhood educator with 10 months of ECE training plus 500 hours of supervised work experience.</p> <p><u>Age 30–72 months:</u> A group of 8 children must have one ECE with 10 months' ECE training plus 500 hours of supervised work experience. A group of 9 to 16 children must have one ECE and one assistant (with one course in ECE).</p>		
Nunavut	Ratio and group size		Ratio	Group size
		0–12 months	1:3	6
		13–24 months	1:4	8
		25–35 months	1:6	12
		3 years	1:8	16
		4 years	1:9	18
		5–11 years	1:10	20
	Staff training requirements	There are no early childhood training requirements.		
Northwest Territories	Ratio and group size		Ratio	Group size
		0–12 months	1:3	6
		13–24 months	1:4	8
		25–35 months	1:6	12
		3 years	1:8	16
		4 years	1:9	18
		5–11 years	1:10	20
	Staff training requirements	There are no early childhood training requirements.		
Yukon Territory	Ratio and group size		Ratio	Group size
		0–17 months	1:4	8
		18–24 months	1:6	12
		3–6 years	1:8	16
	Staff training requirements	20% of the staff in a centre must have two or more years of ECE training or its equivalent and an additional 30% must have one year of ECE training. Other staff must have completed at least a 60-hour child care orientation.		

**Note:** Until 1999, Nunavut was part of the Northwest Territories and it is still using its child care legislation.

### *Regulation of family child care*

Every province/territory stipulates how many children a family child care home may care for before regulation is required. There are two different approaches that provinces/territories use to regulate family child care: (1) an individual licence is issued to each family child care home; or (2) the government contracts with or licences a family child care agency which is responsible for ensuring that the standards are met in the family child care homes it supervises.

Regardless of the model of licensing, the standards for family child care homes address:

- the maximum number of children permitted in the home and the allowable mix by age category;
- whether the provider is required to have training;
- requirements for indoor and outdoor play space;
- record keeping;
- practices around substitute family child care providers for emergency situations and back-up care arrangements; and
- health and safety measures.

Table 12 provides specific information about the number of children and the mix of ages permitted and the required training in those provinces where providers are required to take training.

**Table 12: Family child care regulations, 2003**

Province/territory	Variable	Requirements
Newfoundland & Labrador	Permitted number of children	Up to six children, including the provider's own children not attending school on a full-time basis. No more than three children may be under age 36 months; of these, no more than two may be under 24 months.
	Educational requirements	Orientation course of 30–60 hours, depending on the age group for whom the provider is responsible. A minimum of 30 hours of professional development every three years.
Prince Edward Island	Permitted number of children	Up to seven children of mixed ages, including the provider's own children under age 12, with a maximum of three children under age 2.
	Educational requirements	A 30-hour training course and an additional 30 hours of in-service training in each three year period.
Nova Scotia	Permitted number of children	Up to six children of mixed ages, including the provider's own preschool children, or up to eight school-aged children including the provider's own school-age children.
	Educational requirements	No early childhood training or experience is required.
New Brunswick	Permitted number of children	Up to six children of mixed ages, including the provider's own children under age 12. There may be no more than three infants or five children age 2–5.
	Educational requirements	No early childhood training or experience is required.
Quebec	Permitted number of children	Up to six children, including the provider's own children under age 9; no more than two children may be under age 18 months. <u>If there is a provider and an assistant:</u> up to nine children, including the providers' own children under age 9; no more than four children may be under 18 months.
	Educational requirements	A 45-hour training course on child development, health, safety and nutrition, and organization of the physical environment.
Ontario	Permitted number of children	Up to five children, including the provider's own children under age 6. No more than two children may be under age 2, and no more than three may be under 3.
	Educational requirements	No early childhood training or experience is required of providers. However, agencies are required to hire a home visitor for every 25 homes. Home visitors are required to have a completed a post-secondary program in child development or family studies and have at least 2 years experience.
Manitoba	Permitted number of children	Up to eight children under age 12, including the provider's own children under age 12. No more than five children may be under age 6, of whom no more than three may be under 2. <u>If there is a provider and a second licensee:</u> up to 12 children under age 12, including the providers' own children under age 12. No more than three children may be under age 2.
	Educational requirements	An approved 40-hour course within the first year of providing child care.
Saskatchewan	Permitted number of children	Up to eight children, including the provider's own children under age 13; of the eight, only five may be younger than age 6 and of these five, only two may be younger than 30 months. <u>If there is a provider and an assistant:</u> up to 12 children, including the providers' own children under age 13. Of the 12 children, only 10 may be younger than age 6 and of these, only two may be younger than 30 months.
	Educational requirements	Providers working on their own must complete a 40-hour introductory ECE course within the first year of being licensed. The charge provider in a situation of two providers must complete a 120-hour ECE course within the first year of being licensed. All providers are required to engage in six hours of professional development each year.

Alberta	Permitted number of children	Up to six children under age 11, including the provider's own children under age 11, with a maximum of three children under age 3 and no more than two children under age 2.
	Educational requirements	No early childhood training is required.
British Columbia	Permitted number of children	Up to seven children under age 12, including the provider's own children under age 12. Of the seven children, no more than five may be preschoolers, no more than three may be under age 3, and no more than one under 1.
	Educational requirements	A course on the care of young children (length not stipulated) or relevant work experience.
Nunavut	Permitted number of children	Maximum of eight children under age 12, including the provider's own children under age 12. No more than six children may be age 5 or younger, no more than three may be younger than 3, and no more than two may be under 2.
	Educational requirements	No early childhood training is required.
Northwest Territories	Permitted number of children	Maximum of eight children under age 12, including the provider's own children under age 12. No more than six children may be age 5 or younger, no more than three children may be younger than 3, and no more than two may be under 2.
	Educational requirements	No early childhood training is required.
Yukon Territory	Permitted number of children	Up to eight children, including the provider's own children under age 6. Of the eight children, no more than four infants or eight preschoolers. <u>If there is a provider and an assistant: four additional children may be cared for.</u>
	Educational requirements	Completion of a 60-hour ECE course within the first year of being licensed.

In some aspects of family child care regulation, there is a degree of variation across the provinces/territories. For example:

- The maximum number of children permitted before there is a requirement to become regulated varies from two, excluding the provider's own children, to eight, including the provider's own children under age 13.
- The maximum number of children permitted with one regulated provider varies from five to eight.
- Several provinces/territories have provisions for an assistant to work with a provider and permit a larger group size in this situation (group family child care).
- Most provinces/territories require the provider to have a valid first aid certificate. Some require a criminal record check on all adults living in the home.
- Half the provinces require training, either before a licence is issued or within three years of being licensed. The length of required ranges between 30 and 120 hours.

Providers in the five provinces and three territories that license family child care providers on an individual basis set their own fees, except in Manitoba where the government sets specific maximum fees. Practice in the other provinces, all of which use the family child care agency model for regulation, depends on the policies of the individual agency, except in Quebec where maximum fees are set by the government.

#### **4. Monitoring and enforcement of regulations**

##### *Kindergarten*

Confirmation that teachers have the required academic background, that the prescribed curriculum is being followed, and that the physical space protects the children's health and safety is the responsibility of the school board. School boards are held accountable for the funds they receive from the provincial/territorial government and for keeping financial records in the prescribed format. In all provinces/territories, the Minister may conduct financial and/or program audits in any school district. In provinces where there are regional ministry staff, the staff may meet with school board officials on a regular basis.

### *Child care centres*

Licences to operate a child care centre are generally issued for a one- to five-year period depending on the province/territory. Almost all provinces/territories require at least an annual visit by a government licensing official to inspect the centre and ensure compliance with the regulations; some require that there must also be a number of additional unannounced visits each year. In several provinces/territories, the licensing official must have ECE experience. Centres are also required to have annual inspections by the local fire marshal's office and health inspections, usually by the local public health unit.

The program inspection process usually focuses on the structural elements in the standards; that is, elements that can be counted and measured. If a centre is found in non-compliance with the regulations, most provinces/territories allow for a provisional licence or conditions on a licence for a period of time to correct deficits, providing the health and well-being of the children are not at risk. The standards generally stipulate what remedial action is to be undertaken if a centre is found in non-compliance and a time in which to comply. If a centre continues to be in non-compliance, the licence may be suspended or revoked. In practice, licences are rarely revoked unless the health and safety of the children are considered to be in jeopardy. Most provinces/territories require the centre to post its licence in a public place where parents can see it.

### *Family child care*

There are somewhat different approaches to monitoring for the two models of family child care described above. When an individual licensing model is used, government licensing officials inspect each home for compliance with the regulations. The required frequency of the visits by the government official depends on the province/territory and varies from once a year to one licensing visit a year plus three or four unannounced visits. Family child care providers are also required to obtain an annual fire safety inspection from the fire marshal's office and a health inspection, usually from the local public health unit. The licensing officials who license centres are also responsible for licensing individual family child care homes.

In provinces using an agency model, the agency is required to hire staff, called home visitors, to make regular in-home visits to observe the care being provided. One province requires home visitors to have an ECE credential and experience. The required frequency of these visits ranges from twice monthly to four times a year, depending on the province. Agencies generally recruit and screen providers, approve providers and homes, provide training, act as a liaison between providers and parents, and may provide equipment and toy lending. It is the agency that is responsible for ensuring that the homes it supervises comply with the standards. Provincial licensing staff conduct inspections of the agencies to monitor for adherence to requirements.

If an individual home or an agency is found to be in non-compliance but the health and well-being of the children is not in jeopardy, a provisional licence is generally issued or conditions are placed on the licence and a time in which corrective action must be taken is stipulated. If the home or agency continues to be in non-compliance, its licence may be suspended or revoked.

Licensing officials also have the responsibility to investigate complaints of unregulated family child care providers looking after more children than permitted.

## **5. Types of non-regulated ECEC**

In all provinces/territories, certain types of ECEC are exempt from regulation. No province/territory regulates the care of children by a non-relative (a nanny or sitter) in the child's own home. Individuals who come to Canada to care for children under the federal government's Live-in Caregiver program are required to meet certain education and/or experience requirements, but there are no requirements for external monitoring of the care they provide. Each province/territory also permits the unregulated care of a group of children in the caregiver's home, provided the group size does not exceed the limit set in child care legislation.

Generally, play groups and programs for children that take place when a parent is on the premises are not regulated. For example, Citizenship and Immigration Canada supports on-site unregulated care for children 6 months to 6 years of age while their immigrant/refugee parents are taking lessons in English or French under the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program. There are over 200 LINC sites across the country. Many family resource programs provide regularly scheduled play groups or drop-in programs that parents (or other caregivers) and children attend or short-term care while parents are elsewhere; these services are not regulated. Nursery schools/preschools are not regulated in several provinces/territories, but in others they are regulated under child care legislation.

## **6. Trends in regulation**

Kindergarten is publicly funded, publicly operated and regulated as a system. In most parts of the country, the regulatory approach has been the same for a considerable period of time. The exception is one province which recently amended its legislation to require all teachers to be evaluated by the principal or school superintendent every three years against a province-wide set of standards and to be re-certified every five years. To be re-certified, teachers will be required to engage in a specific amount of professional development, to take mandatory courses and to pass a written test.

In recent years, there has been both a tightening and a loosening of regulations in child care. Five provinces/territories have introduced and/or increased training requirements for staff in centre-based care and a number of provinces have introduced training requirements for family child care providers. However, two provinces have increased the number of children who can be cared for in an unregulated family child care home. The family child care regulations in four provinces allow for two family child care providers to provide care for up to 12 children without requiring the more stringent regulations that apply to child care centres.

## **Section 3: Policy Approaches**

### **Part B: Staffing**

#### **1. Introduction**

In Canada, there is a distinction often made between programs that are part of the education system and viewed as primarily educational, such as kindergarten, and child care programs whose primary role is perceived to be the provision of basic care during the parents' absence. The perceived difference is reflected in fundamental differences in the ways in which workers are prepared for the job, the status of the worker, and remuneration levels. In spite of these differences, kindergarten and child care are alike in facing challenges in maintaining an adequate supply of qualified workers and reflecting the diversity of Canada's population in their workforces. Table 13 provides information on the different staff roles found in ECEC, the initial training requirements for each, and the age range of children covered by this initial training.

#### **2. Training, certification and professional development**

##### *Kindergarten teachers*

Individuals teaching in a kindergarten classroom are members of the teaching profession. In order to practise as a kindergarten teacher in Canada (except in Prince Edward Island), an individual must have either a four-year undergraduate degree that includes specific teacher training courses (a B.Ed.), or an undergraduate degree without such courses (a B.A.), plus at least one year of specific teacher training. There are no requirements for kindergarten teachers to have specific training in the development of children under age 6.

There is no Canada-wide curriculum for teacher training. Typically, teacher-training programs include courses on human development, educational psychology, teaching methods and evaluation, and teaching children who have special needs, plus a minimum of a 12-week practicum in classrooms under the supervision of a qualified teacher. While there is usually a primary (kindergarten to Grade 3) specialization, many kindergarten teachers have no specific training for working with 4- and 5-year-olds. In addition, although as many as 50% of children in kindergarten in large cities may be from newcomer families, initial training does not provide good preparation to work with these children (Larose et al., 2001).

##### *Staff in regulated child care*

Not all staff in child care centres are required to have completed a post-secondary early childhood education (ECE) training program. Provincial/territorial regulations state the training requirements for the total centre or for each group of children within a centre. Currently, requirements for centre staff range from no post-secondary ECE required to a requirement that two thirds of all staff working with children have at least a two-year ECE diploma.

Most courses preparing early childhood educators to work in centre-based child care are one- or two-year community college programs that lead to an ECE certificate or diploma, respectively. There is no standard Canada-wide college curriculum. Typically, college ECE programs include coursework on health and safety, early child development, education theory, programming strategies, and strategies for behaviour guidance, plus some supervised experience in a child care setting. Most college ECE programs prepare students specifically for working in child care rather than for a broader professional role, although some now have a first-year general human services program with a second-year specialization. Some colleges have entered into agreements with a university to offer a combined ECE diploma and B.A. degree.



**Table 13: Staffing roles and required training in different forms of ECEC, 2002**

Program	Role	Required initial training	Age range of children covered by the initial training
Pre-kindergarten and kindergarten	<p><u>Principal</u>: responsible for the overall operation of the school.</p> <p><u>Teacher</u>: responsible for a group of children.</p> <p><u>Teacher's assistant</u>: works under the supervision of the teacher.</p>	<p>Same as school teacher, some jurisdictions also require a post-graduate course in educational administration.</p> <p>Every jurisdiction except one requires a minimum of four years of university which must include teacher training courses.</p> <p>No specific educational requirements.</p>	<p>Depends on the area of specialization in the person's initial degree.</p> <p>Specialization in "primary" covers approximately age 5 or 6 to age 9 or 10.</p> <p>Not applicable.</p>
Child care centre, nursery school and preschool where they are regulated under child care legislation	<p><u>Director</u>: responsible for the overall operation of the centre.</p> <p><u>Early childhood educator</u>: responsible for a group of children.</p> <p><u>Assistant</u>: works under the educator's supervision.</p>	<p>Varies across jurisdictions from a two-year ECE college credential to no requirements.</p> <p>Ranges from two thirds of staff in a centre must have a two-year ECE credential to no requirements.</p> <p>No specific educational requirement except in British Columbia where assistants are required to have completed one ECE course.</p>	<p>Age 0–12</p> <p>Age 0–12</p> <p>Not applicable.</p>
Regulated school-age child care program	<p><u>Director</u>: responsible for the overall operation of the program.</p> <p><u>Staff</u>: responsible for a group of children.</p>	<p>In seven jurisdictions, school-age child care falls under the same legislation as child care centres. The other jurisdictions have no specific ECE training requirements.</p>	<p>Age 5–12</p> <p>Age 5–12</p>
Family child care agency	<p><u>Director</u>: responsible for the overall operation of the agency.</p> <p><u>Home visitor</u>: responsible for monitoring and supporting the providers.</p> <p><u>Family child care provider</u>: responsible for a group of children.</p>	<p>No specific educational requirements.</p> <p>One jurisdiction requires a two-year ECEC-related college credential; most agencies in other jurisdictions require an undergraduate degree.</p> <p>Varies from a 45-hour course within the first two years of providing care to no requirements.</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p> <p>Age 0–12</p> <p>Age 0–12</p>
Independently licensed family child care provider	<p><u>Government licensing official</u>: responsible for monitoring and licensing providers.</p> <p><u>Family child care provider</u>: responsible for a group of children.</p>	<p>Usually required to have a university degree, but not usually required to have an ECE credential.</p> <p>One jurisdiction requires an ECE orientation before starting to provide care, three require a 30- to 120-hour orientation within the first three years of being licensed.</p>	<p>Age 0–12</p> <p>Age 0–12</p>

**Sources:** Don Heimbecker, Canadian Teachers' Federation, personal communication; Friendly et al., 2002.

Some provincial/territorial governments require certification of child care centre staff. Generally, there is a system of levels of certification that depend on the number of years of ECE training completed; the certification level may determine whether the person is permitted to have primary responsibility for a group of children or only to work as an assistant. Completion of a specified number of hours of professional development is required to remain certified in two jurisdictions. In British Columbia, centre staff must have a licence to practise which requires, in addition to an ECE certificate, verification of 500 hours of supervised work experience in a licensed child care facility.

No province/territory requires post-secondary training for regulated family child care providers, although several have requirements for some early childhood training or orientation. The majority of family child caregivers who have completed a training program have done so through a community organization or a family child care agency (Taylor, Dunster and Pollard, 1999). Only a few colleges offer a specific family child care training program (Beach and Bertrand, 1999).

Concerns that have been expressed about existing community college ECE training programs include their focus on centre-based care, emphasis on preschoolers and relative lack of attention to infants/toddlers and school-age children, and the relatively small amount of attention paid to preparing students to work with families, with children who have special needs, with Aboriginal children or in situations of cultural, racial and/or linguistic diversity (Beach, Bertrand and Cleveland, 1998). Recent research studies highlight the need to pay more attention to the knowledge and skills required to work effectively with immigrant children and their families and in situations of ethnocultural diversity (Bernhard et al., 1998) and with children who have special needs and their families (Irwin, Lero and Brophy, 2000).

#### *Barriers to training and to professional development and efforts to address them*

The cost of Canadian basic post-secondary education to obtain either an ECE credential or a university degree and distance from such a program can be barriers to access for many potential students. Other barriers faced by people wanting to obtain an ECE certificate or diploma include difficulty in transferring course credits to another institution, a time conflict between the hours in which courses are provided and the working hours of people already employed in the field, the individual's language and/or culture, and the relationship between the investment made in training and future earnings capacity.

In Canada, ECE certificate, diploma and degree programs are delivered through approximately 120 institutions across the country. While most of these programs are in publicly funded community colleges, certificate and diploma programs are also offered by private colleges and approximately 20 universities have degree programs that include a preschool or ECE specialization. In spite of the broad commonality in ECE certificate and diploma curricula across colleges, there are differences in the length of programs, the organization of courses and the requirements for field practice that contribute to difficulties in credit transfer from one college to another (Beach and Bertrand, 1999). Few colleges offer training that is specific to the provision of family child care. Family child care providers traditionally have obtained their training from family child care agencies in provinces using this regulatory approach or through conferences and workshops; this type of training may not be recognized for course credit when an individual seeks an ECE certificate.

The barriers noted above are being addressed in various ways. The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) and the federal government are examining how to improve financial assistance programs for post-secondary students (CMEC, 2002). An action plan to facilitate recognition of prior learning and transference of course credits across institutions and between jurisdictions is to be implemented in stages over the next four years (Canadian Alliance of Education and Training Organizations, 2002a). A national family child care training program with three modules—basic, intermediate and advanced—has been developed by the Canadian Child Care Federation (CCCCF). It is already being offered in several provinces and is being adapted for delivery through the Internet to increase its accessibility. The implementation of prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) in some provinces has allowed for formal recognition of measurable skills and knowledge acquired through other training and experience. Some colleges, for example, allow up to 75% of credits to be gained through this process. Universities and colleges are increasingly providing distance education; this enables access regardless of where the student lives and permits courses to be taken outside of usual work hours. Courses are being adapted to integrate values, knowledge and practices from non-mainstream contexts. Examples of this include the two-year Aboriginal ECE program developed at Holland College in Prince Edward Island and, in British Columbia, Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre's training programs for family child care providers in languages other than English and French.

Participating in professional development activities can present challenges for child care staff. The work of child care is physically taxing, and many caregivers who are unable to take time off during the day

must make a commitment to evening or weekend courses or conferences. Between 1991 and 1998, the proportion of child care centre staff who had engaged in professional development within the previous 12 months decreased from 87% to 76%. The most common reasons cited for non-participation were cost and inability to obtain release time (Doherty et al., 2000b). In contrast, kindergarten teachers have scheduled professional development days on which they have no teaching responsibility and many school boards provide professional development without fees.

### **3. Remuneration levels**

#### *Kindergarten teachers and child care centre staff*

As illustrated in Table 14, income levels and benefits differ across ECEC services. In 2001, the minimum average salary for a school teacher with the basic educational requirement and credential ranged from \$28,000 to \$50,000, depending on the province/territory (Canadian Teachers' Federation, 2002a). In the same year, the average salary for a child care centre staff person with some training and responsible for a group of children ranged between \$12,551 and \$29,670 in the seven provinces for which information is available (Friendly et al., 2000). Within child care, remuneration levels and benefits vary by setting (i.e. by whether the individual works in a centre or a regulated family child care home). Overall, family child care providers have lower remuneration levels than staff working in centre-based programs. There is also considerable variation in the average salary level within each occupation, reflecting differences in average wages, average costs of living in different provinces/territories and availability of government funding.

Basic salary scales and benefits for school teachers are established through negotiations between provincial/territorial teachers' associations and the provincial/territorial government in 10 jurisdictions and the local school authority or a regional government entity in three provinces. Salary levels are higher for people with post-graduate degrees and increase with experience. Each province has a compulsory retirement plan for teachers that provides a pension (Canadian Teachers' Federation, 2002a).

Unionization is rare in the child care field, with 13.4% of child care centres across Canada reporting unionized staff in 1998 (Doherty et al., 2000b). Quebec is the only jurisdiction in which child care remuneration levels are set through a centralized bargaining process that involves the government, two major unions in the province, and a small group of employer-representatives. Elsewhere, remuneration levels are decided by the board of directors or owner of the individual centre or family child care agency or through negotiation with individual parents by family child care providers who are not affiliated with an agency. Depending upon the setting, remuneration may or may not increase with education and experience. The low salary levels of early childhood educators working in child care centres have been identified as a concern for a number of reasons, among them the association found by research between low salaries and high staff turnover rates (Doherty et al., 2000b).

#### *The special situation of family child care providers*

As described earlier, some provinces/territories license family child care providers individually, while others license or contract with family child care agencies which in turn recruit and monitor providers. Providers who are individually licensed are clearly self-employed. The employment status of those affiliated with an agency is less clear and has been debated in the courts several times. Currently, providers affiliated with an agency are treated as if they were self-employed for purposes of administration of federal and provincial/territorial employment and income tax legislation. As a result, they are not eligible for maternity and parental leave benefits, Employment Insurance and protections under labour legislation such as paid sick days.

**Table 14: Annual remuneration for public school teachers, child care centre staff, family child care providers and Aboriginal Head Start staff**

Income and available benefits	Public school teachers (2001 data)	Child care centre staff, person responsible for a group of children (2001 data)	Regulated family child care providers (1998 data)	Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities staff (2001 data)
Before tax income	Minimum average salary with the basic educational requirement and credential = \$28,000 – \$50,000 per year depending on province/territory	Average salary for person responsible for a group of children = \$12,551–\$29,670 per year depending on province/territory	Estimated average before tax income per year from child care after deducting child care-related expenses for a provider working at least 48 weeks = \$13,000	Canada-wide average salary for people working with a group of children = \$25,380 per year
Paid sick days	Typical	74% of staff	No	76% of staff
Cumulative paid sick days	Typical	24% of staff	No	Information not available
Supplementary medical insurance	Typical	58% of staff	No	18% of staff
Dental insurance	Typical	57% of staff	No	Information not available
Long-term disability insurance	Typical	48% of staff	11%	28% of staff
Life insurance	Typical	56% of staff	No	Information not available
Retirement pension as a work benefit	Always	25% of staff	No	12% of staff

**Sources:** Doherty et al., 2000a,b; Canadian Teachers' Federation, 2002c; Friendly et al., 2002; Survey of all program sites, Richard Budgell, Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities Program, personal communication.

**Notes:** There is considerable variation in remuneration levels for school teachers, for people working in child care, and for Aboriginal Head Start staff across the provinces/territories reflecting differences in average wage and average cost of living levels in different jurisdictions.

Salary levels for staff working in child care centres were converted from hourly rates by multiplying by 1827 (based on full-time position, 35 hours a week). Information on benefits for child care centre staff was collected in 1998. Salary levels for people working in Aboriginal Head Start were converted from hourly rates on the basis of 44 weeks a year (assuming no paid vacation) and the national average work week of 37 hours.

#### **4. The issue of professionalism**

Kindergarten teachers working in the school system view themselves and are viewed by others as professionals. They engage in an occupation that has many of the characteristics traditionally associated with a profession—a clear articulation of the specialized skills and knowledge required to do the job, a legal requirement to undertake specific post-secondary education and to become certified before practising, and, in two jurisdictions, a college of teachers which has the legal authority to set and monitor standards of practice and to regulate and discipline its members. At a pan-Canadian level, the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF), created in 1920, represents all the provincial/territorial teachers'

associations. While it does not have collective bargaining powers of its own, it assists provincial/territorial teachers' federations in collective bargaining by providing information on salaries, benefit levels and average workloads across the country (CTF, 2002c).

Many people in Canada do not regard working in child care as a profession in the traditional sense. The child care field has not developed some of the characteristics normally associated with a profession—there are no specific educational requirements for entering the occupation, certification before beginning to work in a child care centre is not required in all provinces/territories, and no jurisdiction has established a college of child care practitioners. However, there is at least one child care organization in every province and in two of the three territories. In some cases, as in British Columbia, centre staff and family child care providers have separate province-wide organizations; in other jurisdictions (e.g. Manitoba), centre staff and family child care providers belong to the same organization. Generally, the role of the provincial/territorial organizations includes keeping their members informed about issues related to child care and providing some professional development opportunities. Other activities engaged in by provincial/territorial child care organizations include administration of the provincial government's mandatory child care staff certification program or a voluntary certification program, participation in government advisory or review committees, engaging in advocacy around the need for additional child care and government funding, and lobbying for improved salaries and working conditions for people in the child care field.

There are two pan-Canadian child care organizations—the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada (CCAAC), founded in 1982, and the Canadian Child Care Federation (CCCCF) established in 1989. Both have formalized links with provincial/territorial associations. CCCCf has a member council consisting of representatives from its 16 provincial/territorial association affiliates (which collectively represent 11 different jurisdictions) and representatives of other groups such as Aboriginal communities and rural child care. The member council provides a mechanism for two-way communication between CCCCf and its affiliates and also sets the strategic direction for it. CCCCf's board of directors is elected from and by the member council and is responsible for governance issues. CCCCf is specifically interested in increasing the skills, expertise and awareness of people working in child care and has developed tools such as a national Code of Ethics for Child Care Practitioners (CCCCf, 2000) and a leadership training program. The CCAAC Council of Child Care Advocates consists of representatives from provincial/territorial child care associations that have an advocacy mandate, such as the B.C. Child Care Advocacy Forum, or are actively engaged in advocacy, representatives from other sectors such as organized labour, and representatives from its Parents' Network. The council establishes the CCAAC advocacy positions and formulates strategies. The board of directors, which includes representation from provincial/territorial associations, is responsible for governance issues. CCAAC is actively engaged in linking parents across Canada, providing them with information about child care issues, and assisting them to advocate for child care in their own provinces/territories.

## **5. Human resource issues**

The education and child care fields each have an umbrella organization whose mandate is to address human resource issues. The Canadian Alliance of Education and Training Organizations (CAETO) includes representatives from elementary and secondary schools and post-secondary educational institutions. The Child Care Human Resources Round Table (CCHRRRT), which formally became the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council<sup>13</sup> in December of 2003, includes representation from people working in child care centres (including school-age care and part-day programs), family child care, and people who provide care in the child's own home (nannies/mothers' helpers). The new council's mandate is to find ways to ensure a skilled workforce that provides high quality child care. Both CAETO and CCHRRSC have identified the same two major human resource issues: maintaining an adequate supply of qualified workers and the need to reflect the diversity of Canada's children in the workforce. (The CCHRRSC is discussed in greater detail in Section 4.2.)

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<sup>13</sup> A sector council is a permanent organization often receiving federal government funding, as is the case with the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (CCHRRSC) which brings representatives from the workforce, employers and organized labour together to address human resource issues in the field.

### *The struggle to maintain an adequate supply of qualified workers*

Staffing shortages are of concern both to elementary schools and child care programs. High attrition rates among recent entrants into the occupation and experienced people leaving the field contribute to this problem in both cases. For the education field, the problem is exacerbated by the substantial proportion of teachers now reaching retirement age. A shortage of teachers is predicted up to 2008, then the shortfall between supply and demand is expected to be balanced (CAETO, 2002b). A Canada-wide survey of school authorities found that 76% expected that by 2003, there would be great difficulty filling vacant full-time positions (CTF, 2000a).

In 1998, the annual turnover rate for staff in child care centres on a Canada-wide basis was 28% with a range across jurisdictions from 15% to 45% (Doherty et al., 2000b). Thirty-eight percent of child care centre staff who had left in the previous 12 months had accepted a job that was unrelated to child care. Some jurisdictions permit centres to operate without the required number of trained staff because trained staff are unavailable to fill jobs; in 2001, a third of the centres in Manitoba were operating with such an exemption (Mayer, 2001). Nearly 20% of centre supervisors who left their job in 1998 entered an unrelated field of work. Dissatisfaction with pay and "found the job too stressful" were cited by many centre directors as common reasons for staff turnover (Doherty et al., 2000b). Research shows that turnover among regulated family child care providers is a concern as well and dissatisfaction with income is also cited by family child care agency directors as a major reason for providers deciding to leave (Doherty et al., 2001).

Three factors appear to contribute to the staffing shortage in both the education and child care fields. The first is low remuneration levels in comparison to other occupations with similar educational and/or skill requirements. Average salary levels for female elementary school teachers are a little higher than in comparable female-dominated occupations such as nursing and social work, but substantially less than can be obtained in industry and business with the same level of post-secondary education (CAETO, 2002b). In the child care field, in 1998 the average annual salary for a person responsible for a group of children in a centre was less than that of a teacher's assistant in an elementary school (Doherty et al., 2000b). Working conditions are a second factor that contribute to retention difficulties. High levels of stress have been reported among both teachers (CTF, 2000c) and child care centre staff (Doherty et al., 2000b). In both fields, stress has been identified as associated with increased expectations to include children with special needs and increasing numbers of children whose mother tongue is neither English nor French in situations that lack adequate consultation and support. A third factor is that the career ladder for both kindergarten teachers and child care staff is limited. Finally, a fourth contributor to turnover in the child care field is the widespread belief among workers that their job is neither understood nor respected by the general public (Doherty et al., 2000b).

Three strategies are being used in the child care field to improve recognition and remuneration levels—advocacy, unionization and professionalization. Advocacy groups such as the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care and the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of B.C. have long worked with feminist groups, the labour movement and others to highlight the need for better compensation, as have provincial child care associations such as the Manitoba Child Care Association. Advocacy is also undertaken by unions which have played a pivotal role in improving remuneration, benefits and working conditions, particularly in Ontario and Quebec. Recently, a number of provincial/territorial governments have provided funds to increase remuneration levels in child care. Efforts to improve the public perception of people working in child care, and, through this, to improve their remuneration, include the Canadian Child Care Federation's development of a Code of Ethics and also occupational standards. Finally, the governments of Manitoba and Quebec have undertaken public education and recruitment programs to attract more people into the child care field. In addition, the Government of Canada has recently launched the Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Early Childhood Education which provide national recognition to innovative early childhood educators who excel in their work with young children.

### *Reflecting diversity in the workforce*

#### Gender

In child care, 98% of child care centre staff are female (Doherty et al., 2000b) as are 81% of elementary school teachers and 91% of teaching assistants in schools (CAETO, 2002b). Whatever the reason for this predominance of women, the result is that there are few men to act as role models for children in ECEC services.

### Cultural and racial diversity

Cultural and racial diversity in the workforce are also important for the learning environment, especially as it is experienced by children who are not members of the dominant culture. Research has shown that children under age 5 notice and ascribe value to different physical and cultural characteristics with those in the dominant culture being perceived as having the most value. A teacher from the same background or another minority group presents minority children with a model who is not from the dominant culture but has its status and serves to protect the children from de-valuing their cultural/ethnic background (European Commission Network on Childcare, 1994).

According to the 1996 Census, Aboriginal children represented 6.4% of the child population age 0 to 14 (CAETO, 2002b). In the off-reserve Aboriginal Head Start program, 95% of staff report themselves as being Aboriginal (Richard Budgell, unpublished data from a survey conducted in 2001), while this is true of less than 2% of teachers in the public school system (CAETO, 2002b). The gap between the proportion of Aboriginal children and Aboriginal teachers in the public school system varies across jurisdictions and is highest in the territories, Manitoba and Saskatchewan (CAETO, 2002b). Data are not available on the extent of the gap in kindergarten compared to other grades. No studies have explored the extent of diversity among people working in child care.

In 1996, 13% of all children age 0 to 14 in Canada were members of a minority group in contrast to 4% of public school teachers. Again, the gap between minority group children and minority group teachers varies across jurisdictions and is highest in those provinces with the highest immigration rates, such as British Columbia (CAETO, 2002b). Data are not available on the extent of the gap in kindergarten compared to other grades.

## **Section 3: Policy Approaches**

### **Part C: Program content and implementation**

#### **1. Introduction**

This section explores the curricula and pedagogical approaches used in Canadian kindergarten and child care, the extent to which programs recognize and support children's diversity, and the way in which transitions are handled. The extent to which there are linkages and partnerships between families, ECEC services and community services is discussed in the following section.

#### **2. Curricula**

##### *Kindergarten*

A review of provincial/territorial statements of expected learning outcomes for kindergarten indicates a high level of consensus that children should leave kindergarten with the ability to use language to communicate ideas, feelings and emotion and to ask for information, an understanding of concepts such as length and weight, and an awareness of the conventions of written materials. Some provinces have prescribed materials to be used in kindergarten; other provinces/territories provide lists of suggested curriculum materials and activities that the teacher might use. In practice, school boards generally have considerable freedom to adapt their programming to local needs and circumstances.

Although there is no national approach to kindergarten programming, a move toward the development of common curricula for elementary and secondary schools, including kindergarten, is occurring in two parts of the country. The ministers of education in each of the three territories, Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba and Saskatchewan have signed the Western and Northern Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education, an agreement to collaborate in the development of a common curriculum framework for basic education, student assessment, standards for student performance, and standards for teacher preparation and certification. The ministers of education in New Brunswick, Newfoundland/Labrador, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island have agreed to undertake joint endeavours through the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation. Both groups have developed common curricula for some subjects in kindergarten and elementary school.

##### *Child care*

Generally, provinces/territories have not developed specific philosophical approaches or specific curricula for child care. Quebec, however, requires its child care curriculum, *Jouer, c'est magique*, to be used in child care centres and regulated family child care. Information from post-secondary institutions that teach ECE to people who wish to work in child care suggests that training builds on the work of Friedrich Froebel, Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky. Students are helped to understand that children develop skills in stages and through active involvement with their environment and the people in it.

##### *Aboriginal Head Start*

Aboriginal Head Start programs (whether on- or off-reserve) are required by the federal government to provide programming in Aboriginal language and culture, health promotion and nutrition, and experiences that will contribute to children's school readiness. Within these parameters, individual programs are encouraged to use approaches that reflect the local community's values, culture and needs and to involve community Elders in the daily programming.

#### **3. Pedagogical approaches**

While evidence is not available about the existent pedagogical approaches in ECEC programs, some provincial/territorial statements about approaches to kindergarten are available. Similar statements are not in place for child care programs but inferences may be drawn about pedagogical approaches from what is taught in the institutions that train people to work in child care. These two information sources suggest that the predominant pedagogical approach in both kindergarten and child care builds on the belief that young



children learn best through direct hands-on experiences that are appropriate for their developmental level and by active involvement and interaction with their environment and with supportive adults.

The kindergarten statements of expected learning outcomes and information from the ECE training institutions suggest that programming should be play-based and exploratory, not didactic and that the concept of balance in physical, socio-emotional, communicative and intellectual activities and in the mixture of adult- and child-initiated activities is important. These philosophical approaches are reflected in both settings through activities such as games that involve counting or sorting objects in addition to more formal activities such as reading a story to children at circle time and then engaging them in a discussion about what happened and how the people in the story might have felt.

#### **4. Assessment of program effectiveness**

Readiness for Grade 1 is identified as a primary goal for kindergarten in all provinces/territories and school readiness is often identified as a goal for child care. In Canada, the term “school readiness” is usually understood to mean more than the development of pre-academic skills. It includes the need for good physical and emotional health, a positive self-concept, a willingness to try new things, and the communication, social and cognitive skills to take advantage of the learning opportunities that the formal school setting provides.

There are neither pan-Canadian nor individual provincial/territorial mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of kindergarten programs in preparing children for Grade 1. Assessment of the extent to which kindergarten children have achieved expected outcomes is carried out by individual school boards or teachers. Assistance in this may be provided by the province/territory (e.g. Saskatchewan’s 1994 kindergarten curriculum guide includes assessment checklists in areas such as emerging literacy). Some provinces periodically assess the process quality in child care settings using standardized observation tools, but no province/territory assesses the development of children in child care.

#### **5. Recognizing and supporting children’s diversity**

The term “diversity” in Canada is often used in education and child care to apply to all types of diversity—diversity in gender, race, cultural heritage, religions, and physical and cognitive ability. Recognizing and supporting diversity is seen as requiring three broad forms of assistance: (1) supports so that the children can participate to their optimal potential in community-based programs along with able-bodied children and children from the dominant culture; (2) programming that enables children with special needs and children from diverse backgrounds to develop a sense of self-worth and feelings of competence; and (3) activities that assist all children to respect and value diversity and to feel comfortable interacting with people who are different from them. In practice, it appears that many people working in ECEC have internalized the concept of respecting and valuing diversity; good practice is considered to require an inclusive approach that supports the culture, language, religion and abilities of all children.

In kindergarten, provinces/territories address the obligation of public schools to provide appropriate programming for all children, including those with special needs and those from non-dominant cultures. Governments may provide curriculum suggestions to assist children to understand, respect and feel comfortable with those from different backgrounds. Program suggestions include incorporating music and stories from various cultures into the program, reading and discussing culturally affirming and gender balanced books with the children, and providing opportunities for all children to share their cultural traditions. In Nunavut, kindergarten is provided in Inuktitut (the local Aboriginal language). The importance of all children understanding and respecting the cultural traditions of First Nations appears to receive particular attention. A common curriculum for Aboriginal Language and Culture Programs for all children beginning in kindergarten, developed with the assistance of representatives from Aboriginal communities, has been adopted by the territories and four western provinces (Western and Northern Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education, 2000). This curriculum includes statements of expected outcomes for non-Aboriginal children. The education ministry in British Columbia has developed a framework document to assist school authorities to evaluate their policies, practices and teaching materials for consistency with the government commitment to “honour diversity and promote human rights” (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2001, page 1). Few governments have policy related to

recognizing and supporting cultural diversity in child care. One exception is British Columbia where the *Child Care Resource and Referral Program Standards Manual* includes policies that address cultural diversity and services to Aboriginal families.

## **6. Transitions in ECEC**

Children's transitions in ECEC are of two broad types. There are the milestone transitions of moving from home to a group program for the first time, possibly moving from a child care program to kindergarten, and moving from kindergarten to Grade 1. There are also daily transitions between home, child care and kindergarten.

The way the transition from home to kindergarten or child care is handled for an individual child tends to depend very much on the policies and practices of a given school board, school or child care setting. The transition from kindergarten to Grade 1 is facilitated in all provinces/territories by the fact that the kindergarten curriculum is either embedded in a broader curriculum that spans kindergarten to Grade 3 or 4, or has similar though more basic outcome statements in the same areas as those used for higher grades. In either case, experiences and expectations in kindergarten are clearly positioned to be stepping stones to Grade 1.

Children may also move from child care to kindergarten and many children attend before- and/or after-school child care programs while in kindergarten. Sometimes, the kindergarten and child care programs attended by an individual child operate in the same elementary school building; more often, they do not. There is no systemic linkage between child care and kindergarten such as that between the kindergarten and Grade 1 curricula noted above. Instead, communication and linkages between kindergarten and child care generally depend upon the individual school teacher and the child care setting. An example of an exception is the protocol developed in Manitoba specifically to assist with the transition of children with special needs as they move from child care to kindergarten. The number of different daily transitions experienced by a child increases, while the potential for links between kindergarten and child care decreases when, as is known to happen, parents have to use more than one arrangement to meet their child care needs.

## **7. Opportunities for the provinces/territories to discuss ECEC programming issues**

The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), composed of all provincial/territorial education ministers, meets periodically and provides a forum for the discussion of issues of mutual concern and the development of pan-Canadian strategies. Similar opportunities for the government officials responsible for child care occur through regular meetings of the Provincial/Territorial Directors of Early Childhood Education and Care. The implementation of the Early Childhood Development Agreement and the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Care is the responsibility of the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Early Childhood Development Working Group. This group of officials, which reports to the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers and Deputy Ministers responsible for Social Services, also meets on a regular basis.

## Section 3: Policy Approaches

### Part D: Family engagement and support

#### 1. Introduction

This section examines family engagement in Canadian ECEC services and identifies some of the societal supports that are available for families with young children. Parental engagement includes:

- parents as initiators and operators of ECEC programs;
- parents as partners in ECEC services; and
- parents/families as consumers of ECEC programs.

While the idea that supporting the optimal development of young children means engaging their families is generally embraced in Canada, certain barriers to family engagement exist. As a result, how, and how much, families are engaged in their child's ECEC program is quite variable.

Most Canadian parents are also workers. Parents with young children are assisted in balancing work and family responsibilities through several categories of family leave. Other parental supports include family resource programs, specific support for families who have a child with special needs, information services, home visiting, government programs to assist parents to pay for child care, and other types of income support.

#### 2. Family engagement

##### *Parents as initiators and operators of ECEC programs*

Kindergarten programs in almost all provinces/territories are set up and operated by school boards as public services. Child care programs in all provinces/territories are initiated and operated by a mix of parent groups, community and voluntary organizations, and businesses. While information on the number of non-profit child care programs operated by parent groups is not available, parents are known to play an important role in service delivery. The child care legislation in the Northwest Territories, Saskatchewan and Quebec requires a parent majority on non-profit centres' boards of directors; in these and in a number of other jurisdictions as well, parent operation is a predominant mode of delivery. Parent-run child care programs may be incorporated as cooperatives or as non-profit organizations. In either case, parents frequently initiate and set up the program, often raising capital funds, negotiating with provincial/territorial licensing officials and following provincial/territorial rules for incorporation. Even though day-to-day operation is usually delegated to the supervisor or director of the program, the boards of directors are legally responsible for hiring child care staff, meeting payrolls, ensuring compliance with regulations, and making personnel, program and administrative decisions.

##### *Parents as partners in ECEC services*

In the education field, provincial/territorial legislation affirms the right of parents to be informed about their child's progress beginning in kindergarten and to participate in decisions related to their child's education. Public schools may have Home and School Associations that provide opportunities for parents and teachers to meet as a group to discuss common educational issues. Most provinces/territories require a community advisory committee, sometimes called a school council, for every single publicly funded school and that this committee meet on a regular basis. In some cases, legislation specifies that a certain proportion of the committee must be parents of children currently attending the school. The role is purely advisory and varies across the provinces/territories, but may include activities such as making suggestions for adapting the provincial/territorial curricula to local needs. At an individual level, it is common practice to have annual meetings between parents and their child's teacher for information exchange and joint establishment of goals for the child. Parents may also volunteer in the classroom or participate in field trips.

There is considerable variation in regulated child care regarding the role of parents as partners with care providers. Several provincial/territorial regulations require child care programs to provide parents with

specific information prior to enrolment but generally no ongoing parent role is specified in these cases. Centres may hold parent meetings to discuss common issues of interest and concern and may schedule regular meetings for individual parents to meet with the care provider. Centres also use other techniques to reach out to and engage parents, such as daily exchanges of written notes or a journal or a periodic centre newsletter. As in kindergarten, some parents may volunteer to participate on a regular or periodic basis. In some provinces/territories, there may be parent participation preschools or parent co-ops. These part-day nursery schools are non-profit programs in which parents, working with trained early childhood staff, act as assistants in the program on a regular basis.

Commentators in both the education and child care fields note that although there is strong support in Canada for the principle of involving parents in their child's ECEC program, the extent and the manner in which this occurs varies. Some of the barriers to parent engagement that have been identified both in kindergarten and child care include: (1) the limited experience in working with parents provided in teacher/ECE training and lack of comfort with this role in kindergarten and child care; (2) kindergarten teacher/child care staff time constraints; (3) parental time constraints, especially in lone-parent and two-earner families; and (4) communication difficulty for parents who do not speak the language used in the kindergarten or child care program (Bernhard et al., 1999; McNaughton and Krentz, 2000).

#### *Parents/families as consumers of ECEC programs*

Parental/familial expectations of their children's ECEC program vary with the type of program, with individual families and perhaps with the province/territory. Generally, parents expect kindergarten to focus on the development of the skills and knowledge necessary for future academic success and child care to provide a mix of care and developmentally stimulating activities that will support skill development (Johnson and Mathien, 1998). Some studies show that some parents specifically seek a child care centre because they want a degree of formal structure while others prefer the family-like atmosphere of family child care (Bureau de la statistique du Quebec, 1999; Doherty, in press). Preference for one model over the other is sometimes linked to the age of the child, with some parents of younger children preferring a family setting. Parents, especially if they do not have members of their own family living close by, may look to their child care provider as a source of information about child development, effective parenting strategies and other community resources.

### **3. Family support**

#### *Work-family balance and parental leaves*

Canadian parents are assisted to balance work and family responsibilities through several categories of family leave:

- paid maternity leave for the mother associated with the birth of a new baby;
- paid parental/adoption leave that may be taken by birth parents or by adoptive parents. In provinces where both parents can take leave at the same time, the father may take parental leave while the mother is on maternity leave; and
- family obligation leave that may be taken if a parent needs time away from work because of a child's illness or other child-related situation.

Responsibility for maternity and for parental/adoption leaves is split between the federal and the provincial/territorial governments. Provincial/territorial legislation sets the length and conditions of job-protected leave while partial salary replacement is covered through the federal government's Employment Insurance program. People taking maternity and/or parental/adoption leave are job-protected under legislation and have the right to be reinstated in the same/comparable pre-leave employment with the same salary and benefits (Labour Canada, 2002). The federal benefit (maternity and parental benefits combined) may be taken for 50 weeks by eligible new parents (see Table 15) while all provinces/territories provide at least that length of time in job-protected leave in their employment legislation. The leave provisions vary by province/territory with some jurisdictions permitting parents to share parental leave periods and some allowing each parent to take parental leave. In 2001, 61% of all new mothers received federal maternity and/or parental benefits with the median time at home for mothers being 10 months. In the same year, 10% of new fathers claimed parental leave benefits

(Statistics Canada, 2003g). Generally, adopting parents are entitled to provincial/territorial parental leaves but not to maternity leave. Overall, maternity and parental leaves are treated as employment benefits in Canada.

Unpaid family obligation leave, ranging from three to five days a year, is provided for in the legislation of four provinces. Other types of assistance, such as flexible work schedules, job sharing and “top-up” of the Employment Insurance maternity/parental leave wage replacement amount to bring it closer to the individual's salary, have resulted from collective bargaining or employer initiatives as has family obligation leave in those jurisdictions where it is not mandated by legislation.

**Table 15: Federal parental leave benefits, 2002**

Program	Child's age	Eligibility criteria	Benefit
Maternity Leave Benefit	Prenatal to 1 year of age.	Birth mothers who have a minimum of 600 hours of insurable work in the previous 12-month period or since their last claim.	55% of insurable earnings with a maximum benefit of \$413 per week for 15 weeks.
Parental/Adoption Leave Benefit	For a birth mother following maternity leave, for fathers usually within 12 months of the child's birth, for adoptive parents when the child comes into custody regardless of the child's age.	Birth mothers or fathers or adoptive mothers or fathers with a minimum of 600 hours of insurable work in the previous 12-month period or since their last claim.	55% of insurable earnings with a maximum benefit of \$413 per week for 35 weeks. May be taken by either eligible parent or shared between them.

**Source:** Human Resources Development Canada. (2002). *Maternity, Parental and Sick Leave Benefits*. Available on-line at: [http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/ae-ei/pubs/special\\_e.shtml](http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/ae-ei/pubs/special_e.shtml), retrieved December 2002.

#### *Other family support services*

Various family support services exist in all provinces/territories. These may not be conceptually or actually coordinated into a planned system of support for families with young children or be formally linked with ECEC services. The *Healthy Child Development Initiative* in Prince Edward Island is a multi-component strategy applicable to all families with young children; it includes both supports to parents and direct services for children. *Healthy Child Manitoba* provides both universal programming and initiatives for children and families who may be at risk, including home visiting, health promotion and child care. Saskatchewan's *Kids First* program is intended for children deemed to be at risk and includes parent support through home visiting and early learning programs for children.

#### Family resource programs

There are an estimated 2,000 family resource programs (FRPs) across Canada serving approximately 40% of families with a child under age 6 (FRP Canada, 2002). Generally, unless they are part of a government program established for a specific population such as the Military Family Services Program, FRPs are initiated by the community and are operated by community-based boards of directors (sometimes parents). Seventy-six percent of FRPs are open to any family that wishes to use them. They offer a range of supports, including: (1) information about community resources; (2) parenting education courses; (3) toy- and/or equipment-lending libraries; (4) parent/child play groups or drop-in programs or programs for children without their parent/caregiver; (5) assistance to families seeking affordable housing or needing to obtain social assistance; and (6) adult educational upgrading and literacy programs. Some provide outreach services through home visits or mobile resource vans that bring toys and materials to a parent's home. The mix of services in a given program depends upon the perceived needs of the community as determined by the board of directors. Typically, the operating budget for an FRP combines

funds from a variety of sources, including the federal government, provincial/territorial and municipal governments, school boards (in a few instances), cash or in-kind donations from local service clubs and businesses, and their own fund raising; user fees generally do not play a key role in financing (FRP Canada, 2002). The availability of family resource programs varies across provinces/territories and between urban and rural communities with urban areas more likely to have the service.

In some provinces/territories, FRPs are provided by the federally funded Community Action Program for Children (CAPC) Program. CAPC targets families living in situations that may put their children at risk and is jointly managed by the Government of Canada and provincial/territorial governments. CAPC offers a range of family support and children's programs, including FRPs. Twenty-three sites have specific programs for men, such as father/child activities, fathers' mutual support groups, and fathering education courses (<http://www.sks/jc-ge.ca/capc>). Provincial/territorial governments determine the programs that are offered by CAPC.

#### Support for families with a child who has special needs

Several provinces/territories provide government-funded in-home services for children with developmental challenges or disabilities. These, such as the Infant Development Program in British Columbia, have trained consultants who go into the home to work with parents in developing and implementing special activities to enhance the child's development and provide parents with information and support. They may also work with child care or kindergarten staff to ease the transition for the child when first entering these programs. Some of these government-funded services provide short-term respite care to enable parents to take a break.

Children with special needs and their families are also supported by networks of non-government services that are funded through charitable donations. Two of the largest are the Association for Community Living (formally the Canadian Association for Mental Retardation) and the Easter Seal Society which serves children with physical disabilities or chronic medical conditions. These organizations provide information, assistance in locating and accessing services, summer camps for children, and respite care for parents.

#### Sources of information for parents with young children

All provinces/territories have websites providing varying kinds of general information about ECEC services, including child care and kindergarten. Although these generally do not provide information about service availability or the quality or cost of specific services, Manitoba's and British Columbia's websites allow parents to estimate their eligibility for child care fee subsidies; Manitoba's website also provides child care vacancy information that is updated regularly. Most jurisdictions produce information booklets on a wide range of general parenting issues, as well as hints on how to find and choose a child care setting. Parents can also obtain general information about parenting issues through websites administered by non-government organizations such as Child and Family Canada ([www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca)) and the parenting network of the Canadian Institute of Child Health ([www.eparentingnetwork.ca](http://www.eparentingnetwork.ca)). British Columbia has a network of government-funded child care resource and referral programs. These maintain registries of family child care providers and provide professional development opportunities for them.

#### Home visiting

Several provinces and two of the territories have home-visiting programs for pregnant women deemed to be high risk and parents who are identified as needing additional support. Specially trained home visitors provide information related to parenting and child development and other supports such as nutritional counselling, tips on how to budget and referrals to other community resources.

#### Assistance to pay for child care services

The Child Care Expense Deduction (CCED) was established in 1971 under the *Income Tax Act* in recognition that for many families child care expenses are a necessary cost associated with parental employment; the rationale is that earned income used to pay for child care is not part of the family's discretionary income and should not be subject to income tax. Parents who are working or studying may

claim a tax deduction for the actual cost of the child care or two thirds of the income of the eligible parent (the lower earner in a couple) up to a specified maximum. The current maximum deductible of \$7,000 for a child under age 7 translates into a potential tax saving of \$3,500 for a tax claimant in the 50% income tax bracket and \$1,400 for a lower income claimant in the 20% tax bracket (Young, 2000). In 2001/02, there were an estimated 1,200,000 parent claimants; this includes parents with children over age 6 since it is not possible to isolate expenditures solely for children age 0 to 6 from the total expenditure (HRDC/Health Canada/INAC, 2002).

As discussed in Section 2, Part B, every province/territory except Quebec has a program of fee subsidies that pay some or all of the costs of regulated child care on behalf of low-income families. Quebec has its own approach to subsidizing the cost of regulated child care for very low-income families for whom the usual \$5 a day fee is too high.

In some provinces/territories, funds are available for regulated or unregulated child care through vouchers or cash payments for parents on social assistance in workfare or training programs. While these kinds of programs exist in most provinces/territories, it is not possible to estimate government spending on them.

#### Income support

Approximately 80% of parents with young children receive a tax-free monthly payment through the federal government Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB). Eligible families with the lowest income also receive a National Child Benefit (NCB) Supplement. Those parents with a family income below \$25,921 who are unemployed and receiving Employment Insurance benefits also receive a Family Supplement through the federal Employment Insurance program.

**Table 16: Federal government financial assistance to families with children, 2002**

<b>Program</b>	<b>Eligibility criteria</b>	<b>Assistance</b>
CCTB and the NCB Supplement	Families with a child under age 18 and a net income below approximately \$79,000 are eligible for all or part of the base benefit. Families with a net income below \$22,397 are eligible for maximum federal child benefits (the total base benefit and the entire Supplement).	The maximum base benefit is \$1,151 per year per child; this is increased by \$80 per year for the third and each additional child under age 18 and by \$228 for each child under age 7. The maximum received through the combination of the base benefit and the Supplement is \$2,444 per year for the first child and slightly less for subsequent children.
Family Supplement through Employment Insurance	Parent has a child under age 16, is unemployed and receiving Employment Insurance benefits, and family income is less than \$25,921 per year.	The amount received depends on family income and the number of children. Can be as much as 80% of the individual's wage instead of the usual 55% but cannot exceed \$413 per week.

**Sources:** Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, 2002a. *About the Canada Child Tax Benefit*. Available on-line at: <http://www.ccr-aadrc.gc.ca/benefits/>; Human Resources Development Canada. (2000b). *The Family Supplement*. Available on-line at: <http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/ae/pubs/219017.shtml>.

Each province/territory provides welfare (social assistance) payments from its own revenues to very low-income families.

#### **4. The role of communities**

Communities in the sense of community groups in civil society have a number of key roles in ECEC in Canada. As described above, the initiation, development and ongoing maintenance of child care programs is usually a responsibility that community/voluntary groups and parents assume. Governments generally have not provided specific support for the development of community-organized approaches to

providing ECEC, although there are exceptions. The City of Vancouver in British Columbia has developed goals for a comprehensive child care system, has a child care action plan, and employs a City Childcare Coordinator. Vancouver routinely seeks to obtain “community amenity contributions,” such as child care space, when negotiating re-zoning with land developers. It also provides some funding to non-profit child care programs for specific purposes such as start-up costs and program enhancement. The City of Toronto has a child care Advisory Committee, Children’s Ombudsperson, Child and Youth Action Committee and planning processes that engage service providers and the public.

Although individual ECEC programs may engage members of the community as volunteers, available research shows that volunteerism does not play a major role in child care services (Doherty et al., 2002b). Volunteers may provide assistance in programming, fund raising or by providing interpretation for parents who do not speak the language used in the service. There are limited instances of service clubs in some communities providing in-kind or cash donations to programs that support families with young children (e.g. one service club provided materials for a child care centre’s parenting courses). Such support depends heavily upon the initiative of the service club or a program director who approaches a club for assistance



## Section 3: Policy Approaches

### Part E: Financing ECEC services

#### 1. Introduction

Financing for Canadian ECEC is shared among parents and the federal, provincial/territorial and municipal governments. The proportion of financing from the different sources varies depending upon the program and the province/territory. Kindergarten is funded as part of public education systems and is free to the user. Except in Quebec, regulated child care is not a funded program. Generally, the bulk of funds for operating child care programs comes from parent fees and fee subsidies for eligible low-income parents with some provincial/territorial operating funds in the form of grants.

With the exception of Aboriginal and other programs that are funded directly by the federal government, most government financing for ECEC programs comes from provincial/territorial general revenues. These provincial/territorial general revenue funds are derived from several sources, including federal transfer payments and taxation. In addition, some financing comes from local/municipal governments for kindergarten and child care in some provinces/territories. The financial contribution to ECEC programs from businesses, social organizations and other non-government sources (except parent fees) is minimal.

#### 2. Kindergarten

With the exception of federal funds for education for Aboriginal children living on reserve, kindergarten is financed through block grants to school boards for all their school programs (kindergarten to Grade 12) made by provincial/territorial governments from their general revenues. In three provinces, there are additional municipal funds provided to school boards through money raised by property taxes levied specifically for public education. In 2001, municipal funds accounted for between 15% and 58% of public school budgets in these provinces (Canada School Board Association, 2002).

Kindergarten expenditure data are not available as provinces/territories usually report aggregated education spending for all grades (kindergarten to Grade 12). However, calculations from available information from a survey of provincial/territorial officials suggest a very rough estimate of total provincial/territorial spending on kindergarten of \$1.5 billion in 2001. Table 17 shows the provincial/territorial data used for this estimate. It should be noted that the expenditure figures are estimates, not actuals, and that some jurisdictions were not able to provide an estimate.

**Table 17: Estimated expenditures on kindergarten, 2001**

Province or territory	Available information
Newfoundland & Labrador	Information not available
Prince Edward Island	\$150–\$200 per month per pupil, depending on the location of the program. Estimated total for 2001 = \$3.2 million
Nova Scotia	Information not available
New Brunswick	Information not available
Quebec	Average spending per pupil in maternelle (age 5) = \$1,694 per year Average spending per pupil in pré-maternelle (age 4) = \$1,879 per year Average spending per 4-year-old in passé-partout = \$900 per year
Ontario	Average spending per 4-year-old = \$6,645 per year (full-time equivalent) Average spending per 5-year-old = \$6,673 per year (full-time equivalent)
Manitoba	Average spending per pupil = \$3,500 per year
Saskatchewan	Average spending per pupil in rural areas = \$2,189 per year Average spending per pupil in Regina/Saskatoon = \$2,069 per year
Alberta	Average spending per pupil = \$2,184 per year
British Columbia	Average spending per pupil = \$4,200 per year
Northwest Territories	Average spending per pupil = \$4,570 per year
Nunavut	Information not available
Yukon Territory	Information not available

**Source:** Friendly et al., 2002, based on interviews with provincial/territorial government officials.

**Note:** Where amounts are provided, they are estimates, not actuals.

### 3. Regulated child care

This category includes child care centres, regulated family child care, school-age child care in most provinces/territories and, in some provinces/territories, part-day nursery schools or preschools. Outside of Quebec, almost none of these are funded programs; each individual child care setting obtains its operating revenue from a number of sources—fees paid directly by parents, fee subsidies paid directly to the program by provinces/territories on behalf of low-income parents, and other provincial/territorial financing, usually in the form of grants that may be available to some of the eligible programs in the province/territory. Provincial/territorial funding, in turn, is derived in part from federal government transfer payments. There is considerable provincial/territorial variation in the proportions of financing from each source and the relative availability of funds. Municipal financing may play a role too, although this is mostly applicable to Ontario where municipal governments both contribute and administer funds.

The most recent year in which comparable data were collected on sources of revenue from centres in every province/territory is 1998 (Doherty et al., 2000b). According to that survey, the average (Canada-wide) child care centre derives its revenue as follows:

- 49% from parent fees;
- 31% from government fee subsidies;
- 17% from other government funding; and
- 3% from other sources such as fund raising and charitable donations.

Comparable data are not available for family child care.

#### Parent fees

In 1998, the proportion of the average child care centre's revenue from parent fees ranged from 34% to 82%, depending on the jurisdiction (Doherty et al., 2000b). Child care fees in Canada are market-based, except in Manitoba and Quebec, both of which set a maximum fee that can be charged by regulated child care settings that receive provincial funding.

#### Government financing

##### a) Provincial/territorial financing

Provinces/territories do not directly deliver child care services; instead, they provide funds to community groups and businesses to assist in their provision of child care. Fee subsidies, the largest category of provincial/territorial child care spending, are covered in some detail in the Access section. Other provincial/territorial financing may include operating funding or grants to child care programs for specific purposes (e.g. wage enhancement), funds for including children with special needs, and capital and start-up funds. Generally, the process requires that the service provider apply for the grant. In some instances, funds may not be available because a limit or freeze is in effect. For example, in Prince Edward Island operating grants are not available to centres that have opened since 1993, when operating funding was frozen. The availability and amounts of government grants vary from time to time and may change dramatically with a change in government. Total provincial/territorial spending on child care for children age 0 to 12 in 2000/01 was almost \$1,889.8 million (Friendly et al., 2002). It is not possible to estimate how much of this pertained to children under age 6.

Table 18 provides information on the expenditures by each province/territory (where the information is available) for regulated child care for each child age 0 to 12 living in the jurisdiction at four points in time (1992–2001, adjusted to 2001 dollars); this includes fee subsidies and government grants. The data in this table cover programs for children age 0 to 12, not age 0 to 6, as generally it is not possible to break government expenditures down by that age group. The table illustrates the substantial infusion of funds into regulated child care in Quebec which began with the government's 1997 commitment to the creation of 85,000 new regulated spaces by 2001.

Table 19 provides information on the expenditures by each province/territory *per actual regulated space* at four periods in time (adjusted to 2001 dollars). Again, the data cover programs for children age 0 to 12.

The provincial/territorial expenditure differences evident in Table 19 primarily reflect differences across jurisdictions in the provision of grants and the availability of fee subsidies. These differences are easier to identify in Table 20, which provides information on the proportion of provincial/territorial allocations to regulated child care for different purposes.

**Table 18: Allocation for regulated child care for each child age 0–12 years, by province/territory, 1992, 1995, 1998, 2001 (adjusted to 2001 dollars, rounded)<sup>1</sup>**

Province/Territory	1992 (\$)	1995 (\$)	1998 (\$)	2001 (\$)
Newfoundland & Labrador	17	33	40	101
Prince Edward Island <sup>2</sup>	125	74	116	187
Nova Scotia	83	73	110	91
New Brunswick	32	28	49	105
Quebec	138	190	272	980
Ontario	273	318	257	232
Manitoba	245	258	248	338
Saskatchewan	71	74	93	97
Alberta	151	146	111	110
British Columbia <sup>3</sup>	111	169	211	274
Northwest Territories <sup>4</sup>	154	87	Not available	Not available
Nunavut	n/a	n/a	n/a	Not available
Yukon Territory	468	574	Not available	Not available
CANADA	<b>179</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>386</b>

**Sources:** Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 2000, Table 7; Friendly et al., 2002, Table 34a.

**Notes:**

- Adjusted values based on the Consumer Price Index (1996), All-Items, Annual Averages (Index, 1992 = 100).
- n/a = not applicable. Nunavut was not created until 1999.
- The data in the table pertain to children age 0–12 since generally it is not possible to estimate the proportion of expenditures for children under age 6.

<sup>1</sup> Estimates based on total provincial/territorial allocations and total number of children age 0–12 years.

<sup>2</sup> The 2001 figure for Prince Edward Island includes kindergarten, which is under child care legislation. As a result, the 2001 figure is not comparable to the figures in the previous years.

<sup>3</sup> Figures for British Columbia for fee subsidies are estimated because British Columbia allows subsidies to be used in both regulated and unregulated care. These figures have been adjusted accordingly.

<sup>4</sup> Figures for Northwest Territories and Yukon are based on estimated numbers of children age 0–12 and therefore are not directly comparable to the figures given for the other jurisdictions.

**Table 19: Allocation per regulated child care space, by province/territory, 1992, 1995, 1998, 2001 (adjusted to 2001 dollars, rounded)<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Province/Territory</b>	<b>1992 \$</b>	<b>1995 \$</b>	<b>1998 \$</b>	<b>2001 \$</b>
Newfoundland & Labrador	536	777	815	1,835
Prince Edward Island	769	480	750 <sup>2</sup>	1,334
Nova Scotia	1,227	1,247	1,295	1,125
New Brunswick	584	446	640	1,066
Quebec <sup>3</sup>	2,032	2,033	1,822	4,651
Ontario	3,398	4,135	3,044	2,608
Manitoba	2,692	2,720	2,365	2,731
Saskatchewan	2,307	1,969	2,378	2,279
Alberta	1,549	1,514	1,252	1,206
British Columbia	1,498	1,762	1,956	2,256
Northwest Territories	2,683	1,409	1,756	1,298
Nunavut	n/a	n/a	n/a	2,001
Yukon Territory	2,794	4,329	3,839	4,086
<b>CANADA</b>	<b>2,387</b>	<b>2,614</b>	<b>2,175</b>	<b>3,191</b>

**Source:** Friendly et al., 2002, Table 33a.

**Notes:**

- Adjusted values based on the Consumer Price Index (1996), All-Items, Annual Averages (Index, 1992 = 100).
- n/a = not applicable. Nunavut was not created until 1999.

<sup>1</sup> Estimates based on total provincial/territorial allocations and total number of regulated child care spaces (centre-based and family child care) for children age 0–12. It is not possible to determine the proportion of expenditures used for children under age 6.

<sup>2</sup> 2001 figures for Prince Edward Island did not include part-day kindergarten expenditures or spaces for the purpose of comparison with other jurisdictions. Therefore, Prince Edward Island's figures for 2001 are not comparable to its earlier figures.

<sup>3</sup> Quebec figures include expenditure information on school-age child care obtained from the Ministry of Education.

**Table 20: Proportion of provincial/territorial allocation for different categories of expenditures in regulated child care spaces for children age 0–12, by province/territory, 2001**

Item	NL	PE	NS	NB	QC <sup>1</sup>	ON	MB	SK	AB	BC	NT	YT	NU
Parent fee subsidy	79.9%	75.4%	66.4%	55.0%	n/a <sup>2</sup>	66.4%	51.3%	60.1%	86.6%	36.8%	51.3%	63.8 %	28.4%
One-time grants (e.g. start-up)	2.6%	Nil	0.1%	Nil	2.5%	Nil	Nil	0.8%	Nil	1.2%	Nil	0.7%	Nil
Recurring operating grants to centres	4.1%	6.1%	23.0%	22.8%	97.4% <sup>3</sup>	25.7% <sup>4</sup>	32.4%	27.3%	Nil	36.8	48.7% <sup>5</sup>	34.7 %	71.6% <sup>6</sup>
Recurring family child care agency administration fee	3.1%	n/a	0.3%	n/a	See foot note # 16	See foot note # 17	n/a	n/a	9.7%	n/a	n/a/	n/a	n/a
Special needs funding	10.3%	18.5%	7.8%	22.2%		7.9 %	11.6%	4.6%	3.7%	24.0%	No data available	0.8%	No data available
Other grants	Nil	Nil	2.3 %	Nil	0.1%	Nil	4.8%	7.3%	Nil	1.4%	Nil	Nil	Nil

**Source:** Calculations based on data in Friendly et al., 2002.

<sup>1</sup> The figures for Quebec relate only to children age 0–4 inclusive.

<sup>2</sup> Quebec parents paid \$5/day for child care with the government picking up the remainder of the cost until January 2004 when that cost was raised to \$7/day. Working parents who cannot afford \$7/day are eligible for a subsidy that reduces the cost; information on the total amount of this subsidization is not available.

<sup>3</sup> This item also covers the costs of the administration fee for the family child care component in the centres de la petite enfance and funds to assist in the inclusion of children with special needs.

<sup>4</sup> The statistic for the grants to centres in Ontario includes wage enhancement grants for centre staff and regulated family child care providers and the administration fee for family child care agencies.

<sup>5</sup> Includes funding for start-up.

<sup>6</sup> Includes funding for start-up.

#### b) Municipal financing

Municipalities and other local governments play a limited role in funding or operating child care programs, except in Ontario where their role is mandated and many municipalities do deliver child care services. In Ontario, municipal/regional governments have administered and paid 20% of fee subsidies for eligible families for many years using their own municipal revenues. Since 2000, Ontario municipalities also fund 20% of wage enhancement grants, funding to assist integration of children with special needs, the child care component of the *Ontario Works* program (a workfare program), and family resource programs. Data for Ontario municipal government expenditures on child care are not available. Some municipalities in Alberta provide fee subsidies for after-school programs from block funds allocated to the municipalities by the province through the Family and Community Services program. Again, the amount of municipal expenditures on fee subsidies in Alberta is not available. In 2002, the City of Vancouver, using its own revenues, allocated an estimated \$1.3 million for operating and capital grants to centres operated by non-profit groups (Carol Ann Young, Child Care Coordinator, City of Vancouver, personal communication, April 21, 2003). It is not possible to estimate the proportion of these funds used for services for children under age 6.

#### c) Direct federal government funding for specific populations

As discussed in Section 3, Part E, the federal government directly funds or contributes to the financing of child care programs for children living on reserve and also for military families. Other than this, the federal government's financial contribution to child care services is indirect.

d) Indirect government funding

The federal government contributes indirectly to the financing of child care through three different mechanisms: (1) the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST); (2) the National Child Benefit Reinvestment; and (3) the Child Care Expense Deduction (CCED).

The CHST is the main vehicle for transferring federal funds to provinces/territories. Most of the CHST is an undesignated block transfer to be used at the discretion of provincial/territorial governments for health, post-secondary education, and social services including child care. Except for the designated funds flowed through the CHST under the federal/provincial/territorial Early Childhood Development Agreement and the federal/provincial/territorial Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care, the amount of CHST funds spent on child care cannot be determined.

Some federal financing for regulated child care also comes through the National Child Benefit Reinvestment (described in the Context section). Provinces/territories/First Nations may reduce their payments to very low-income families receiving social assistance (welfare) by an amount equal to the federal payment for the National Child Benefit Supplement and invest the savings in programs for low-income families that promote attachment to the workforce and/or reduce child poverty. In 2000/01, the total provincial/territorial Reinvestment plus additional investments was \$534.5 million, of which \$38.4 million (about 8%) was spent on regulated child care (*National Child Benefit 2002 Progress Report*. Available on-line at: [www.nationalchildbenefit.ca](http://www.nationalchildbenefit.ca)). The total First Nations Reinvestment for 2000/01 was \$23.0 million, of which \$617,000 was spent on child care (*The First Nations National Child Benefit Progress Report for the Year Ending March 31, 2001*. Available on-line at: [www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pe-cp/111\\_e.html](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pe-cp/111_e.html)).

The CCED relieves eligible parents using child care of some of their income tax liability. The resultant foregone federal income can also be considered as an indirect way of funding child care. In 2000/01, the foregone income as a result of the CCED was \$560 million (Canada Department of Finance, in press). This amount includes foregone revenue related to expenditures on children up to age 16 as it is not possible to separate out those related to children under age 6.

#### **4. Unregulated child care arrangements**

Unregulated child care—including unregulated family child care, an unrelated adult hired to care for the child in the child's own home, some nursery schools/preschools, the federal government's Child Minding program for children whose parents are attending English or French as a Second Language training, and recreational programs used by parents for child care—is financed in a variety of ways. While only limited data from which to draw inferences are available, it can be assumed that most of the cost of unregulated child care is paid directly by parents. There are, however, a number of public financing arrangements that contribute to unregulated child care, such as the federal CCED, which allows deductions for unregulated care as long as the parent can produce a receipt, as well as for regulated care, and some provincial/territorial vouchers, tax credits and cash payments made to parents in job-training programs. It should be noted that while most provincial/territorial fee subsidies are used only in regulated centres and family child care, in British Columbia, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut fee subsidies may be used for unregulated care as well. The data do not exist to enable an estimate of the amount of federal funds used for unregulated child care.

#### **5. Federal programs for specific populations**

##### Aboriginal children

The federal government provides direct funding for a number of ECEC services for Aboriginal children—kindergarten programs on reserve, Aboriginal Head Start, both on and off reserve, and child care programs on reserve and in Inuit communities. The federal government does not directly operate any of these programs other than a few of the schools on reserves (however, the operation of these schools is rapidly being transferred to the bands they serve). Instead, funds are transferred from the federal government to bands/First Nations and Aboriginal community groups so that they can operate the service. As illustrated in Table 21, three different federal government departments are responsible for ECEC services for Aboriginal children.

**Table 21: Federal government financing of ECEC services for Aboriginal children, 2001/02**

Department	Program	Funding mechanism	2001/02 expenditure
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC)	Child day care program, Alberta (17 First Nations)	Funds flowed directly by INAC to each First Nations government with the number of spaces to be provided specified in an annual or multi-year agreement.	\$2.7 million for children under age 6
	Child day care program, Ontario (57 First Nations)	Cost-sharing agreement with the Government of Ontario through which Ontario contributes 80% of the funding and INAC 20%. There is a contract between the First Nation government operating the centre and the Ontario Ministry of Community Services stating the number of children to be served. This contract must be approved by INAC before being finalized.	\$13.4 million for children under age 6
	On-reserve elementary education, including kindergarten (387 sites)	Funds flowed directly to each First Nations government with a requirement that they be used for agreed-to programming.	Estimated \$32.4 million for children under age 6
Health Canada	Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities (114 sites)	Funds flowed directly to each of the community groups operating a program under an annual contract which specifies the services to be provided.	\$22.5 million
	First Nations Head Start (160 projects serving 306 communities)	Funds flowed through Contribution Agreements between the Health Canada regional office and the First Nations community or association of communities (such as Tribal Councils). Agreements specify the activities to be provided.	\$25.0 million
Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC)	First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative (FNICCI) (389 sites)	<b>Funds flow to Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement Holders (AHRDA Holders) (Aboriginal organizations with whom HRDC has formal agreements) who determine which communities receive FNICCI funding and flow funds to those communities to provide child care services.</b>	\$41.0 million

**Sources:** HRDC/Health Canada/INAC, 2002, for funding amounts and number of sites; information from a federal government official working with each program for the funding mechanism used.

<sup>1</sup> Reflects expenditures on behalf of children up to age 12, but most of the expenditures would be for children under age 6.

Both on- and off-reserve Aboriginal Head Start, described in Section 3C, is provided free of charge as is kindergarten. Some parents receive partial or full subsidies for child care services funded through INAC and HRDC.

### Military families

Military Family Resource Centres, located on Armed Forces bases and stations, are intended to serve military families. The federal government provides core funding for each centre through a formal agreement and requires that each provide specific core services, including information about local resources, referrals, parenting education and emergency child care. The centres are considered by the government to be independent, third-party organizations, and each is operated by a community-based, elected board of directors. Individual centres may provide other child and family services, such as regular child care, and may also receive funding from other sources. Whether or not parents are required to pay a membership fee or are charged for a service depends upon the individual centre and sometimes upon the specific service being provided. The 2001/02 federal government expenditures related to children under age 6 are estimated to be \$4.0 million (HRDC/Health Canada/INAC, 2002).

## **6. Financing the infrastructure for ECEC services**

In ECEC, infrastructure includes:

- the buildings and homes in which programs are delivered;
- the government departments that develop policies, administer funds and carry out regulation;
- post-secondary institutions that train kindergarten teachers and early childhood educators; and
- institutions and organizations that provide information to parents and supports to individuals working in the ECEC field.

### *Kindergarten*

The infrastructure for kindergarten is part of the education system and is primarily financed and operated by government. It includes provincial/territorial departments that are responsible for legislation, regulation and policy. These government departments delegate the day-to-day operation to school boards that develop and manage a budget for all public schools in their jurisdiction, develop policies, supervise the operation of schools, provide consultation and professional development for teachers and maintain facilities. Provincial/territorial teachers' associations/federations are primarily funded by member fees. Generally, teachers must belong to their provincial/territorial association/federation which is responsible for collective bargaining and which also provides professional development.

### *Child care*

In each province/territory, there are government departments with responsibility for child care policy, legislation, regulation, and monitoring and enforcing their regulations. They usually administer the fee subsidy program and available government grants, and in some jurisdictions certify early childhood educators. Capital funding, such as start-up grants, equipment grants and/or funds to assist with repairs or renovations, is provided by five provinces and one territory. The various government functions in child care are sometimes assumed by more than one department in the same province/territory. Each province/territory has a system of publicly funded post-secondary institutions that train early childhood educators; there may be private training institutions as well.

Much of the infrastructure for child care programs is provided by community, parent and voluntary groups. Their functions include securing funds for facilities, collecting and disseminating information about such things as best practices, providing training and professional development, and sometimes playing a role in the policy development process. Quebec provides ongoing core funding to child care organizations to provide training, professional development and support to child care staff. Generally, groups providing infrastructure are funded through grants, membership fees and fee-for-service activities.



## **Section 4: Data, evaluation and research**

### **1. Introduction**

Regularly collected, comparable, reliable data are integral to systematic evaluation of policy and program approaches, to conducting research that can answer specific questions, and for constructing indicators to monitor and assess ECEC provision and quality. There are a variety of different types of information that can be used in the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of Canadian ECEC policies and programs, including regularly collected data and data from discrete research studies. Some of this information is produced by the Government of Canada, some by the provinces/territories, and some is produced by non-government organizations or academic researchers. This section identifies the available information and discusses the gaps in research and data that exist.

### **2. Available research and data**

#### *Data and research produced by the Government of Canada*

Statistics Canada is one of the primary sources of data at the pan-Canadian level. As Canada's central statistical agency, it has a legislated mandate to collect, compile, analyse, abstract and publish statistical information on a range of topics, including social and economic activities for Canada as a whole and for each of the provinces/territories. The data produced by Statistics Canada are available at a number of different geographic levels, including national, provincial/territorial and community. In addition to being responsible for conducting a census every five years, it has over 350 active surveys on all aspects of Canadian life. Other data regularly collected by Statistics Canada include the *National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth* (NLSCY) and the *Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics* (SLID).

The NLSCY, jointly undertaken by Statistics Canada and Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC), is a longitudinal study designed to assess the development and well-being of Canada's children and youth from infancy until adulthood. Implementation of the NLSCY has helped to broaden knowledge about children in Canada, particularly young children. Using the data collected in the NLSCY, it is possible to examine such issues as the extent to which child care is used by parents who are in the paid labour force, the association between family income and the type of child care used, and the extent to which parents are using multiple child care arrangements for a single child. However, since the NLSCY instruments do not include a measure of child care quality, its data cannot be used to examine issues such as the impact of child care on child outcomes.

The first collection cycle of the NLSCY (collected in late 1994 and early 1995) interviewed parents of about 23,000 children up to age 11. The parents shared information not only about their children, but also about themselves and the children's families, schools and neighbourhoods. Information is collected on: (1) child outcomes such as general health, development, language skills, cognitive skills, social relationships and behaviour; (2) characteristics of the child's family, such as family structure, parents' labour force participation, use of child care, parenting style, family functioning, the availability of social support for the parents and family income; (3) characteristics of the neighbourhood in which the child lives; and (4) the child's participation in sports and other activities and the child's school experiences. Direct assessment, including tests of vocabulary, math and reading skills, are combined with reports from parents, teachers and school principal and from the older children and youth themselves (HRDC, 1999).

Statistics Canada's SLID is designed to follow the same respondent for several years. It collects a large selection of demographic, family and labour market variables that can be used in both cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses. The SLID can provide regularly collected data that are relevant for policy and program development in ECEC, such as the number of mothers in the paid labour force who have children under age 6.

The *Understanding the Early Years* (UEY) study conducted by HRDC is also a source of information about children. This is a five-year study conducted in 13 communities across Canada to explore how early childhood development is influenced by neighbourhood characteristics, families, schools, child care

facilities and the availability of community resources such as public libraries. UEY is using the NLSCY instruments and the *Early Development Instrument* (EDI) developed at McMaster/Chedoke Hospital. The EDI questionnaire, completed by all kindergarten teachers in the study communities, provides aggregate school-readiness information on kindergarten children in the designated community. UEY also does community mapping to identify the programs and services for young children available in the community (HRDC, 2003).

Beginning in 1971 and until 1998, HRDC published *Status of Day Care in Canada*. These data provided information on the number of children with mothers in the paid labour force and the number and auspice of regulated centre and family child care spaces. These reports, with their standard information, enabled tracking the supply of regulated child care for children with mothers in the labour force over time.

#### *Federal/provincial/territorial data and research*

Under the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Agreement, participating federal/provincial/territorial governments have committed to monitor and report to Canadians on the well-being of Canada's young children using an agreed upon common set of 11 indicators. This common set of indicators reflects the five domains of child well-being: (1) physical health and motor development; (2) emotional health; (3) social knowledge and competence; (4) cognitive learning; and (5) language-communication. The 2003 Multilateral Agreement on Early Learning and Care also commits governments to public reporting on a list of specific items related to accessibility, quality and financing.

Provincial/territorial governments are also required to report annually to the public on their activities and expenditures under the ECD Agreement. This reporting will allow public tracking of progress in improving and enhancing early childhood development programs and services.

Under the March 2003 Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care, participating governments have committed to report annually on activities and expenditures related to regulated early learning and child care programs and services, beginning with a baseline report in November 2003. These reports will include descriptive and expenditure information, as well as indicators of availability, affordability and quality. In addition, the framework commits governments to develop an evaluation framework for early learning and child care within one year of the flow of funds.

*Tots 2001* is a joint study conducted by the Government of Manitoba (Healthy Child Manitoba) and HRDC that will examine the development of young children over a five-year period starting from age 3. This study uses direct measures of child outcomes at age 3 in relation to selected indicators of child care applicable to all child care arrangements. Over time, it will determine how children are progressing in the early years of life, what factors affect the development of children, and how to best respond to their needs. Potentially, follow-ups will occur when the children are in kindergarten and in early elementary school. The findings of this study are intended to benefit the families of young children and care providers in the community, as well as the three levels of government in Canada.

#### *Provincial/territorial data and research*

The provincial/territorial governments all regularly collect administrative data related to kindergarten and regulated child care. Generally, child care data on the number of spaces in centres for each age group of children, the number of children with special needs in regular child care spaces, and the number of fee subsidies are available from these sources. Several provinces regularly conduct surveys to collect information about centres and family child care homes and also assess parental needs; one example is the periodic survey conducted by British Columbia. Other provinces/territories have done surveys or studies to answer specific questions, including collecting data on centre staff perceptions of training needs, surveying centres to determine their need for program support, and collecting information about salary levels.

Some data and information on kindergarten as a discrete program within elementary education are available from each province/territory. Generally, however, these data are limited. For example, most

provinces/territories do not separate public spending on kindergarten from public spending on elementary schools as a whole. Some jurisdictions can provide an estimate of the average cost per student for kindergarten, others cannot. Most provinces/territories can provide kindergarten enrolment figures. The Pan Canadian Education Indicators Program (PCEIP), a joint effort of Statistics Canada and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), is intended to provide information on specific education indicators from all provinces/territories in as consistent a fashion as possible to support governments' decision making, policy formulation and program development. PCEIP reports were issued in 1996 and 1999.

#### *Local government data collection*

Some municipalities in Ontario directly operate child care and have developed their own systems to collect basic data and monitor and evaluate their programs. An example of this is the comprehensive data system of the City of Toronto. It enables Toronto to assess families' eligibility for fee subsidy, maintain waiting lists, establish rates payable to child care programs, and process enrolment, attendance and payments to services on behalf of subsidized families. Toronto uses the data it collects to monitor service levels, plan for service enhancements, and, when merged with census and other information, analyse service needs and emerging trends. Information on vacancies and other public information derived from the data system is provided on a website.

#### *Research undertaken by non-government organizations and other researchers*

The federal government is one of the primary funders of the collection and synthesis of data, the development of research instruments, and discrete research studies conducted by non-government organizations (NGOs) and/or non-government researchers.

The 1988 *National Child Care Study* was one of the first studies related to ECEC services funded by the federal government and is the only Canadian study on parents who use child care. It provided substantial data on the characteristics of parent-users of child care, their preferences and needs, and patterns of child care arrangements (Lero, Pence, Shields, Brockman and Goelman, 1992). This survey has not been replicated.

In contrast, the first phase of the 1998 *You Bet I Care!* study (Doherty et al., 2000b) replicated a previous (1991) national study of wages and working conditions in child care centres, the characteristics and education levels of early childhood educators working in them, staff morale, parent fees and turnover rates (Canadian Child Day Care Federation/Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association, 1992). The same questions were asked in both studies. This resulted in comparable data that enable the identification of similarities and differences between two points in time. The second phase of the *You Bet I Care!* study collected the same data from a different sample of 239 centres in six provinces and one territory and used standard observation tools to rate the quality in each centre. By combining information about staff and the quality ratings, the study was able to identify predictors of quality in the Canadian context and to establish a baseline of quality which could be used to identify the effect of subsequent policy changes (Goelman et al., 2000). Phase three of *You Bet I Care!* collected data from 231 regulated family child care providers in the same seven jurisdictions that paralleled, to the extent possible, the data collected in centres in phase one. Observational tools were also used to obtain a quality rating in each home. Combining quality ratings with data about the individual provider enabled identification of predictors of quality in family child care and a baseline of quality (Doherty et al., 2000a).

Data on family resource programs across the country have also been collected twice, first in 1994 and again in 2001 by FRP Canada (Association of Family Resource Programs Canada, 1995; 2002). Both surveys collected data on program services, program users, characteristics of the staff, program sponsors and sources of funding, thereby allowing for comparison of the profile of these programs at two points in time.

A national human resource study of child care in Canada (the Child Care Sector Study) was funded by HRDC and conducted in the late 1990s (Beach, Bertrand and Cleveland, 1998). This study examined data on a number of human resource issues, such as wages and working conditions, training opportunities, career trends and workforce morale. One outcome of the study has been the establishment of the Child Care Human Resources Round Table (CCHRRT), a 15-member, formalized mechanism through which child care organizations, labour organizations and representatives of different parts of the child care workforce address

human resource issues through sectoral perspectives and analyses. The CCHRRT became a formal sector council in December 2003 (now the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council or CCHRSC) —a permanent organization with representatives from the workforce, employers and the labour movement—which is funded by HRDC to examine child care human resource issues.

Since the early 1990s, the Childcare Resource and Research Unit at the University of Toronto has received a federal grant to synthesize the available administrative ECEC data from the provinces/territories and to use it to produce periodic national reports. Over the years, these periodic reports have moved from solely covering regulated child care to include data collected from federal and provincial/territorial sources about federal programs and kindergarten (Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 1992; 1994; 1997; 2000; Friendly et al., 2002). Reviewing the series of reports enables tracking of changes in government policies, practices and funding.

The development by the Canadian Centre for Children at Risk at McMaster University of the Early Development Instrument used in the *Understanding the Early Years Study* is an example of federal funds being used to develop a research instrument.

Another example of federally funded research is a cost-benefit analysis of quality child care by two university economists (Cleveland and Krashinsky, 1998). The study examined the child development benefits and the parental employment benefits that could result and provided a cost analysis of a universal child care program. While not assigning specific monetary values to each of the various benefits that could be achieved, the researchers did use existing studies and research to roughly approximate child development and employment benefits as a lump sum.

In the fall of 2000, the Government of Canada established five centres of excellence. The Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development (CEECD) was established to improve knowledge of the social and emotional development of young children. The mandate of the CEECD is to foster the dissemination of scientific knowledge on the social and emotional development of young children and the policies and services that influence this development. One of the tasks undertaken by the CEECD is the development of an encyclopedia on a variety of issues related to early childhood development.

Through a variety of funding sources, a number of social policy think tanks undertake research projects and policy analysis that contribute to greater knowledge and understanding of issues, such as family preferences and needs in relation to ECEC services. One example is the *Best Policy Mix for Children* project undertaken by the Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN) to explore the sorts of services and supports required by young children and their families (Stroick and Jenson, 1999).

While federal government funding for ECEC research has enabled research and data collection by NGOs, academic researchers and social policy organizations, funding programs have not been stable or predictable.

### **3. Gaps in ECEC evaluation, data and research**

Over the years, there have been many changes in Canadian social and economic policy that have an impact on ECEC services. Generally, the impact of ECEC policies and program approaches and changes to them is not systematically monitored or evaluated by Canadian governments at either the federal or the provincial/territorial level.

Provinces/territories collect considerable amounts of administrative data. The data, however, often are not comparable across jurisdictions and in some instances provinces/territories do not collect information routinely collected in other jurisdictions. In other cases, the same information is collected across provinces/territories, but the methodology used differs and results in data that are not comparable from one jurisdiction to another. There is no regular collection of national data by government or others about the use and characteristics of kindergarten, nursery schools, regulated child care or family resource programs, or about the children and families using them. Nor are data collected on the demand or need for ECEC services (Cleveland, Colley, Friendly and Lero, 2003. Available on-line at <http://www.childcarecanada.org>).

## **Section 5: Concluding Comments**

### **1. ECEC services as a component of support for young children and their families**

ECEC—regulated child care, kindergarten and nursery schools/preschools—is a component of Canadian supports for families and young children. ECEC programs are framed by partially paid maternity/parental leave and public schooling, which generally begins at age 6. In addition, the national health insurance program fully covers the cost of basic treatment by hospitals and physicians and may cover other health services as well. Other supports include family resource programs providing such things as parenting education, a variety of services for children with special needs, and some income support and supplements for some families with young children.

### **2. The distinguishing features of ECEC in Canada**

#### *The role of governments*

There is no national approach to ECEC in Canada. Government responsibility for ECEC programs and supports for families and young children is split between federal and provincial/territorial governments. Under Canadian constitutional conventions, educational and social programs such as child care and kindergarten are generally the responsibility of provinces/territories. The federal government assumes responsibility for some programs, including some children's services for specific populations—Aboriginal people, military families and immigrants/refugees, and some income support and supplements for low-income working families with children.

Each province/territory has its own legislation, policies and practices for ECEC programs. The federal government's main role in ECEC consists of transferring money to provinces/territories for some of their programs, primarily through the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST), a block grant for health, social services and post-secondary education. Two specific intergovernmental initiatives—the Early Childhood Development Agreement and the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care—are delivered through the CHST. Provincial/territorial employment legislation sets the terms for maternity/parental leaves while the federal government provides partial salary replacement for eligible parents.

Local governments (usually municipalities) are subordinate to the province/territory in which they are located. Local governments in Canada generally have no or a very limited role in child care, except in Ontario where they have a legislated mandate. In three provinces, municipalities provide some of the funding for the delivery of public education.

#### *The role of the voluntary sector and non-government organizations*

The voluntary sector and non-government organizations (NGOs) play multiple important roles in Canadian ECEC. These roles include initiating, developing and assuming responsibility for delivering child care programs, providing policy and program advice to governments, and providing a variety of services and infrastructure that support ECEC. Education associations, child care groups, allied organizations such as labour and social justice groups, and social policy NGOs at federal and provincial/territorial levels provide training and professional development, keep their members and the public informed about new research and changing concepts of best practice, carry out basic data collection and research, and engage in advocacy.

#### *The dichotomy between care and education*

The two main forms of ECEC in Canada are kindergarten and child care. Child care programs were first established in the late 1850s as charitable services to provide basic custodial care and supervision for the young children of impoverished mothers who had to engage in paid employment to support the family. Kindergarten as part of the public education system began in the 1880s in Toronto. Its purpose has always been viewed as the preparation of children for entry into the formal school system. These are still two separate programs; the differences in their origins can still be seen in the way in which they are funded, the training requirements to work in the program, the status of the work, and remuneration levels.

Kindergarten is (usually) publicly funded by provincial/territorial governments as part of a public education system with additional local funds in three provinces. It is basically free to the user. Kindergarten teachers in almost all provinces/territories must have an undergraduate (university) degree that includes teacher training courses; early childhood training is usually not required. Generally (outside Quebec), child care programs are funded primarily by fees paid by parents and government (provincial/territorial) fee subsidies paid on behalf of low-income families with less than 20% coming from other government funding. No province/territory requires that all individuals working in child care have completed a post-secondary training program; requirements range from no training requirement to a requirement of two years at post-secondary level in early child education for two thirds of a centre's staff. Teaching in a kindergarten is viewed as a profession while, generally, providing child care is not viewed as a profession by the general public. This difference in status is reflected in the higher overall salary levels and better benefits available to kindergarten teachers.

Kindergarten is available for virtually all 5-year-olds in all provinces/territories, 4-year-olds in almost all regions of Ontario and a limited number of 4-year-olds elsewhere. It is part time (usually 2½ hours a day) in all but three provinces where it is full school day (4–5 hours). Regulated child care is not an entitlement in any province/territory nor is it widely available. In 2001, there was a regulated space in a child care centre for an estimated 24% of the children under age 6 who have a mother in the paid workforce. Other children in this age group attended regulated family child care. Overall, this form of child care provides approximately 20% of all regulated spaces for children age 0 to 12. Information on the number of children under age 6 enrolled in family child care is not available.

#### *Populations with specific needs*

##### Aboriginal children

Thirty-five percent of the Aboriginal population are under age 15. Compared to the population as a whole, the Aboriginal population is educationally disadvantaged. Over the past decade, the federal government has introduced a number of new ECEC services for Aboriginal children under age 6 both on and off reserve and increased financial support. Aboriginal organizations often express a strong desire to maintain their culture and for ECEC services that are culturally sensitive, reflecting Aboriginal cultural norms and practices.

##### Immigrant and refugee children

In 2001, immigrants accounted for 18.3% of Canada's total population. Many immigrants have young children and almost two thirds of the children who came to Canada between 1997 and 1999 spoke neither English nor French. In some kindergarten classes in Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal, more than 50% of the students were born outside Canada and most of these children came from Asia, the Middle East or Africa. Increasingly, staff in child care programs and kindergarten classes assist children who are learning English or French adapt to what may be very different norms and expectations. Neither the kindergarten nor child care workforce reflects the cultural and racial diversity of the population as a whole. Training programs for teachers and for early childhood educators are under pressure to specifically prepare their students for working in a situation of ethnocultural diversity.

##### Children with special needs

The right of children with special needs to participate in ordinary community programs and to be supported in participating in daily activities has been conceptually accepted and internalized in Canada. Legislation or written policy in all provinces/territories guarantees children with special needs access to public school systems beginning in kindergarten, although not necessarily inclusion in regular classrooms. School boards usually provide additional funding for supports, such as assistants or adapted materials, to support inclusion. While no province/territory guarantees children with special needs access to regulated child care, all have specific mechanisms to support inclusion. In some jurisdictions, the cost of the additional supports required is covered by the government regardless of parental employment or socio-economic status; in others, this assistance is available only to parents with a family income below a certain level or who are in the paid labour force. Access to regulated child care for children with special needs may be limited by waiting lists for the additional funding required for inclusion.

### Children in rural areas

Although almost 80% of Canada's population live in urban areas, there are also rural communities where people engage in farming, fishing, mining, forestry or tourism or parents commute substantial distances each day to jobs elsewhere. ECEC services need to be flexible to meet the requirements of parents who need care on a seasonal basis at peak harvesting or tourism times and parents needing daily care that covers not only their time at work but also the time spent commuting.

## **3. Noteworthy initiatives**

### *Quebec's comprehensive family support policy*

In 1997, the Parti Québécois announced a new family support policy consisting of: (1) an extended parental leave program; (2) a consolidated child benefit for low-income families; and (3) a universal approach to ECEC that included setting annual targets for expansion, providing public funding with a parent fee of \$5 a day and extending kindergarten for 5-year-olds to full days. As part of the implementation of its new policy, Quebec consolidated centre and regulated family child care programs into early childhood centres (*centres de la petite enfance* – CPEs).

The expanded parental leave program has not yet been implemented. The demand for \$5 a day child care has far exceeded expectations and waiting lists have grown in spite of an increase in child care spaces for children age 0 to 4 (from 82,302 to 139,683). In January 2004, the Government of Quebec raised the parent fee for child care from \$5/day to \$7/day.

### *Expansion of maternity/parental benefits and leaves*

As of January 2002, parents who qualify under Employment Insurance rules are paid partial salary replacement for 15 weeks of maternity leave and 35 weeks of parental leave (the conditions for leaves are set by provinces/territories). A decrease in the number of hours that a person must have worked to be eligible for maternal/parental benefits (from 700 to 600 annually) also increased the number of new parents able to take advantage of this opportunity.

### *Expansion of ECEC programs for Aboriginal peoples*

Over the past decade, federal funding of ECEC services for Aboriginal children both on and off reserves has increased as has the number of different Aboriginal ECEC programs. In October 2002, the federal government announced \$320 million over the next five years to expand and improve ECEC services for Aboriginal children and, subsequently, an additional \$35 million over five years, primarily for services for First Nations children living on reserve.

### *The Multilateral Agreement on Early Learning and Care*

In March 2003, Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers responsible for Social Services agreed to a "framework for improving access to affordable, quality, provincially and territorially regulated early learning and child care programs." The federal funds (\$25 million in the first year, rising to \$350 million in the fifth year) are intended as "another important step in helping to promote young children's development and supporting their parents' participation in employment or training." The federal funds are to be spent on provincially/territorially regulated and monitored child care programs and public reporting will be required.

## **4. Trends**

### *Heightened awareness of the importance of the early years*

In the past decade, the NGOs, the media and reports such as *The Early Years Study* (McCain and Mustard, 1999) have played a key role with the general public as well as with policy makers in summarizing and popularizing research on the relationships between children's early experiences and their later health, well-being and development. *The Early Years Study* has been influential in helping people to understand that care and education are not separate entities, but instead interact with each other and are both important for young children's well-being and development.

The heightened awareness of the importance of the early years is evident in intergovernmental agreements such as the National Children's Agenda and the subsequent federal/provincial/territorial Early Childhood Development Agreement and the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care. It is also evident in the actions of individual provinces/territories. For example, five different government departments came together to develop Prince Edward Island's Healthy Child Development Strategy to support the growth and development of all children. Several provinces/territories have begun to address the need to improve the quality of regulated child care (e.g. by introducing or strengthening their child care staff training requirements and improving salary levels).

#### *Increased federal government involvement in early learning and care services*

ECEC services are generally the responsibility of provinces/territories. Under the block grant provisions of the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST) introduced in 1996,<sup>14</sup> there was no requirement to use federal funds transferred to provinces/territories for early learning and care. Similarly, the Early Childhood Development Agreement provided federal funds through the CHST that were earmarked for four categories of programs to support children's development, but there was no requirement to use funds for early learning and care. The Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Care signed in March 2003, however, specifies that the federal funds provided to the provinces/territories under this agreement must be used to improve access to affordable, quality regulated early learning and child care programs such as child care centres, family child care homes and nursery schools. The framework also commits the provinces/territories to report to the public annually on their progress in meeting the objective of improving access to quality early learning and care services.

## **5. Challenges for the future**

1. Building a common pan-Canadian purpose and vision for ECEC.
2. Creating a coherent system of ECEC that simultaneously supports parental labour force participation, healthy child development and populations in need of additional or specific forms of support.
3. Building on what is known about processes that support quality in ECEC.
4. Maintaining and fostering collaboration among the federal, provincial/territorial and local governments, and between these governments and Aboriginal communities.

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<sup>14</sup> The 2003 federal budget announced that the Government of Canada will legislate an end to the combined Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST), and, effective April 1, 2004, create two new transfers: a Canada Health Transfer in support of health and a Canada Social Transfer in support of post-secondary education, social assistance and social services, including early childhood development. The existing CHST will be apportioned between the two new transfers.



## Glossary

**Aboriginal Head Start:** a federal initiative that provides early interventions to preschool age Aboriginal, Métis and Inuit children. It includes the protection and promotion of Aboriginal cultures and languages, education, health, nutrition, counseling and parental involvement.

**Aboriginal people:** refers to all Indigenous peoples in Canada, including First Nations people, Métis and Inuit (see individual definitions).

**Auspice:** in child care, refers to the legally incorporated status of the program, either as a non-profit organization or a commercial (also known as for-profit) operation.

**Canada Assistance Plan (CAP):** from 1966 to 1995/96, the federal government used this funding mechanism to reimburse the provinces/territories for 50% of their eligible expenditures on social assistance and social programs, including regulated child care.

**Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST):** a block fund that replaced CAP as the vehicle for federal transfers to the provincial/territorial governments. It provides cash payments and tax transfers in support of health care, post-secondary education, social assistance and social services, including early childhood development.

**Canadian Alliance of Education and Training Organizations (CAETO):** a non-profit umbrella organization of national education and training organizations representing all levels of the education system. It provides its members with opportunities for information sharing and joint projects.

**Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms:** contained in the *Constitution Act, 1982*, it serves as the guiding law of the land and applies to all levels of government. It guarantees to all Canadians, among other things, rights to liberty, equality under the law, and freedom of religion, expression, association and peaceful assembly. It protects the rights of women, Aboriginal people and minority language groups.

**Centres de la petite enfance (CPE):** the primary administrative structure for regulated child care in Quebec. These not-for-profit, community-based organizations administered by parents provide both centre-based care for children 0 to 4 and regulated family child care.

**Child Care Expense Deduction (CCED):** an individual tax deduction that assists with cost of child care associated with parental employment. The parent with lower income may deduct up to \$7,000 for children under 7 and \$4,000 for children aged 7 to 16.

**Community college:** a post-secondary institution that offers certificate and diploma programs, as well as a number of other programs, responding to the training needs of business, industry, the public service sectors and the educational needs of vocationally oriented secondary school graduates. Community colleges are where most credential-bearing early childhood education programs are taught.

**Constitution Act:** a statute of the British Parliament created Canada in 1867 and set out the division of powers between the federal and provincial governments. Its original name was the *British North America Act, 1867*, but the name was changed in 1982. The *Constitution Act, 1982* is the supreme law of Canada that takes precedence over any other law. It was created as a part of the *Canada Act 1982* which ended any further British legislative authority over Canada. The constitution contains the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

**Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC):** composed of all the provincial/territorial education ministers, CMEC provides a forum for the discussion of issues of mutual concern and the development of pan-Canadian strategies.

**Early Childhood Development (ECD) Agreement:** in September 2000, Canada's First Ministers established the Early Childhood Development Agreement, under which the federal government is transferring \$2.2 billion over five years to provinces/territories to improve and expand their Early Childhood Development programs and services for children prenatal to age 0 to 6. Provincial/territorial governments will invest the funds in any or all of the following four areas: healthy pregnancy, birth and infancy; parenting and family supports; early childhood development, learning and care; and community supports.

**Early childhood education and care:** in Canada, a term used to broadly reflect child care centres, family child care homes, preschools and nursery schools, and, in some contexts, kindergarten.

**Early childhood education certificate/diploma:** a college credential obtained after completing coursework for preparation to work in a child care centre.

**Early childhood educator:** a person with a post-secondary certificate or diploma in early childhood education (or equivalent training).

**Early learning and child care:** in Canada, a term largely equivalent to “early childhood education and care.” Also the term used in the federal/provincial/territorial Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care, under which investments can be made in provincially/territorially regulated child care centres, family child care homes, preschools and nursery schools.

**Elder:** a respected older member of an Aboriginal community who is recognized by the community as knowledgeable about the community’s values and practices.

**Family child care:** home-based care provided for a portion of the day by a non-relative in a private family home inhabited by the family/individual who is providing care.

**Family child care agency:** an organization with which, in some provinces, the provincial government enters into a contract whereby the organization is responsible for monitoring and supervising a group of family child care providers who are then considered to be part of the regulated system.

**Family resource programs:** community-based organizations that work with families, children and caregivers. They offer a range of services that include parent and caregiver support, playgroups and drop-in programs, referrals to other resources and toy lending.

**First Nations:** a term that is used to apply to people who may also be called Indians (who could either have status under the *Indian Act* or not, living on or off reserve), and is also used to refer to legally recognized entities known in the *Indian Act* as “bands.”

**Inclusion:** the active involvement and participation of children with special needs and typically developing children in the same setting.

**Inuit:** original inhabitants of much of Canada’s Far North. Most Inuit in Canada are found in Labrador (Nunatsiavut), Northern Quebec (Nunavik) and the territory of Nunavut.

**Kindergarten:** usually a part-day full-week program for 5-year-olds under ministries of education, provided by all provinces/territories. In most jurisdictions it is treated as if it were an entitlement. In Ontario, **junior kindergarten** is usually a part-day full-week program available to almost all 4-year-olds.

**Licence:** a permit given to operators or agencies which meet minimum requirements for the legal operation of a child care centre, a family child care home or a family child care agency.

**Métis:** descendants of Aboriginal people and European fur traders/settlers who have developed their own Métis culture.

**Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care:** in March 2003, Canada’s Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers responsible for Social Services reached agreement on a Multilateral Framework for Early Learning and Child Care, under which the federal government is transferring \$900 million over five years to provinces/territories to support investments in provincially/territorially regulated early learning and child care programs for children under 6. The objective of this initiative is to further promote early childhood development and support the participation of parents in employment or training by improving access to affordable, quality early learning and child care programs and services.

**Nursery school:** part-day, part-week program of early childhood education and care, usually for children 2½ to 5, which may be regulated depending on the province/territory. Also known as preschool in some provinces/territories.

**Pre-kindergarten:** a program operated by school boards for children who are usually 4 years old. Programs are usually part-day, and with the exception of Ontario are provided only to targeted populations.

**Process quality:** the day-to-day experiences of a child in a child care setting.

**Province and territory:** the major political division of Canada, provinces and territories are responsible for matters such as education, property and the administrations of justice, hospitals and municipalities. For the territories, federal laws regulate the election of territorial councils, whose powers—including passing territorial laws—are conferred by the federal government. The provinces, in contrast, have the power to pass laws in a number of areas.

**Reserve:** a defined geographical territory governed by the federal *Indian Act* that has been set aside for the exclusive use of First Nations people (previously known as Indians). Reserves are administered by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and are generally excluded from local jurisdiction.

**School-age care:** care for children, usually age 5 to 12, provided before and after school during the school year and care during school holidays; may include care provided over the lunch break.

**School boards:** the local authority for public education, composed of a group of elected trustees responsible for ensuring that the education of students in their jurisdiction is provided in accordance with the provincial/territorial regulations.

**Social Union Framework Agreement (SUFA):** signed by the federal and provincial governments (except Quebec) in February 1999, SUFA created a new framework for social policy making. In addition to setting the rules for how the federal and provincial governments should work, the agreement lays out principles of equity and fairness in social programs; codifies rules for the federal spending power; and promises collaboration, accountability and transparency.

**Special needs:** a child with special needs is one who has one or more of: a physical or developmental handicap, a severe behavioural problem, or a medical condition that makes the child medically fragile.

**Statistics Canada:** the official source for Canadian social and economic statistics and products. Statistics Canada is legislated to produce statistics on population, resources, economy, society and culture.



## List of acronyms

B.A.:	Bachelor of Arts degree
B.Ed.:	Bachelor of Education degree
CAETO:	Canadian Alliance of Education and Training Organizations
CAP:	Canada Assistance Plan
CAPC:	Community Action Program for Children
CCAAC:	Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada
CCCF:	Canadian Child Care Federation
CCED:	Child Care Expense Deduction
CCHRRT:	Child Care Human Resources Round Table
CCTB:	Canada Child Tax Benefit
CEECD:	Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development
CHST:	Canada Health and Social Transfer
CMEC:	Council of Ministers of Education, Canada
CPE:	Centre de la petite enfance (in Quebec)
CPRN:	Canadian Policy Research Networks
CTF:	Canadian Teachers' Federation
ECD:	Early Childhood Development
ECE:	Early childhood education (either certificate or diploma); sometimes also used to refer to an early childhood educator
ECEC:	Early childhood education and care
EDI:	Early Development Instrument
FNICCI:	First Nations/Inuit Child Care Initiative
FRP:	Family resource program
HRDC:	Human Resources Development Canada
INAC:	Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
LICO:	Low Income Cut-Off
LINC:	Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada program
MIKE:	Measuring and Improving Kids' Environments
NCA:	National Children's Agenda
NCB:	National Child Benefit
NGO:	Non-government organization
NLSCY:	National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCEIP:	Pan Canadian Education Indicators Program
PLAR:	Prior learning, assessment and recognition tool
SLID:	Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics
SUFA:	Social Union Framework Agreement
UEY:	Understanding the Early Years project

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## **ANNEXES:**

**PROVINCIAL CONTEXT FOR FOUR PROVINCES HOSTING SITE VISITS  
BY THE OECD REVIEW TEAM**

**BRITISH COLUMBIA**

**MANITOBA**

**PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND**

**SASKATCHEWAN**



## Annex A: British Columbia

### 1. Provincial context

#### 1.1 Overview

British Columbia is Canada's western-most province and has a land mass larger than France and Germany combined. It borders on Alberta to the east, the U.S. in the south, the Yukon and Northwest territories in the north, and has Alaska to the northwest. As of July 2001, the province had a population of 4.096 million people, most of whom live along the southern border either in Vancouver and its surrounding suburban areas or in the southern part of Vancouver Island. British Columbia is Canada's third-largest generator of hydro electricity, and the second-largest natural gas producer. While forestry, mining, fishing and agriculture remain important, there is strong growth in new industries such as eco-tourism and film production (<http://www.gov.bc.ca>).

#### 1.2 Demographics<sup>15</sup>

Table 1: *Children with mothers in the paid labour force, 2001, rounded*

Age range	Total number of children	With mother in paid labour force	Workforce participation rate by age of youngest child
0 – 2 years	123,100	71,400	62.8%
3 – 5 years	125,500	76,400	69.4%

Table 2: *Children identifying with an Aboriginal group, 2001 census*

Age range	North American Indian	Métis	Inuit
0 – 4 years	16,125	3,530	150
5 – 9 years	17,735	3,905	210

**Source:** Statistics Canada. (2003). *Aboriginal origin, age groups, and sex for population for Canada, Provinces, Territories, Census Metropolitan areas and Census agglomerations, 2001 census* (<http://www.statcan.ca/english/IPS/Data/97F0011XBO1004.htm>).

Table 3: *Estimated number of children with disabilities who are residing at home, 2001*

Age	Number of children with disabilities	Percentage of children with disabilities
0 – 4 years	3,950	2.0
5 – 9 years	9,080	3.9

**Source:** Statistics Canada. (2002). *A profile of disability in Canada, 2001 – Tables, 2001 Participation and Activity Limitation Survey* (<http://www.statcan.ca/english/IPS/Data/89-579-XIE.htm>).

#### *Cultural and ethnic diversity:*

There are 197 First Nations bands in British Columbia. Each year approximately 35,000 immigrants arrive in the province. In 1996, the top 10 languages spoken by British Columbians are: English, Chinese (Cantonese/Mandarin), Punjabi, German, French, Dutch, Italian, Tagalog, Spanish and Japanese (<http://www.gov.bc.ca>).

<sup>15</sup> Remaining statistical data are from Friendly, M., Beach, J., & Turiano, M. (2002). *Early childhood education and care in Canada: Provinces and Territories, 2001*, Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit, Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto, unless otherwise indicated.

### 1.3 Provincial expenditures on regulated child care and kindergarten, 2001

- Provincial allocation on regulated child care for each child in the province age 0 – 12 = \$274.<sup>16</sup>
- Percent of children age 0 – 12 for whom there is a regulated child care space = 12.1%.
- Average spending for each kindergarten student in school-based program funded by the Ministry of Education = \$4,200.

### 1.4 Family-related leave, 2001

- Maternity leave = 17weeks, an additional 6 weeks is available to the birth mother if she is unable to return to work for health reasons related to the pregnancy or birth.<sup>17</sup>
- Parental leave = 35 weeks for birth mothers who have taken maternity leave, 37 weeks for those who did not take maternity leave or for the other parent. An additional 5 weeks is available if the child has a condition requiring additional parental care.
- Adoption leave = 37 weeks, an additional 5 weeks is available if the child has a condition requiring additional parental care.
- Family-related leave = 5 days per year.

### 1.5 Services for aboriginal children, 2001

- On-reserve regulated child care: Sixty-five First Nations communities have child care facilities licensed and funded by the province and operated by Band and Tribal Councils.
- Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities: There are 7 sites which, collectively, served approximately 310 children in 2001 (Kari Nisbet, AHS in Urban and Northern Communities, personal communication).
- First Nations Head Start: programs operate in 77 communities which, collectively served approximately 1,800 children in 2001 (Melanie Morningstar, First Nations HS, personal communication).
- Children living on reserve may attend kindergarten classes in schools on their reserve or attend kindergarten in off-reserve schools, in such situations the federal government pays a tuition fee to the local school board.

### 1.6 Services for children who have special needs, 2001

- Infant Development program: Serves children up to age three who are at risk of developmental delay or have a developmental delay, and their families. Trained consultants go into the children's homes to work with the parents in developing and implementing a program of activities to stimulate the child's development. Special toys, equipment and books on child development are also available through these programs and most offer playgroups for parents and their children.
- Early Intervention program: There is also a network of early intervention and support services for children with special needs that provides physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, and parental support.
- Supported Child Care program: Provincial policy supports the integration of children with special needs into regular child care settings. Low income parents who have a child with special needs have to meet the same social and financial criteria as other parents in order to obtain a fee subsidy or child care must have been recommended by the Ministry of Children and Family Development as part of a risk-reduction program. Funding for additional supports required to assist in the child's integration is covered by the province regardless of the family income. However, there is a ceiling on the budget for these funds and waiting lists. There are also some group child care centres that are licensed as special needs facilities where at least 25% of the children have special needs.

<sup>16</sup> Data on the allocation to child care for each child age 0 – 5 are not available.

<sup>17</sup> Provincial maternity, parental, adoption, and family-related leaves are unpaid. The federal government pays for some portions of maternity, parental, and adoption leave under the provisions of the Employment Insurance program but not for family-related leave.

- Special Needs Supplement: Families eligible for the Child Care Subsidy Program may receive an additional amount of \$107 per month to help with the basic space fee for their child with special needs.
- Additional supports to assist in the integration of children into ordinary kindergarten: Under Ministry of Education policy children with special needs have the right to attend kindergarten (and higher grades) in the public school system. The province provides additional funds when required for teachers' assistants to work with the children and/or for materials and equipment that will assist the child's integration into a regular classroom. There are not any parental fees for kindergarten.

## **2. Child care**

### **2.1 Responsible ministries**

- The Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services is responsible for child care legislation, policy and research; managing and administering child care programs including the Child Care Subsidy Program (fee subsidies), the Child Care Operating Funding Program (operating funds to licensed group, out-of-school, preschool, emergency, special needs and family child care providers), the Major Capital Program for New Child Care Spaces, and the Minor Capital Program for Emergency Repair, Replacement and Relocation; funding both a network of 39 Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) programs and the Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre (the CCRR programs and Westcoast are described below); and registration of child care practitioners as being qualified to work as an early childhood educator, and for approving early childhood (ECE) training programs.
- The Ministry of Health Planning is responsible for developing regulations and standards for licensing child care centres and family child care homes, registration of child care practitioners as being qualified to work as an early childhood educator, and for approving early childhood training programs. Licensing and inspection of licensed child care facilities is carried out by Licensing Officers employed by Regional Health Authorities.
- The Ministry of Children and Family Development is responsible for the Supported Child Care, the Infant Development program, early intervention programs for children at risk, and protective services for children at risk of neglect or abuse. The Ministry has a special focus on aboriginal children.
- The Ministry of Human Resources is responsible for the administration of the child care subsidy program.

The work of these four ministries related to child care is shared through the inter-ministerial Child Care Policy Team.

The Minister of State for Women's Equality in the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services is responsible for the development and implementation of child care programs.

The Minister of State for Early Childhood Development is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of a cross-government integrated early childhood development strategy, from preconception up to age six, and for overseeing the development and implementation of the federal/provincial/territorial Early Childhood Development (ECD) Initiative.

## 2.2 Number of regulated child care spaces

Table 4: Number of full- and part-time child care spaces by type, 2001

Type of space	Centre-based		Family child care <sup>1</sup>
	Full-time	Part-time	
Children under age three	3,744	Nil	
Children over age three	13,905	Nil	
Preschool	Nil	15,407	
Out-of-school	Nil	19,533	
Child minding <sup>2</sup>	Nil	2,379	
Occasional child care/other	Nil	422	
Special needs spaces	526	Nil	
TOTALS	18,175	37,741	17,033

<sup>1</sup> Typically, family child care homes have a mixed-age group.

<sup>2</sup> The term child minding refers to care for up to three hours a day, no more than two days a week, for children age 18 months up to entry into grade one. The permitted maximum number of children is 16 when any child is under age three and 20 if all children are age three or older.

## 2.3 Sponsorship of regulated centre-based spaces, 2001

- Non-profit = 32,699
- Commercial (for-profit) = 23,217

## 2.4 Regulations

Table 5: Regulations for child care centres and regulated family child care homes, 2001

Type	Variable	Requirements		
Regulated centre care	Ratio and group size	<u>Age of children</u>	<u>Staff: child ratio</u>	<u>Max. group size</u>
		0 – 3 years	1:4	12
		30 mths to 6 yrs	1:8	25
		Preschool	1:15	20
		School-age	1:10 – 15	20-25
		Special needs	1:4	12-16
	Staff educational requirements	<p><b>Under age 36 months:</b> Each group of four children requires one infant/toddler educator (basic early childhood training of at least 10 months plus 500 hours of supervised work experience and special infant/toddler training). Each group of 5 – 8 children requires one infant/toddler educator and one early childhood educator (basic early childhood training of at least 10 months plus 500 hours of supervised work experience).</p> <p><b>Age 30 months to 6 years.</b> Each group of up to eight children requires one early childhood educator (basic early childhood training of at least 10 months plus 500 hours of supervised work experience). A group of 9-16 children requires one early childhood educator and one assistant (with one course in early childhood education).</p> <p><b>In special needs facilities.</b> Every group of four or fewer children must have one special needs educator (basic early childhood training of at least 10 months plus 500 hours of supervised work experience and specialized training related to children with special needs).</p>		
Regulated family child care	Government monitoring	Annual visit is policy, although not a legislated requirement. Licensing officials do not have to have a background in early childhood education.		
	Permitted child numbers	Up to seven children under age 12, including the provider's own. Of the seven, no more than five preschoolers, no more than three under age 3, and no more than one under age one.		
	Provider educational requirements	Must have a first aid certificate. No requirement for early childhood education training nor for engaging in professional development.		
	Government monitoring	Annual visit is policy, although not a legislated requirement. Licensing officials do not have to have a background in early childhood education.		



The Community Care Facility Appeal Board, which consists of members representing various community sectors who are appointed by the Minister of Health, hears appeals from child care settings and child care teachers in situations where they have been refused a license or had a license suspended or cancelled.

## 2.5 Fee subsidy

Fee subsidy is paid directly to the service provider except when child care is provided in the child's own home. Then the subsidy is paid to the parent in the role of employer and the parent is responsible for any required deductions for income tax purposes, Employment Insurance benefits, etc. Parents may select the child care facility of their choice, either licensed group care, licensed family child care, or license-not-required family child care (child care for less than 3 children provided in the caregiver's home) or care in the child's home. Eligibility for a fee subsidy is determined on the basis of both social criteria and income level. Parents must be working, seeking work, engaged in training or education, or have child care recommended by the Ministry of Children and Family Development as part of a risk-reduction program. The fee subsidy is available to all parents who meet the eligibility criteria.

Table 6: *Child care fee subsidy program, 2003*

Income eligibility criteria	Family size	Turning point <sup>1</sup>	Break-even point <sup>2</sup>
	single parent, one four-year-old single parent, one two-year-old and one four-year-old	\$16,764 (net) \$19,080 (net)	\$23,124 (net) \$36,000 (net)
User fee/surcharge	No user fee, but child care services may surcharge above the maximum subsidy rates <sup>3</sup>		
Eligible services	Commercial or non-profit, regulated or non-regulated services, including preschools and care provided by a non-relative in the child's own home or a relative who is not residing in the child's home.		
Maximum monthly subsidy	Type of care	Part-day	Full-day
	Family child care:		
	• Age 0 – 18 months	\$219	\$438
	• Age 19 – 36 months	202	404
	• Age 3 – 5	177	354
	• School-age	147	173
	Centre-based care:		
	• Age 0 – 18 months	\$292	\$585
	• Age 19 – 36 months	264	528
	• Age 3 – 5 years	184	368
	• School-age	147	173
	Preschool	\$107	Not applicable
	In child's own home	Depends on number and ages of children	

<sup>1</sup> The turning point is the income level up to which a full subsidy is available.

<sup>2</sup> Partial subsidy is available up to the break-even point at which income subsidy ceases.

<sup>3</sup> Surcharges may be paid by the government on behalf of the parents if the child is in child care as part of a risk reduction plan under the Child, Family and Community Services Act or the parent is participating in a Young Parent Program.

## 2.6 Fees for child care

Table 7: Average fees for full-time care, 2001

Child's age	Centre-based care Monthly fee	Family child care Monthly fee <sup>1</sup>
Infants (age 0 – 17 months)	\$705	\$538
Toddlers (age 18 months – 2.11 years)	662	538
Preschoolers (Age 3.0 – 5.11 years)	494	501
School-age children, am and pm	197	281

1 Jan Gottfred, government of British Columbia, personal communication based on the 2001 Provincial Child Care Survey.

## 2.7 Other government funding, 2003

### One-time funding

- Child Care Capital Funding Program – Major Capital Funding for the Creation of New Child Care Spaces: Up to 50% of eligible costs to a maximum of \$250,000 to assist with building, purchasing or renovating facilities, purchase of furnishings and equipment. Available to non-profit societies (operators), public institutions, local governments and First Nations Governments.
- Child Care Capital Funding Program – Minor Capital Funding for Emergency Repair, Replacement and Relocation: Up to \$4,000 to upgrade or repair facilities in order to continue to comply with licensing requirements and to assist with costs when a facility must move to another location. Available to non-profit societies, public institutions, local governments and First Nations Governments.

### Recurring funding

- Supported child care: Funds to assist with the additional costs of caring for children with special needs in ordinary child care settings. As well as the fee subsidy, parents may be eligible for a further special needs subsidy of up to \$107/month.
- Child Care Operating Funding Program: Funding based on enrollment provided to licensed group, out-of-school, preschool, emergency, special needs, and family child care providers.

### Other funding

- Child Care Resource and Referral Program: a network of 39 non-profit child care support programs for child care providers and parents in communities right across the province. They assist in the recruitment, support and training of both regulated and unregulated family child care providers, the development and implementation of training opportunities for providers, and the provision of assistance to parents in finding child care.
- Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre: a non-profit program that provides training and networking opportunities to family child care providers in Vancouver and surrounding area. On a province-wide basis it provides multi-lingual resources and training opportunities to child care providers and child care centres through its Early Childhood Multicultural Service, a child care resource library, and assistance to non-profit centres in developing and maintaining sound financial management practices.
- British Columbia Aboriginal Child Care Society: a non-profit program that provides support and advice to child care providers providing child care to aboriginal children both on- and off-reserve.

## 2.8 Proportion of provincial allocation for regulated child care (centre- and family-based) by category of expenditure, 2001

- Parent fee subsidy = 36.8%.
- Recurring operating grants = 36.6%.
- Special needs funding = 24.0%.
- One time grants = 1.2%.
- Other grants = 1.4%.

## 2.9 Proportion of the average centre's or family child care provider's revenue from three primary sources

Table 8: Proportion of regulated child care programs' revenue from major sources

Source	Child care centres 1998	Family child care providers 2001
Fees paid by parents themselves	49.4%	73.0%
Fee subsidies paid by government	38.5	22.0
Other government grants	8.9	3.3
Other sources	3.2	1.8

**Sources:** Doherty, G., Lero, D.S., Goelman, H., LaGrange, A., and Tougas, J. (2000). *You Bet I Care! A Canada-Wide Study on Wages, Working Conditions and Practices in Child Care Centres*. Guelph, Ontario: Centre for Families, Work and Well-Being, University of Guelph. This is the most recent information available; Forer, B. and Hunter, T. (2001). Survey conducted for the provincial government (information on family child care homes).

## 2.10 Mean gross hourly wage for centre-based staff (full- and part-time combined), 2001

Supervisor = \$14.61  
Child care teacher = \$13.28  
Assistant teacher = \$11.68  
(who may be untrained)

Provincial minimum hourly minimum wage for an adult in 2002 = \$8.00 (B.C. Ministry of Labour)

## 2.11 Child care planning and development

The Provincial Child Care Council has up to 21 members appointed by the Minister of State for Women's Equality. The members come from all parts of the province and represent a wide range of community interests including parents, centre-based and family-based child care settings, public health, education, the aboriginal community, the immigrant/refugee community, organized labour, and municipal government. The Council's role is to advise the minister on policies and programs that affect the affordability, quality, stability, and accessibility of child care in British Columbia and to facilitate discussion with community groups, people providing child care, and parents.

Several times since 1991 the provincial government has collected information through a mail-out questionnaire sent to all regulated centres and family child care providers in the province. Data routinely collected include enrolment statistics, average fee for different aged children, proportion of children receiving fee subsidies, educational level of the people providing care, and hours of operation. The most recent survey was collected in 2001. This periodic collection of data provides information that can be used to track regional and provincial trends.

In 1998 and in 2001 the provincial government collected information from parents about their child care needs. A report from the most recent data collection will be available in the fall of 2003.

The province of British Columbia has adopted a number of goals and target areas known as the New Era promises. The following two New Era promises relate to child care:

- Target child care funding to help parents who need it the most.
- Increase child care choices for parents by encouraging the expansion of safe, affordable child care spaces.

Goals and targets related to these two goals are included in the Service Plan for the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services, and progress in these areas is to be regularly monitored (see <http://www.gov.bc.ca/mcaaws/> ).

## **2.12 Key provincial child care organizations**

- Early Childhood Educators of B.C. (represents primarily centre-based staff).
- Western Canada Family Child Care Association of B.C.
- The B.C. Association of Child Care Services (represents administrators, owners, Board members and staff from child care settings and child care resource and referral services).
- School-Age Child Care Association of B.C.
- Coalition of Child Care Advocates of B.C.
- The Child Care Advocacy Forum
- Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre.
- British Columbia Aboriginal Child Care Society.

## **2.13 Recent developments**

### The Fall 2001 Child Care Community Consultations

The community consultations involved seeking community views on the need for child care through twelve on-site community consultations and the circulation of 20,000 Child Care Options Surveys (more than 4,000 of which were completed and submitted). Both the consultations and the survey identified the following priorities for child care funding:

- Support to low-income parents.
- Funding of infant/toddler spaces.
- Funding of out-of-school spaces.
- Development of a long-term, comprehensive child care plan.

A large majority of respondents identified cost, lack of infant/toddler spaces, and limited hours of operation as key barriers to accessing child care. Respondents noted that child care resource and referral programs are working well. Concerns were expressed about the low wages and benefits provided for people working in child care, and about the difficulty of implementing inclusion of children with special needs due to shortages of early intervention services, qualified staff, and funding ([www.mcaaws.gov.bc.ca/childcare/childcar.htm](http://www.mcaaws.gov.bc.ca/childcare/childcar.htm)).

### Community consultations in 2002

Consultation on changes to the *Community Care Facility Act* with respect to child care (and adult continuing care) licensing took place in a number of communities during 2002 and further public opinion on changes to licensing was gathered by means of a questionnaire posted on the Ministry of Health Planning website.

Information was also collected from parents, child care providers and other interested community members at local meetings hosted by the Minister of State for Women's Equality and by questionnaires and surveys distributed at these meetings and by means of a survey on the Ministry website.

### Funding changes that occurred in 2002 or are scheduled to occur in 2003 or 2004

- Several changes were made to the child care subsidy program, effective April 1, 2002. While maximum subsidy rates were not changed, the income threshold that determines parental eligibility was reduced by \$285/month. Social need eligibility has been targeted to parents who are working, looking for work, or enrolled in education or training programs, or who have medical needs. Effective May 2003, the threshold was raised by \$100 per month.
- Three recurring child care grants were consolidated into one grant to be known as the Child Care Operating Funding Program, effective April 1, 2003.
- The province will no longer provide funding for the network of child care resource and referral programs in the province or the Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre, effective March 31, 2004. A new program is being developed to increase the quality of family child care. A government referral website will help parents find child care in their communities.

## **3. Kindergarten**

### **3.1 Ministry responsible for legislation, policy and funding.**

Ministry of Education.

### **3.2 Enrolment in 2002**

Total = 42,819

### **3.3 Sponsorship**

Kindergarten is delivered in both public and private (independent, fee-charging) schools.

### **3.4 Eligibility criteria for kindergarten**

- Participation in kindergarten is optional for five-year-olds and compulsory for six-year-olds.
- Minimum age at entry = age five on or before December 31<sup>st</sup>. Parents may defer their child's enrolment to the following school year (age six).

### **3.5 Programming**

There are 2.4 hours of instruction per day during the standard school calendar. The Ministry has adopted a provincial programming framework, *The Primary Program*, which includes kindergarten to grade 3.

### **3.6 Regulations, policies, practices**

- The *School Act* sets a maximum of 19 students per class.
- Minimum training requirements for teachers are the same as for any teacher. There is no requirement that the person have specialized in primary teaching or have a background in early childhood education.
- Whether or not teaching assistants are provided in a kindergarten class depends on the policy of the local school board. In practice, teaching assistants tend to be used only in classes where there is a child with special needs who requires extra assistance. There are no specific training requirements for teaching assistants.

### **3.7 Special populations**

- Ministry policy guarantees the right to kindergarten for children with special needs. Typically, these children are included in ordinary kindergarten classrooms. The Province will provide funding beyond the standard per pupil allocation for supports such as a

- teaching assistant or special equipment. In 2002, there were 890 children with special needs enrolled in kindergarten in the public school system.
- In some communities there are full-day kindergarten programs available to Aboriginal children, and/or children with English as a second language (ESL). In 2002, there were 3,281 children in Aboriginal programs and 6,911 children in ESL programs.
  - Some Inner City schools (schools in “high risk” neighbourhoods) have special programs such as pre-kindergarten for four-year-olds or a school meals program.

### **3.8 Kindergarten planning and development**

There is no province-wide planning group for kindergarten similar to the Provincial Child Care Council. Much of the responsibility for planning has been delegated to local school boards. Each school must have a School Planning Council which must include at least one parent.

### **3.9 Professional associations**

- B.C. College of Teachers
- B.C. Teachers’ Federation.
- B.C. Primary Teachers’ Association.
- Special Education Association of B.C.
- First Nations Education Association of B.C.

### **3.10 Recent developments**

- In 2000, the Ministry revised the *Primary Program* framework.
- In 2001, the Ministry produced *Diversity in BC Schools: A Framework*, to assist schools to assess the extent to which their policies, practices and programs are consistent with the Ministry’s commitment to “honouring diversity and promoting human rights, preventing discrimination, harassment, and violence, and responding to incidents of discrimination, harassment, or violence when they occur” (p.4). Available at <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/diversity>.
- In March, 2002, the Ministry sent out satisfaction questionnaires to the students in grades 4, 7, 10 & 12, to their parents, and to school staff from 1,584 schools. Just over half of the parents of elementary school students responded, of these, 74% reported a high level of satisfaction with the program being provided by the school. The report is available at <http://www.gov.bc.ca/bded/> - follow the ‘parent’ link.
- Effective July 1, 2002, every school must have a School Planning Council which prepares and submits to the local school board a plan for improving student achievement in the school. These Councils are advisory bodies which consist of the school principal, one teacher from the school, and three representatives to be elected by secret ballot from the schools Parent Advisory Council.

## Annex B: Manitoba

### 1. Provincial context

#### 1.1 Overview

Manitoba is the easternmost of the three Prairie Provinces and has a land mass of 649,947 square kilometers (250,946 square miles). It extends from the 49th to the 60th parallel (the equivalent of Paris, France to Oslo, Norway). Manitoba has a total population of 1,150,000, more than half of whom live in the capital city of Winnipeg. Agriculture has always been one of Manitoba's most important industries and source of income and employment; wheat continues to be the most important Manitoba crop. Other important industries are mining, hydro-electricity generation and manufacturing. Major growth industries include food processing, transportation, equipment, machinery industries, printing and publishing, clothing, furniture and fixtures. ([www.gov.mb.ca/aboutmb.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/aboutmb.html))

#### 1.2 Demographics<sup>18</sup>

Table 1: *Children with mothers in the paid labour force, 2001, rounded*

Age range	Total number of children	With mother in paid labour force	Workforce participation rate by age of youngest child
0 – 2 years	38,800	23,400	65.7%
3 – 5 years	40,000	25,800	75.1%

Table 2: *Children identifying with an Aboriginal group, 2001 census*

Age range	North American Indian	Métis	Inuit
0 – 4 years	13,320	5,050	50
5 – 9 years	14,105	5,435	110

**Source:** Statistics Canada. (2003). *Aboriginal origin, age groups, and sex for population for Canada, Provinces, Territories, Census Metropolitan areas and Census agglomerations, 2001 census* (<http://www.statcan.ca/english/IPS/Data/97F0011XBO1004.htm>).

Table 3: *Estimated number of children with disabilities who are residing at home, 2001*

Age	Number of children with disabilities	Percentage of children with disabilities
0-4	1,210	1.9
5-9	3,130	4.3

**Source:** Statistics Canada. (2002). *A profile of disability in Canada, 2001 – Tables, 2001 Participation and Activity Limitation Survey* <http://www.statcan.ca/english/IPS/Data/89-579-XIE.htm>).

#### *Cultural and ethnic diversity:*

There are 62 First Nations in Manitoba. The Aboriginal population of Manitoba was joined by the Scottish Selkirk settlers in 1811, English and French Canadians after confederation in 1870, followed by Russian Mennonites, Icelanders, Ukrainians and Germans in subsequent years. Post W.W.II saw additional immigration from Europe and most recently from the Caribbean, South America, Africa and Asia. More than 100 languages are spoken across the province. In 1996 the most common languages spoken by Manitobans were English, French, German, Cree, Tagalog, Chinese, Polish, Ukrainian, Portuguese and Punjabi ([www.statcan.ca/english/Pgdb/demo29b.htm](http://www.statcan.ca/english/Pgdb/demo29b.htm)).

<sup>18</sup> Remaining statistical data are from Friendly, M., Beach, J., and Turiano, M. (2002). *Early childhood education and care in Canada: Provinces and Territories, 2001*. Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit, Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto, unless otherwise stated.

### 1.3 Provincial expenditures on regulated child care and kindergarten, 2001

- Provincial allocation on regulated child care for each child in the province age 0 – 12 = \$338.<sup>19</sup>
- Percent of children age 0 – 12 for whom there is a regulated child care space = 12.4%
- Average spending for each kindergarten student in school-based program funded by the Ministry of Education = \$3,500

### 1.4 Family-related leave, 2001

- Maternity leave = up to 17 weeks for birth mothers who have been employed with the same employer for at least seven consecutive months<sup>20</sup>
- Parental/Adoption leave = 37 weeks available to birth and adoptive parents who have been employed with the same employer for at least seven consecutive months. Birth mothers must take parental leave immediately following maternity leave unless their employer or collective agreement permits a different arrangement. The father's leave may be taken at the same time, a different time or overlap the mother's leave. Parental leave must begin within 52 weeks of the child's birth or coming into custody.
- Family-related leave. There is no legislated family-related leave, but it may be provided through some collective agreements

### 1.5 Services for aboriginal children, 2001

- On-reserve regulated child care: The federal government's First Nations/Inuit Child Care Initiative has resulted in the development of approximately 60 on-reserve child care centres. Manitoba does not license or fund child care programs on reserve but upon request will assist facilities on-reserve to meet licensing requirements. In 2002, a *Manitoba First Nations Child Day Care Regulations and Monitoring Initiative*, sponsored by the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs began, the purpose of which is to establish First Nations' child care regulations, standards and monitoring systems.
- Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities: There are 18 sites, which collectively served approximately 700 children in 2001 (Kari Nisbet, AHS in Urban and Northern Communities, personal communication)
- First Nations Head Start: programs operate in 20 communities which, collectively served approximately 500 children in 2001 (Melanie Morningstar, First Nations HS, personal communication)
- Children living on reserve may attend kindergarten classes in schools on their reserve or attend kindergarten in off-reserve schools; in such situations the federal government pays a tuition fee to the local school board.

### 1.6 Services for children who have special needs, 2001

- Children with Disabilities Program: Provides access to community child care and early intervention strategies for children with disabilities. Support is available to non-profit child care centres, nursery schools and family and group day care homes in the form of grants for additional staffing, specialized equipment and training. For a program to receive additional supports, children must have a cognitive, developmental or physical disability and be assessed as eligible. In addition to cognitive, physical or developmental delay, the Children with Disabilities Program will provide support for children with "behavioural" problems as well as nursing support for medically-fragile children. Children are accommodated as child care space and funding availability allow.

<sup>19</sup> Data on the allocation to child care for each child age 0 – 5 are not available.

<sup>20</sup> Provincial maternity, parental, adoption, and family-related leaves are unpaid. The federal government pays for some portions of maternity, parental, and adoption leave under the provisions of the Employment Insurance program but not for family-related leave.



- Children's Special Services provides a range of supports to families with children with special needs, including: in-home services for children with developmental and/or physical disabilities, therapy services for preschool children with lifelong disabilities, short-term respite care for parents, and early intervention by trained child development counselors. Families are mentored to develop their skills to care for, teach and maintain their children in the home and community. This is often provided in the child's home, but can be done in a day care, nursery school or other child care setting.
- Healthy Child Manitoba is a partnership of seven government departments working with community partners to facilitate a community development approach for the well-being of children, families and communities. The priority focus is on conception through infancy and the preschool years. It includes: (1) Baby First – a three-year home visiting program for newborns and their families based on universal screening and delivered through the community health system; (2) STOP FAS (Fetal Alcohol Syndrome) – a three-year intensive peer mentoring program for women at risk of having a child with FAS/FAE; and (3) Early Start - a three-year home-visiting program for families with children age 2-5 with special social needs currently attending licensed child care. It is intended to support parenting, community connectedness and enhance children's readiness to learn at school.
- Additional supports to assist in the integration of children into ordinary kindergarten:  
There is a policy of inclusion in regular kindergarten. To provide extra supports, special needs funding is available for students who require and receive extensive supports based on a comprehensive needs assessment. This support is provided at three levels. In the 2002/2003 school year they were: Level 1 – a "formula" funded grant, included in base support funding; Level 2 – Categorical Support Grant of \$8,565 per student, and Level 3 – Categorical Support Grant of \$19,055 per student.

## 1.7 Other services

The Manitoba Education and Youth Early Childhood Development Initiative is an inter-sectoral service for preschoolers, birth to 5 years, with a focus on "readiness to learn." This program is funded and administered by Manitoba Education and Youth.

## 2. Child care

### 2.1 Department responsible for legislation, licensing and funding

- The Department of Family Services and Housing Child Day Care Program is responsible for child care legislation and policy, providing fee subsidies and operating funding to eligible centres and homes, and for classifying all early childhood educators and child care assistants who work in licensed centres. Licensing and monitoring are provided through the Winnipeg and six regional offices.

### 2.2 Number of regulated child care spaces

Table 4: Number of full- and part-time child care spaces by type, 2001

Type of centre program	Centre-based		Family child care <sup>1</sup>
	Full-time	Part-time	
Infants/toddler	1,070	24 <sup>2</sup>	
Preschooler	8,758	4,278	
School-age		4,971	
TOTALS	9,828	9,273	3,921

<sup>1</sup> Typically, family child care homes have a mixed-age group.

<sup>2</sup> This represents children under two years who may be attending a program licensed as a nursery school

## 2.3 Regulations

Table 5: Regulations for child care centres and regulated family child care homes, 2001

Type	Variable	Requirements		
Regulated centre care	Ratio and group size	Age	Staff:child ratios	Max. group size
		Day care centre- mixed age groups		
		12 wks-2 yrs	1:4	8
		2-6 yrs	1:8	16
		6-12 yrs	1:15	30
		Day care centre – separate age groups		
		12 wks – 1 yr	1:3	6
		1-2 yrs	1:4	8
		2-3 yrs	1:6	12
		3-4 yrs	1:8	16
		4-5 yrs	1:9	18
		5-6 yrs	1:10	20
		6-12 yrs	1:15	30
		Nursery school		
		12 wks-2 yrs	1:4	8
		2-6 yrs	1:10	20
	Staff educational requirements	Two-thirds of full-time staff for children aged 12 weeks to 6 years, and one-half of staff in school age centres must be classified as an Early Childhood Educator (ECE) II (approved 2-year diploma in child care services or satisfactory completion of a Child Day Care Competency-Based Assessment) or ECE III (an approved diploma program and a recognized certificate, or an approved degree from a recognized university) A director in a full-time preschool centre must be classified as an ECE III and have one year of experience in working with children in child care or in a related field. A director in a school-age centre or nursery school must be classified as an ECE II and have one year of experience in child care or in a related setting.		
	Government monitoring	Four contacts with each facility during the year are required, including three monitoring visits, one of which is a re-licensing visit.		
Regulated family child care	Permitted child numbers	<u>Family day care homes (one child care provider):</u> Eight children under 12 years (including the provider's own children under 12 years). No more than five children may be under six years, of whom no more than three may be under two years <u>Group day care homes (two child care providers):</u> Twelve children under 12 years (including the providers' own children under 12 years). No more than three children may be under two years.		
	Provider educational requirements	Providers must have a valid first-aid certificate that includes CPR training relevant to the age group being cared for. Providers are assessed by Child Day Care for their suitability to provide care based on recognized family child care competencies <sup>1</sup>		
	Government monitoring	Three drop-in visits per year and one scheduled re-licensing visit per year are conducted.		

<sup>1</sup> Effective 2003, new family child care providers are required to complete 40 hours of training in ECE for family child care

## 2.4 Fee subsidy

Fee assistance is paid directly to service providers on behalf of eligible parents. Eligibility for fee subsidies is based on both social criteria and income level. To be eligible, parents must be working, looking for work, engaged in training or education, or be receiving medical or rehabilitation treatment; or the child is determined to need child care due to the child's or family's assessed mental, physical, social, emotional or developmental needs.

*Table 6: Child care fee subsidy program, 2001*

Income eligibility criteria	<u>Family size</u>	<u>Turning point</u> <sup>1</sup>	<u>Break-even point</u> <sup>2</sup>
	single parent, one preschool child	\$13,787 (net)	\$24,577 (net)
	two parents, two preschool children	\$18,895 (net)	\$40,475 (net)
User fee/surcharge	Centres and family child care homes may surcharge subsidized parents higher than the maximum subsidy rate up to \$2.40/day/child.		
Eligible services	non-profit and commercial centres and family child care homes		
Maximum monthly subsidy <sup>3</sup>	Age of child	Centre	Family child care
	Infant	\$554.67	\$390.00
	Preschool	\$355.33	\$303.33
	School age	Before, lunch and after school \$156	Before, lunch and after school \$156
		Non-instructional days same as preschool	Non-instructional days same as preschool
	Centres and homes providing care for a child for more than 10 hrs/day receive subsidy at one-and-a-half times the full-day rate.		

<sup>1</sup> The turning point is the income level up to which a full subsidy is available.

<sup>2</sup> Partial subsidy is available up to the break-even point at which income subsidy ceases.

<sup>3</sup> Calculated on the basis of the maximum daily fee multiplied by 260 days per year divided by 12 months.

## 2.5 Fees for child care

*Table 7: Maximum monthly fees for full-time care, 2001*

Child's age	Centre-based care - Monthly fee	Family child care - Daily fee
Infants	\$606.66	\$442
Preschoolers	\$407.33	\$355.33
School-age children	\$261.67	\$261.67

**Note:** The provincial government sets maximum fees for all children (subsidized or full fee) in funded centre-based and family child care programs. Centres and homes that do not receive operating funding may charge what they wish except to subsidized families.

## 2.6 Other government funding, 2001

One-time funding

- None

## Recurring funding

- annual operating grants per licensed space

	Infants	Preschool	School-age
Fully-funded day care centres	\$6,110	\$1,807	\$462
Fully-funded family and group day care homes	608	208	208

- Grants for children with disabilities: The main type of funding for children with disabilities is the staffing grant which is available on behalf of children with disabilities up to the actual cost incurred for extra staffing. The other kind of funding is the daily supplementary grants which are provided for the number of days of care recommended in an assessment up to a maximum of \$9.50 per day in child care centres and \$4.75 in nursery school and in family or group day care home; this is in addition to any subsidy.

### 2.7 Proportion of provincial allocation for regulated child care (centre- and family-based) by category of expenditure, 2001

- Parent fee subsidy = 51.3%
- Recurring operating grants = 32.4%
- Special needs funding = 11.6%
- One time grants = n/a
- Other grants = n/a

### 2.8 Proportion of the average centre's revenue from three primary sources

Table 8: *Proportion of regulated child care centres' revenue from major sources, 1998.*

Source	Child care centres 1998
Fees paid by parents themselves	33.9%
Fee subsidies paid by government	40.3%
Other government grants	21.6%

**Source:** Doherty, G. Lero, D.S., Goelman, H., LaGrange, A. and Tougas, J. (2000). *You Bet I Care! A Canada-Wide Study on Wages, Working Conditions and Practices in Child Care Centres*. Guelph, Ontario: Centre for Families, Work and Well-Being, University of Guelph. This is the most recent information available.

### 2.9 Mean gross hourly wage for centre-based staff (full- and part-time combined), 2001<sup>21</sup>

Administrative director =	\$20.02
Child care teacher (ECE) =	\$12.32
Child care assistant =	\$8.89

Provincial minimum hourly minimum wage for an adult in 2002 = \$6.50

### 2.10 Sponsorship of regulated centre-based spaces, 2001

- Non-profit = 17,540
- Commercial = 1,561

<sup>21</sup> Figures from the 2000/01 salary survey conducted by Manitoba Child Day Care.

## **2.11 Child care planning and development**

The Child Day Care Regulatory Review Committee consists of 24 representatives, including parents, early childhood educators from nursery schools, infant, preschool and school age centres, family child care, Francophone child care, Aboriginal child care, training institutions, social service organizations, labour and departmental staff. The Committee makes recommendations to government for improvements to the child care system that will support responsive, stable and high-quality early childhood care and education for Manitoba's children, families and communities.

The departments of Education and Family Services and Housing have a child care in schools policy that must be considered in all new, renovated or replacement schools. A needs survey is undertaken to help determine the need for child care and the number of spaces to license. The school retains ownership of the space and has a partnership agreement with the centre as long as there is a need for child care. There are 28 centres operating in schools under this policy, and 161 centres operating in existing surplus school space.

## **2.12 Key provincial child care organizations**

- Manitoba Child Care Association
- Child Care Coalition of Manitoba

## **2.13 Recent developments**

In 2000/2001 Manitoba allocated funds to fully implement its new "unit funding" model for centres. As a result, operating grants for centre infant and preschool spaces were increased to improve salaries for ECEs.

In February 2001 *A Vision for Child Care and Development in Manitoba* was released by the Minister of Family Services and Housing for public feedback. The paper, prepared by the Child Day Care Regulatory Review Committee, identified four key elements for child care: (1) universality; (2) accessibility; (3) affordability; and (4) quality. It made a series of recommendations in each of six components of the child care system: (1) standards/quality care; (2) funding; (3) training and professionalism; (4) governance; (5) integrated service delivery; and (6) public education. In a three month period, there were more than 24,000 responses from the public to the "vision" paper with over 82% of respondents supporting the vision as presented.

In April 2002, Manitoba released its Five Year Plan for child care. The plan is intended to maintain and improve quality, improve accessibility and improve affordability. It sets out targets for funding more spaces, increasing wages and the number of trained ECEs. In Year One of the plan major elements include funds to raise wages, launch a public education and recruitment campaign to attract more students to the field, implement mandatory training of new family child care providers, expand child care spaces and examine the concept of a comprehensive nursery school program for three- and four-year-olds. The goals of the plan are, by the end of March, 2007, to have: (1) increased compensation for service providers by 10%; (2) trained 450 additional early childhood educators; (3) expanded funded spaces by 5,000; (4) expanded nursery school programs; and (5) increased the supply of subsidized spaces and subsidy eligibility levels.

In April, 2003, the provincial government announced that its 2003/2004 budget included a \$6.0 million increase for child care in support of its Five Year Plan. This money will be used for a variety of purposes including operating grants to increase wages and incomes for child care providers, increased funds for fee subsidies, training grants for family child care providers, additional funds to support children with disabilities in community child care settings, and continued funding for the public education and student recruitment campaign.

### **3. Kindergarten**

#### **3.1 Ministry responsible for legislation, policy and funding.**

Manitoba Education and Youth.

#### **3.2 Enrolment in 2001**

- Pre-kindergarten (nursery) for four-year-olds in two school divisions = 2,564.
- Kindergarten (five-year-olds) = 13, 854.

#### **3.3 Sponsorship**

Kindergarten is delivered in both public and private (independent, fee-charging) schools.

#### **3.4 Eligibility criteria for kindergarten**

- Kindergarten is a legislated entitlement but participation in kindergarten is voluntary
- Minimum age at entry = age five on or before December 31<sup>st</sup>.

#### **3.5 Programming**

There are 522.5 instructional hours a year. Kindergarten is a part-day program, but is offered alternate full-days in some rural communities to accommodate school bus schedules. There is a provincial kindergarten curriculum. Through an activity centre-based approach, it includes exposure to language arts, math, science, social studies, physical education/health education and the arts. French replaces English Language arts in French immersion and French-language programs.

#### **3.6 Regulations, policies, practices**

- There is no provincial guideline or regulation for the maximum kindergarten class size, and no information on average class size; however, some collective agreements do specify class size
- All teachers from kindergarten to Senior 4 are required to have an undergraduate degree, plus a two-year Bachelor of Education degree or 10 full courses equivalent to education courses. There is no requirement for a kindergarten teacher to have specialized training in primary education or have a background in early childhood education.
- Whether or not teaching assistants are provided in a kindergarten class depends upon the local school district. School divisions may provide teaching assistants depending on factors such as size of class or split grades.

#### **3.7 Special populations**

- Ministry policy supports inclusion of children with special needs in regular kindergarten and in practice all children are accepted. To provide extra supports, there is both block funding for school divisions to allocate to schools and two levels of funding to allocate to identified child needs determined on a case by case basis. The number of kindergarten children with special needs is not available.
- Inner city children are considered a school division responsibility and the school division allocates grants received to specific schools for inner city children
- English as a Second Language (ESL) grants of \$660 in 2001/2002 and \$700 in 2003/2004 per child are available for a maximum of three years.
- The Aboriginal Education Directorate provides support and resources to teachers, and has an Aboriginal Awareness Consultant who delivers Aboriginal Awareness sessions to classrooms within the province. The Aboriginal Achievement Grant and other provincial grants are given to the school divisions. The staff of the Aboriginal Education Directorate also implements the Aboriginal Education and Training Framework across Manitoba. Its goals are to: (1) improve student success and completion rates; (2) increase skills training and rates of employment; and (3) strengthen effective partnerships.

### **3.8 Collaboration with other ministries**

Manitoba Education and Youth, along with the Departments of Family Services and Housing, Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, Culture, Heritage and Tourism, Energy, Science and Technology, Health, Justice, and Status of Women participate in Healthy Child Manitoba. Healthy Child Manitoba works across departments and sectors to facilitate a community development approach for the well being of Manitoba's children, families and communities, with a focus on children pre-natal to age six.

### **3.9 Kindergarten planning and development**

There is no designated kindergarten specialist in Manitoba Education and Youth, nor is there a province-wide advisory group that is specific to kindergarten with a role similar to the Child Day Care Regulation Review Committee in regard to child care. There is an on-going Inter-organizational Curriculum Advisory Committee for elementary and secondary schools which includes teachers, superintendents, school trustees, parents, and university representatives in addition to representatives from the Manitoba Education and Youth. This Committee is currently examining changes to curricula that will stimulate early numeracy in kindergarten and the early grades of elementary school.

Much of the responsibility for planning has been delegated by the provincial government to the local school boards.

### **3.10 Associations**

Manitoba Teachers' Society

### **3.11 Recent developments**

- In 2001 the government established the Commission on Class Size and Composition. The commission's mandate was to consider whether or not there should be a provincial policy on class size and composition and, if so, to make recommendations. The report, released in May 2002 indicated that the average class size was fewer than 22 students. One of the recommendations of the report was for the province to develop a multi-year plan to implement class size at the Kindergarten to Grade 12 levels between 17-22 students
- In December 2002, Manitoba Education and Youth revised *Guidelines for Early Childhood Transition to School for Children with Special Needs*. This Healthy Child Manitoba protocol, developed and revised in collaboration with school divisions and child daycare agencies, is designed to facilitate community-based agencies working with preschool children with special needs to exchange information with the school system prior (one year) to the child enrolling. Details are available at: <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ks4/specedu/protocols/index.html>
- In response to the 1999 Manitoba Special Education Review, Manitoba Education and Youth produced, in 2002, *Supporting Inclusive Schools: A Handbook for Student Services*, a resource guide for student services which sets out policies, procedures and minimum service standards for delivering student services.

## Annex C: Prince Edward Island

### 1. Provincial context

#### 1.1 Overview

Prince Edward Island (P.E.I.) is located in the Gulf of St. Lawrence on Canada's east coast and linked to its neighbour, New Brunswick, by the 12.9 km Confederation Bridge. In 2001, P.E.I. had a total population of 135,294 with approximately 56% living in rural areas. There are two cities in the province and several small towns. Nearly 60% of the island's 5,660 square kilometers (2,184 square miles) is devoted to agriculture, P.E.I.'s largest industry. The province's sandy beaches have contributed immensely to tourism which is the second largest and fastest growing industry. The next largest industries are fishing and forestry (<http://www.gov.pe.ca/infopei>).

#### 1.2 Demographics<sup>22</sup>

Table 1: *Children with mothers in the paid labour force, 2001, rounded*

Age range	Total number of children	With mother in paid labour force	Workforce participation rate by age of youngest child
0 – 2 years	4,600	3,200	76.9%
3 – 5 years	5,100	3,500	79.3%

Table 2: *Children identifying with an Aboriginal group, 2001 census*

Age range	North American Indian	Métis	Inuit
0 – 4 years	255	50	Nil
5 – 9 years	265	20	Nil

**Source:** Statistics Canada. (2003). *Aboriginal origin, age groups, and sex for population for Canada, Provinces, Territories, Census Metropolitan areas and Census agglomerations, 2001 census* (<http://www.statcan.ca/english/IPS/Data/97F0011XBO1004.htm>).

Table 3: *Estimated number of children with disabilities who are residing at home, 2001*

Age	Number of children with disabilities	Percentage of children with disabilities
0-4	170	2.3
5-9	360	4.0

**Source:** Statistics Canada. (2002). *A profile of disability in Canada, 2001 – Tables, 2001 Participation and Activity Limitation Survey* (<http://www.statcan.ca/english/IPS/Data/89-597-XIE.htm>).

#### *Cultural and ethnic diversity:*

The population of P.E.I. is primarily of British ancestry. Approximately 11% of the population has French as a mother tongue.

#### 1.3 Provincial expenditures on regulated child care and kindergarten, 2001

- Provincial allocation on regulated child care (subsidies, operating grants, and kindergarten in early childhood centres) for each child in the province age 0 – 5 (inclusive) = \$ 570.85. For purposes of inter-provincial comparisons, provincial spending

<sup>22</sup> Remaining statistical data are from Friendly, M., Beach, J. and Turiano, M. (2002). *Early childhood education and care in Canada: Provinces and Territories, 2001*. Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit, Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto, unless otherwise indicated.



on regulated child care for each child age 0 – 5 without consideration of spending on the community-based kindergarten system amounts to \$403.73.

- Percent of children age 0 – 5 (inclusive) for whom there is a regulated child care space = 45.4% (this includes kindergarten spaces which, in P.E.I., are part of the regulated child care system). If kindergarten spaces are not included, regulated child care spaces are available for 39.9% of children age 0 – 5.
- Full-year expenditure on kindergarten (2001-2002) = \$3.2 million or approximately \$1,903 per kindergarten student (based on 1,682 children registered).

#### **1.4 Family-related leave, 2001**

- Maternity leave = 17 weeks.
- Parental leave = 35 weeks. The total parental leave for both parents cannot exceed 35 weeks.
- Adoption leave = 52 weeks. The total combined total leave for both parents cannot exceed 52 weeks.
- Family-related leave = None provided for in legislation.

#### **1.5 Services for aboriginal children, 2001**

- On-reserve regulated child care: Prince Edward Island does not fund or license child care programs on reserve. There are no First Nations/Inuit Child Care Initiative programs.
- Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities: This federal program does not have any sites on Prince Edward Island (Kari Nisbet, AHD in Urban and Northern Communities, personal communication).
- First Nations Head Start: programs operate in 2 communities which, collectively served 27 children in 2001 (Melanie Morningstar, First Nations Head Start, personal communication).
- There is one on-reserve kindergarten program.

#### **1.6 The P.E.I. Healthy Child Development Strategy**

In 1999, the provincial government announced its intention to develop a five-year strategy to support the growth and development of *all* young children in the province. A subsequent document,<sup>23</sup> developed on the basis of broad consultation across the province, identified four goal areas, vision and values, guiding principles, key areas for action with specific goals and objectives, strategic directions, enabling conditions, and emphasized the need for ongoing measuring and monitoring of child outcomes to assess progress. Governance for the provincial strategy includes:

- The Premier's Council. This group of community representatives has a mandate to monitor the implementation of the Healthy Child Development Strategy, provide annual progress reports, and provide the Premier with advice on issues related to young children. The Council hosts an annual "Think Tank on Children," and provides advice on the annual action plan.
- The Children's Secretariat. This consists of representatives from five provincial government departments who work together to implement the Healthy Child Development Strategy and monitor its progress through the development of a government wide/corporate approach to healthy child development, public education and communication, intersectoral partnerships, and liaising with community groups.
- The Children's Working Group. The intersectoral group includes community representatives who provide child care related experience and a focus on the Strategy's key areas of action, and the members of the Children's Secretariat. Other members provide linkages to related provincial strategies, research and aboriginal perspectives,

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<sup>23</sup> Health and Social Services. (2000). *For our Children: A Strategy for Healthy Child Development*. Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island Healthy Child Development Advisory Committee.

and include representation from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). The Children's Working Group is co-chaired by the Director of the Children's Secretariat and a community representative, and actively participates in identifying priorities for funding and policy development, as well as next steps in the implementation of the Strategy.

Funds transferred from the federal government under the Early Childhood Development Agreement have been used to expand or develop direct services for children and to support the community development aspect of the Health Child Development Strategy, including the work of the Premier's Council.

### **1.7 Services for children who have special needs, 2001**

- There is not a province-wide government service to provide assessment and therapy for children with special needs or disabilities. However, these services are available through individual programs and practitioners.
- The provincial government provides grants to assist in the inclusion of children who have special needs in licensed child care centres and kindergarten programs, e.g. for additional staff. Expenditures for special needs funding in 2001/2002 amounted to \$867,148 for 170 children (averaging \$5,100 per child); even so, in 2001/2002, several children were required to wait for up to three months for funding.

## **2. Child care**

### **2.1 Department responsible for legislation, licensing and funding**

The Department of Health and Social Services is responsible for regulation and management of government funds allocated to child care. The Child Care Facilities Board is responsible for standards, monitoring and certification of child care staff.

### **2.2 Number of regulated child care spaces**

*Table 4: Number of full- and part-time child care spaces by type, 2001*

Type of space	Centre-based		Family child care
	Full-time	Part-time	
Infants	75	5	
Preschool	1,243	511	
School-age	Nil	519	
Special needs spaces	120	44	
TOTALS	1,438	1,079	54

## 2.3 Regulations

Table 5: Regulations for child care centres and regulated family child care homes, 2001

Type	Variable	Requirements		
Regulated centre care	Ratio and group size	<u>Age of children</u>	<u>Staff: child ratio</u>	<u>Max. group size</u>
		0 – 2 years	1:3	6
		2 - 3 years	1:5	not specified
		3 – 5 years	1:10	not specified
Regulated centre care	Ratio and group size	5 – 6 years	1:12	not specified
		7 plus years	1:15	not specified
	Staff educational requirements	Centre supervisors and one full-time staff must have completed at least one year of early childhood development training. <sup>1</sup> Thirty hours of in-service training in each three year period is required for all staff.		
	Government monitoring	Annual visit is a legislated requirement. Government provides funding for MIKE – Measuring and Improving Kids' Environments – which uses the <i>Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised</i> <sup>2</sup> to measure and monitor quality. Participation is voluntary, but over 95% of centres are involved.		
Regulated family child care	Permitted child numbers	Up to seven children under age 10, including the provider's own preschool children, with a maximum of three children under age two.		
	Educational requirements	Providers must have a current first aid certificate and a thirty-hour training program.		
	Government monitoring	Annual visit is a legislated requirement. Consultants conduct a program review using the <i>Family Day Care Rating Scale</i> <sup>3</sup>		

<sup>1</sup> Regulations in the Child Care Facilities Act describe a number of acceptable post-secondary training programs ranging from a degree in Child Study to a one-year early childhood education (ECE) diploma combined with experience. The majority of early childhood educators working in PEI have a two-year ECE diploma.

<sup>2</sup> Harms, T., Clifford, R.M., and Cryer, D. (1998). *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised*. New York: Teachers College Press.

<sup>3</sup> Harms, T., and Clifford, R.M. (1989). *Family Day Care Rating Scale*. New York: Teachers College Press.

If a license is revoked or not renewed, the centre or family child care home can appeal directly to the Minister who establishes an appeal board which must conduct an inquiry and render a decision within 30 days.

**2.4 Sponsorship of regulated child care spaces** – The majority (76%) of regulated full-day early childhood centres and privately owned and operated (2002/2003).

## 2.5 Fee subsidy

To be eligible for consideration, parents must have an income below a certain level (see below) and the family must meet one of the following criteria: parent(s) working or studying, parent in receipt of social assistance, parental medical emergency, child is deemed in need of protection, child has special needs. Fee subsidy is paid directly to the service providers on behalf of eligible parents. The provincial fee subsidy budget is capped, but in 2001 there were not any eligible parents on a waiting list.

**Table 6:** *Child care fee subsidy program, 2001*

Income eligibility criteria	<u>Family size</u>	<u>Turning point</u> <sup>1</sup>	<u>Break-even point</u> <sup>2</sup>
	single parent, one child	\$13,440 (net)	\$25,440 (net)
	two parents, two children	\$19,200 (net)	\$51,040 (net)
User fee/surcharge	No user fee, but child care services may charge fees above the subsidy rate and require the parent to pay the difference.		
Eligible services	Any centre or regulated family child care home.		
Maximum subsidy by age of child	0 – 2 years = \$24/day 2 – 3 years = \$20/day 3 years plus = \$19/day School-age = \$18/day		

<sup>1</sup> The turning point is the income level up to which a full subsidy is available.

<sup>2</sup> Partial subsidy is available up to the break-even point at which income subsidy ceases.

## 2.6 Fees for child care

**Table 7:** *Median monthly parent fees for full-time care, 2001*

Child's age	Centre-based care Monthly fee	Family child care Daily fee
Infants	\$520	Data not available
Toddlers	432	
Preschoolers	412	
School-age children	Data not available	

**Source:** *Review and analysis of the Prince Edward Island ECE Industry.* (2001).  
Government of Prince Edward Island.

## 2.7 Other government funding, 2001

### *One-time funding*

- None

### *Recurring funding*

#### Operating grants

- Full-day centre programs - \$0.91/day/space
- Part-time centre-based programs – 12 children or fewer = \$682/year, 24 children or fewer = \$1,092/year, 50 children or fewer = \$1,820 per year.
- Family child care homes = \$450/year.

Operating grants funding has been frozen since 1992, approximately half of the centres and half of the regulated family child care homes do not receive operating grants.

#### Infant incentive funding

\$250/year is provided to centres and family child care homes enrolling at least one child younger than age two on a regular basis for at least six months.

### Special needs funding

Available to centres and family child care programs to pay staff to provide individualized programming for children with special needs. The funding will cover wages up to \$11.50/hour based on training and experience.

### *Other funding*

### Training and professional development

Annual allocation to assist with the purchase of resources and to provide funds for the Early Childhood Development Association to provide professional development activities.

### Other child care assistance

The provincial social assistance budget will provide funds for unregulated care for infants or for extended care when regulated care is unavailable.

## **2.8 Proportion of provincial allocation for regulated child care (centre- and family-based) by category of expenditure, 2001**

- Parent fee subsidy = 75.4%.
- Recurring operating grants = 6.1%.
- Special needs funding = 18.5%.

## **2.9 Proportion of the average centre's revenue from three primary sources, 1998**

Source	Child care centres 1998
Fees paid by parents themselves	66.8%
Fee subsidies paid by government	26.1
Other government grants	6.3
Other sources	0.8

**Source:** Doherty, G., Lero, D.S., Goelman, H., LaGrange, A. and Tougas, J. (2000). *You Bet I Care! A Canada-Wide Study on Wages, Working Conditions, and Practices in Child Care Centres*. Guelph, Ontario: Centre for Families, Work, and Well-Being, University of Guelph. This is the most recent data available.

## **2.10 Median gross hourly wage for centre-based staff (full- and part-time combined), 2001**

Certified staff (at least one year of ECEC training) = \$8.00  
Uncertified staff = \$7.01  
Special needs staff = \$9.00

**Source:** *Review and analysis of the Prince Edward Island ECE Industry*. (2001). Government of Prince Edward Island.

Provincial minimum hourly minimum wage for an adult in 2002 = \$6.00 (Labour and Industrial Relations Division, government of P.E.I.)

## **2.11 Child care planning and development**

Planning for child care is considered within the broader context of the Department of Health and Social Services 2001 *Strategic Plan for the Prince Edward Island Health and Social Services System 2001-2005* and the *P.E.I. Healthy Child Development Strategy*. The province, through

the Children's Secretariat, is assisting communities to identify their needs and how they might be addressed by sharing demographic and other statistical information with the residents.

## **2.12 Key provincial child care organizations**

Early Childhood Development Association of Prince Edward Island.

## **2.13 Recent developments**

- In 2001, the province conducted a survey of wages and working conditions in child care settings (*The Review and analysis of the Prince Edward Island ECE Industry*).
- In 2001/2002 a pilot project was undertaken by the province with the Early Childhood Development Association of Prince Edward Island to improve the quality of centres which had children with special needs enrolled and to enhance the capacity of these centres to provide a truly inclusive experience for the children. This project, conducted in 29 centres and based on the *Keeping the Door Open* model, included on-site training in self-evaluation followed by consultation to assist in identification of needs and the development of an action plan.<sup>24</sup> Subsequently, this program, now called Measuring and Improving Kids' Environments (MIKE) has been expanded to include all centres.
- An Aboriginal two-year early childhood development diploma program has been implemented at Holland community college in Charlottetown.

# **3. Kindergarten**

## **3.1 Background**

Kindergarten is provided through the regulated child care system, with approximately 50% of kindergarten programs offered as part of a full-day early childhood program. This provides a 'seamless' day in which the child is in kindergarten for part of the time and in the regular child care program for the remainder of the day. The three-hour kindergarten program is available free of charge. The centre's regular fee is charged for the time that the child is engaged in the child care program.

## **3.2 Government departments responsible for legislation, policy and funding.**

- The Department of Health and Social Services is responsible for licensing kindergartens, staff certification, and the provision of funding to support the inclusion of children with special needs.
- The Department of Education provides funding for a three-hour core kindergarten program, and is responsible for the curriculum, and in-service education. "Kindergarten mentors" attached to the Department of Education visit the programs and provide on-site consultation in regard to implementing the province-wide curriculum.

Kindergarten is part of the early childhood system on Prince Edward Island, and therefore operates under the *Child Care Facilities Act*. The implementation and monitoring of the Act is the responsibility of the Child Care Facilities Board. Both Departments have representation on the Board, and share in the administration of licensing, staff certification and inspections. Each Department has a Resource Person assigned to the Child Care Facilities Board.

## **3.3 Number of children enrolled**

- 2000/2001 = 1,709 children
- 2001/2002 = 1,682 children.

By definition, in Prince Edward Island kindergarten is for children who will be entering the public school system in the following year.

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<sup>24</sup> For additional information see: New Brunswick Association for Community Living. (2001). *Keeping the Door Open: Enhancing and Maintaining the Capacity of Centres to Include Children with Special Needs*. Fredericton, NB: Author.

### **3.4 Sponsorship**

Kindergarten programs are provided either within child care centres or as stand-alone programs. Kindergartens may be operated either as private or non-profit programs.

### **3.5 Eligibility criteria**

- Participation is not compulsory, however, 97% of eligible children attend.
- Minimum age at entry. Prince Edward Island is changing the age of kindergarten and school entry to ensure that children are six years of age on or before August 31 of the year they enter grade one. This change will take place gradually over a six-year period beginning in the 2003/2004 school year. The gradual implementation schedule was chosen to minimize, to the extent possible, the impact this change will have on families, and the kindergarten/public school systems.

### **3.6 Programming**

The program must operate for no less than three hours a day, five days a week or the equivalent and provide 2.5 hours of instructional time. Programs operate between 8 to 10 months a year. There is a province-wide kindergarten curriculum which is part of the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation curriculum for kindergarten to grade 12 being used in the Atlantic provinces. The kindergarten component includes language arts and mathematical skills and uses a play-based approach.

### **3.7 Regulations, policies, practices**

- Staff ratio is 1:12, the average class size is 36.
- Minimum training requirements for staff = at least one year of early childhood development training plus 30 hours of in-service training in every three year period.

### **3.8 Special populations**

Children with disabilities or special needs are included in the kindergarten programs. The Department of Health and Social Services will provide funding for additional staff if required.

### **3.9 Kindergarten planning and development**

This is done in the context of the *Prince Edward Island Healthy Child Development Strategy*. The Kindergarten Advisory Committee, composed of parents, other community representatives, the provincial child care association, the provincial training institution for child care staff, and representatives from the Departments of Education and of Health and Social Services is mandated to make recommendations to the Minister of Education.

### **3.10 The provincial teachers' association**

Early Childhood Development Association of Prince Edward Island.

### **3.11 Recent developments**

- Public funding of kindergarten was initiated in 2000. Prior to that, kindergarten programs were provided through the child care system on a fee-for-service basis.
- Kindergarten programs in full-day child care centres are participating in the MIKE project to enhance the capacity of programs to provide a truly inclusive, high-quality program for children with special needs.

## Annex D: Saskatchewan

### 1. Provincial context

#### 1.1 Overview

Saskatchewan, located in the heart of Canada between Alberta and Manitoba, has a land mass of over 651,900 square kilometers (more than a quarter of a million square miles) and a total population of 1,021,762. Although Saskatchewan produces over half of the wheat grown in Canada, generating almost \$2 billion annually, two-thirds of its people live in towns or cities. Other important economic activities are service based industries such as finance, insurance, and real estate which generate \$3.3 billion annually.

#### 1.2 Demographics<sup>25</sup>

Table 1: *Children with mothers in the paid labour force, 2001, rounded*

Age range	Total number of children	With mother in paid labour force	Workforce participation rate by age of youngest child
0 – 2 years	37,500	22,800	64.9%
3 – 5 years	37,900	24,100	73.5%

Table 2: *Children identifying with an Aboriginal group, 2001 census*

Age range	North American Indian	Métis	Inuit
0 – 4 years	12,870	3,530	25
5 – 9 years	13,520	3,885	35

**Source:** Statistics Canada. (2003). Aboriginal origin, age groups, and sex for population for Canada, Provinces, Territories, Census Metropolitan areas and Census agglomerations, 2001 census, 20% sample data (<http://www.statcan.ca/english/IPS/Data/97f0011XCB01004.htm>).

Table 3: *Estimated number of children with disabilities who are residing at home, 2001*

Age	Number of children with disabilities	Percentage of children with disabilities
0-4	850	1.7
5-9	1,860	3.2

**Source:** Statistics Canada. (2002). *A profile of disability in Canada, 2001 – Tables, 2001 Participation and Activity Limitation Survey* ([www.statcan.ca/english/IPS/Data/89-579-XIE.htm](http://www.statcan.ca/english/IPS/Data/89-579-XIE.htm)).

#### *Cultural and ethnic diversity:*

The population is largely of British extraction followed by people with German, Ukrainian, North American Indian, Scandinavian, French, Dutch, Polish and Russian ancestry ([www.gov.sk.ca](http://www.gov.sk.ca)).

<sup>25</sup> Remaining statistical data are from Friendly, M., Beach, J. and Turiano, M. (2002). *Early childhood education and care in Canada: Provinces and Territories, 2001*. Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit, Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto, unless otherwise indicated.



### 1.3 Provincial expenditures on regulated child care and kindergarten, 2001

- Provincial allocation on regulated child care for each child in the province age 0 – 12 = \$124.99.<sup>26</sup>
- Percent of children age 0 – 12 for whom there is a regulated child care space = 4.2%.
- Average spending for each kindergarten student in a school-based program = \$2,069 in Regina and Saskatoon, \$2,189 elsewhere. Note: In Saskatchewan the provincial Ministry of Learning provides approximately 40% of funding for K – 12 education, while local property tax provides approximately 60%.

### 1.4 Family-related leave, 2001

- Maternity leave = 18 weeks.<sup>27</sup>
- Parental leave = 34 weeks for birth mothers immediately following maternity leave. The other parent may also take up to 37 weeks. These parental leaves may be taken consecutively.
- Adoption leave = 18 weeks, followed by 34 weeks of parental leave. The other parent may take up to 37 weeks. The two parents may take their leaves consecutively.
- Family-related leave = None provided for in legislation.

### 1.5 Services for aboriginal children, 2001

- On-reserve regulated child care: The federal government's First Nations/Inuit Child Care Initiative has resulted in the development of approximately 45 on-reserve child care centres. Saskatchewan does not license child care programs on reserve.
- Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities: There are 16 sites which, collectively, served approximately 550 children in 2001 (Kari Nisbet, AHS in Urban and Northern Communities, personal communication).
- First Nations Head Start: There are 74 sites which, collectively, served approximately 1,211 children in 2001 (Melanie Morningstar, First Nations H.S., personal communication).
- Children living on reserve may attend kindergarten classes in schools on their reserve or attend kindergarten in off-reserve schools, in such situations the federal government pays a tuition fee to the local school board.

### 1.6 Services for children who have special needs, 2001

- Kids First: This five-year initiative was implemented in 2001 to provide a community-based network of supports and services that focuses on the healthy growth and development of children age 0 – 5 years who may be vulnerable to developmental problems. It is overseen by the Departments of Health, Community Resources and Employment, Learning, Government Relations, and Aboriginal Affairs. The key areas of focus are: reaching high-risk women in target communities as early as possible to assist in Fetal Alcohol Syndrome prevention; screening all babies born in Saskatchewan hospitals to identify children and/or parents in need of support; home visiting for identified families; child care and early learning programs for the children; and other supports for the parents such as nutritional counseling and parenting skill development.
- The Child Care Inclusion program: Provincial policy supports the integration of children with special needs into regular child care settings. A grant of \$200-\$300 dollars per month, depending on the child's need, is available for each child in regulated child care who is deemed to have a developmental delay or be at risk for developmental problems. An enhanced accessibility grant of up to \$1,500 per month may be available for a child who has exceptionally high needs plus additional funds up to \$1,200 for adaptive equipment required to meet the

<sup>26</sup> Data provided by Monica Lysack, Child Day Care Branch. Information on the allocation to child care for each child age 0 – 5 is not available.

<sup>27</sup> Provincial maternity, parental, adoption, and family-relates leaves are unpaid. The federal government pays for some portions of maternity, parental, and adoption leave under the provisions of the Employment Insurance program but not for family-related leave.

child's needs. There may be a waiting list for enhanced accessibility grants if the budget for this is fully spent. Parents of children with special needs pay for the child care space but the funding for the additional supports is provided by the province regardless of the family income.

- Pre-kindergarten: This program is provided in specified schools in targeted "high-risk" communities on a part-day basis for selected three- and four-year-old children. The Ministry of Learning supported 89 programs, each with a maximum of 16 children, in 2001.
- Additional supports to assist in the integration of children into ordinary kindergarten: Under Ministry of Learning policy all children with special needs have the right to attend kindergarten (and higher grades) in the public school system. The province provides additional funds when required for appropriate supports and services for each child and/or for materials and equipment that will assist the child's integration into a regular classroom. There are not any parental fees for kindergarten.
- The Community Solutions program: This program provides funding to community organizations for projects that promote and support inclusion of children and families with special needs; support labour force attachment; are workplace sponsored; or meet the needs of rural or northern communities; **and** have an attachment to a child care service.

### **1.7 Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Children**

Implemented in 1993, the Action Plan provides a vision, set of principles, and goals for children that emerged from a province-wide consultation process. It involves nine government departments, including Learning, Community Resources and Employment, and Health, which work together and with community groups to identify gaps in service and to plan and implement solutions. Key focuses of the Action Plan are: (1) prevention and earlier intervention, and (2) support to vulnerable children, youth and families (<http://www.gov.sk.ca/socserv/>).

### **1.8 Saskatchewan Council on Children and Youth**

Established in 1994, the Council has a broad mandate to advise the government of Saskatchewan and the Ministers involved in the Action Plan for Children and Youth on priorities for achieving the well-being of Saskatchewan's children and youth. The members are volunteers, the majority of whom are from non-government agencies and organizations. They are appointed by the government and represent all parts of the province, Aboriginal peoples, and youth. Activities include identifying priorities, advising on the use of current resources, recommending new approaches and partnerships, and reviewing initiatives that have been taken under the Action Plan. The Council has produced three reports, each of which provided specific recommendations related to children under age six (<http://www.gov.sk.ca/socserv/>).

### **1.9 Human Services Integration Forum**

The Associate and Assistant Deputy Ministers' (ADMs') Forum on Human Services was formed in the fall of 1994 in response to the need for more senior government coordination of a number of initiatives and the growing demand for holistic and integrated human services. The Forum is led by a Steering Committee of seven provincial government departments and Executive Council. The objectives of the Council are to: (1) establish and maintain mechanisms to promote and facilitate interagency collaboration and integrated planning and service delivery; (2) identify and address barriers; (3) provide funding and policy support; (4) provide educational supports to human services providers; and (5) make the most efficient and effective use of resources. A major undertaking of the Human Services Integration Forum is the implementation of School<sup>PLUS</sup>. School<sup>PLUS</sup> is the term used to describe the new conceptualization of schools as centres of learning, support and community for the children and families they serve.

## 2. Child care

### 2.1 Department responsible for legislation, policy, licensing and funding

Child Day Care Branch, Department of Social Services

Monitoring, licensing, and consultation are provided regionally through two regional offices and five sub-offices.

### 2.2 Number of regulated child care spaces

Table 4: Number of child care spaces by type, 2001

Centre-based spaces		Family Child Care <sup>1</sup>
Infants	283	
Toddlers	920	
Preschoolers	2,903	
School-age	845	
TOTALS	4,951	2,215

**Note:** Preschool is an unregulated service in Saskatchewan and is therefore not reflected in the statistics provided in the above table.

1 Typically, family child care homes have a mixed-age group.

### 2.3 Sponsorship of regulated centre-based spaces, 2001

- Non-profit = 4,878
- Commercial (for-profit) = 73

### 2.4 Regulations

Table 5: Regulations for child care centres and regulated family child care homes, 2001

Type	Variable	Requirements		
Regulated centre care	Ratio and group size	<u>Age of children</u>	<u>Staff:child ratio</u>	<u>Max. group size</u>
		Infants	1:3	6
		Toddlers	1:5	10
		Preschool (30 months to 6 years)	1:10	20
		School-age (6 – 12 years old)	1:15	30
	Staff educational requirements	All staff employed for at least 65 hours a month must have completed a 120-hour child care orientation course or equivalent provided through a community college. Centre directors hired after July, 2001 must have at least a two-year ECEC diploma or equivalent.		
	Government monitoring	Policy is two visits annually. Licensing officials do not have to have a background in early childhood education.		

Regulated (licensed) family child care	Permitted child numbers	<u>In a situation of one child care provider:</u> Up to eight children under age 13, including the provider's own. Of the eight, only five may be younger than age 6; of these five, only two may be younger than 30 months. <u>In a situation of a provider and an assistant (group family child care homes):</u> Up to 12 children, including the provider's and the assistant's children under age 13. Of the 12 children, only 10 may be younger than age 6; of these 10, only five may be younger than 30 months and only three younger than 18 months. <u>Teen and student support family child care homes:</u> <sup>1</sup> Up to six children, including the provider's own under age 13. Of these six children, no more than four may be younger than six years; of these four, only two may be younger than 30 months.
	Provider educational requirements	All providers require an orientation session with a government consultant plus six hours of professional development workshops each licensing year. Providers working alone must have a 40-hour introductory course within the first year of licensing. Providers working with an assistant have three years after initial licensing in which to complete a 120-hour child care orientation course through a community college.
	Government monitoring	Policy is an annual licensing visits and periodic drop-in visits throughout the year. Licensing officials do not have to have a background in early childhood education.

<sup>1</sup> Teen student support homes are formally associated with a high school and provide child care for children of parents attending the high school.

If a license is revoked or refused, the applicant may appeal directly to the Minister of Social Services.

## 2.5 Fee subsidy and child care allowances

To be eligible for consideration parents must be employed or seeking employment, attending school or a training program, receiving medical treatment, or have a child with special needs. If the parent meets one of these criteria, an income test is applied to determine if the family income meets the income criteria (see below). The fee subsidy is paid directly to the service provider on behalf of eligible parents. Although the total number of subsidies is not capped, the total funding available for subsidies is limited. As a result, some eligible parents may not be able to obtain a subsidy.

A child care allowance is paid to parents on social assistance who are involved in an employment, training or rehabilitation program. This allowance may be used for regulated or unregulated care.

**Table 6:** *Child care fee subsidy program, as of April, 2003*

Income eligibility criteria	Family size	Turning point <sup>1</sup>	Break-even point <sup>2</sup>
	single parent, one child under age six single parent, two children	\$19,668 (gross) \$20,868 (gross)	\$31,920 (gross) \$45,720 (gross)
User fee/surcharge	10% of the actual cost of care. Centres and family child care homes may surcharge parents an additional amount above this 10%.		
Eligible services	Non-profit child care centres and regulated family child care homes.		
Maximum monthly subsidy	Age of child	Centre	Family child care
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infant</li> <li>• Toddlers</li> <li>• Preschoolers</li> <li>• School-age<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>	\$355 310 255 210	\$295 290 250 210

<sup>1</sup> The turning point is the income level up to which a full subsidy is available.

<sup>2</sup> Partial subsidy is available up to the break-even point at which income subsidy ceases.

<sup>3</sup> Fee subsidy for school-aged children increases to \$255 a month for the school summer vacation period.

## 2.6 Fees for child care

Table 7: Fees for full-time care, 2001

Child's age	Centre-based care Median monthly fee	Family child care Average monthly fee
Infants (age 0 – 17 months)	\$481	\$435
Toddlers (age 18 months – 2.11 years)	420	413
Preschoolers (Age 3.0 – 5.11 years)	384	377
School-age children, am and pm	277	286

## 2.7 Other government funding

### ***One-time funding***

#### Start-up grants

- Child care centres = \$600/space
- Group family child care homes and northern family day care ho = \$600/home
- Family child care homes not deemed northern = \$400/home
- Group family child care homes deemed northern = \$900/home
- School-age programs = \$300/space

#### Tuition reimbursement

\$70 per class or \$200 per orientation course per centre staff.

### ***Recurring funding, as of April, 2003***

#### Early childhood services grants

- Infants = \$258.33/space/month
- Toddlers = \$155/space/month
- Preschoolers = \$77.50/space/month
- School-age = \$51.67/space/month

The grants are equivalent to \$750 per staff as required by the staff: child ratios.

#### Teen support services grants

- Centres \$325/infant space/month  
\$290/toddler space/month
- Family child care homes \$350/designated space/month

#### Equipment grants

- Family child care homes \$100/space/year
- Northern centres \$100/space/year

Southern centres do not get equipment grants.

#### Special needs funding

See "Child Care Inclusion Program" in Section 1.6.

## 2.8 Proportion of provincial allocation for regulated child care (centre- and family-based) by category of expenditure, 2001

- Parent fee subsidy = 60.1%.
- Recurring operating grants = 27.3%.
- Special needs funding = 4.6%.
- One time grants = 0.8%.
- Other grants = 7.3% (Child care allowances paid to parents on social assistance who are engaged in employment training or a rehabilitation program).

## 2.9 Proportion of the average centre's revenue from three primary sources

Table 8: Proportion of average child care centre's revenue from major sources, 1998

Source	Child care centres
Fees paid by parents themselves	38.3%
Fee subsidies paid by government	35.0
Other government grants	21.7
Other sources	5.0

**Source:** Doherty, G., Lero, D.S., Goelman, H., LaGrange, A. and Tougas, J. (2000). *You Bet I Care! A Canada-Wide Study on Wages, Working Conditions and Practices in Child Care Centres*. Guelph, Ontario: Centre for Families, Work and Well-Being, University of Guelph. This is the most recent information available.

## 2.10 Mean gross hourly wage for centre-based staff (full- and part-time combined), 2002

\$10.75 (Monica Lysack, Child Day Care Branch, personal communication)

Provincial minimum hourly minimum wage for an adult in 2002 = \$6.65 (Saskatchewan Labour, Planning and Policy Branch).

## 2.11 Child care planning and development

Saskatchewan's vision statement for child care is "a safe and nurturing environment for children that promotes physical, social, emotional and cognitive development in partnership with parents and communities." The stated objectives for its child care program are to:

- Promote the growth and development of children and to support the provision of child care services to Saskatchewan families;
- Ensure low-income families have access to reliable child care resources that provide a healthy, safe and nurturing environment for children; and
- Provide increased and more flexible range of safe and nurturing child care options for low-income families that support labour market attachment.

The province does not have a formal, written plan for achieving these objectives.

A government-appointed Minister's Advisory Board on Early Learning and Care advises on child care issues and may assist in the establishment of long-term program objectives. This Board is made up of individuals chosen to represent different regions of the province and various constituencies such as parents, the Aboriginal community, school divisions, children with special needs, child care centre directors and staff, family child care providers, and college instructors in early childhood education.

## **2.12 Key provincial child care organizations**

- Saskatchewan Early Childhood Association
- Saskatchewan Early Childhood Directors Association
- Association des Parents Fransaskois
- Saskatchewan Association of Child Care Homes
- Canadian Association for Young Children, Saskatchewan Chapter
- Rural Voices

## **2.13 Recent developments**

In 2001

- The *Child Care Act* and accompanying *Regulations* were amended to increase early childhood training requirements for centre staff and for family child care providers.
- \$1.019 million of the Early Childhood Development Initiative funds was allocated to child care for: (1) enhanced operating grants to child care centres, (2) training and equipment grants for family child care homes, and (3) professional development for centre staff.
- Interviews about child care arrangements and preferences were conducted in 1,273 households with at least one child under age 13. When asked about stressors, 54% of respondents identified finding a good quality child care arrangement and 54% identified managing the cost of quality child care.<sup>28</sup>
- Two regions in the province participated in the *Keeping the Doors Open* pilot project which used a consultation model to assist centres to improve the quality of their overall environment and enhance their capacity to provide truly inclusive experiences for children with special needs.<sup>29</sup>

In 2003, the provincial government announced *Child Care Saskatchewan* – the largest expansion of funding for child care in Saskatchewan’s history. This includes \$2.2 million for:

- 500 new licensed child care spaces in 2003/2004.
- Early Childhood Services grant funding for 250 existing unfunded spaces.
- Capital funding for building development, renovations and fire safety requirements for new spaces.
- Increase Early Childhood Services Grant funding to address wages and human resource requirements.
- Increase in child care subsidies of an average of \$20 per child per month.

## **3. Kindergarten**

### **3.1 Ministry responsible for legislation, policy and funding.**

Saskatchewan Learning

### **3.2 Enrolment in 2001**

- Pre-kindergarten (for “at risk” three- and four-year-olds) = approximately 1,300
- Kindergarten (five-year-olds) = 11,961

### **3.3 Sponsorship**

Kindergarten is delivered in both public and private (independent, fee-charging) schools.

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<sup>28</sup> Environics Research Group Ltd. (2001). *Saskatchewan Child Care Needs and Preferences Survey*. Regina: Saskatchewan Social Services.

<sup>29</sup> For additional information see: New Brunswick Association for Community Living. (2001). *Keeping the Door Open: Enhancing and Maintaining the Capacity of Centres to Include Children with Special Needs*. Fredericton, NB: Author.

### **3.4 Eligibility criteria for kindergarten**

- Participation is not compulsory, however, more than 90% of five-year-olds attend.
- Minimum age at entry varies by school board, in most instances it is age five.

### **3.5 Programming**

The *Education Act* requires at least 80 full-day equivalents, schedules vary by school board but kindergarten is usually a part-day program. There is a province-wide curriculum, *Children First: A Curriculum Guide for Kindergarten*. This is based on the philosophy of Friedrich Froebel and Jean Piaget and emphasizes the use of developmentally appropriate practice and the development of a positive self-concept.

### **3.6 Regulations, policies, practices**

- Average number of children per class. There is no provincial guideline or regulation for ordinary kindergarten; the average class size is not known. In Pre-kindergarten (for children “at risk”) there is a staff: child ratio of 1:8 and a group size of 16 (one teacher and one assistant).
- Minimum training requirements for teachers are the same as for any teacher. There is no requirement that the person have specialized in primary teaching or have a background in early childhood education. However, provincial guidelines for funded Pre-kindergarten programs recommend that teachers have an early childhood specialty.
- Whether or not teaching assistants are provided in a kindergarten class depends upon the local school board. In practice, teaching assistants tend to be only used in classes where there is a child with special needs who requires additional assistance. Training requirements for teaching assistants are dependent upon individual school division policy.

### **3.7 Special populations**

- Ministry policy supports the inclusion of children with special needs in ordinary kindergarten classes and provides funding to assist in their inclusion. In 2001, 210 children age 2-5 years with identifiable disabilities received additional supports from the Ministry of Learning to enter kindergarten (some at an early age) or to attend a local early learning program with additional supports.
- Pre-kindergarten is provided by some school divisions three- and four-year-olds and some three-year-olds. The Ministry’s 1997 *Better Beginnings, Better Futures* document provides guidelines and suggestions for the operation of Pre-kindergarten programs. In 2001, approximately 1,300 children were supported in Pre-kindergarten programs.

### **3.8 Kindergarten planning and development**

Saskatchewan Learning forms advisory committees for specific areas such as kindergarten only as required for a specific purpose.

### **3.9 Professional association**

Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation

### **3.10 Recent developments**

In 2000, Saskatchewan Learning released *Early Literacy: A Resource for Teachers*. This document provides support for teachers of emerging literacy learners in creating positive and effective literacy experiences, particularly focusing on Pre-kindergarten to Grade 3. (Available on-line at: [http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/docs/ela/e\\_literacy/index.html](http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/docs/ela/e_literacy/index.html)).

In 2002, Saskatchewan Learning released *Working Together Toward School<sup>PLUS</sup>: Parent and Community Partnerships in Education: Handbook*. This document is the result of an extensive



review of the role of schools and provides suggestions for schools and school divisions as they seek to authentically include parents and community members in educational programming and decision making. Achieving the vision for School<sup>PLUS</sup> requires a change process in three areas: within the provincial education system, across all human service sectors and at the local community level. School<sup>PLUS</sup> will provide the opportunity to change and enhance the roles and relationships among educators and human service providers. (The handbook is available on-line at: <http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/k/pecs/spip/docs/roleofsch/may2002prnthndbook.pdf>).

In response to the changing needs of children and families, and as part of the mandate of School<sup>PLUS</sup>, a task force has been established to develop a new social policy framework for an integrated early learning and care strategy. The task force is comprised of individuals from the Department of Community Resources and Employment (responsible for child care), and the Department of Learning (responsible for Pre-kindergarten programs).

(Available at <http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/k/pecs/spip/docs/roleofsch/may2002prnthndbook.pdf>).