The *Quality beyond Regulations* policy review was initiated to support countries and jurisdictions to understand and enhance quality in early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings. This policy review places a particular focus on policies that support the quality of children's daily interactions through their ECEC settings, including with other children, staff/teachers, space and materials, their families and the wider community, known as *process quality.* This note discusses several policy levers that are at the core of children's daily experiences in ECEC, making them important for understanding quality beyond the complex governance and regulatory systems that surround ECEC.

Canada

Information on Canada has been collected through the preparation of a country background report and answers to the *Quality beyond Regulations* questionnaire. Four provinces (Alberta, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Québec) have provided in-depth information and are thereby reflected in more detail in the analysis provided in this note.

Key findings

In Canada, ECEC refers to the provision of early childhood education and care for children under the age of 6 and is split between what is known as early learning and child care (ELCC) and pre-primary education (kindergarten) for the year (or two years in some provinces) just before entry into primary school, which also corresponds to entry into the formal education system. Provinces and territories have responsibilities for ECEC, with departments of education having responsibility for pre-primary education (e.g. kindergarten), while licensed/regulated ECEC programmes that precede pre-primary education (e.g. centre-based settings) may fall under the responsibility of one or more ministries and departments, including education, health, family, and/or social services.

Data from 2017 on Canada indicate that enrolment of children at the age of 5 in pre-primary education was almost universal, while the percentage of children aged 2 to 4 attending ECEC ranged from 34% in Newfoundland and Labrador to 73% in Québec. Ensuring that fees to parents do not make ECEC prohibitively expensive to families is a key challenge in several provinces and territories. In 2021, federal, provincial, and territorial governments began discussions on the development of a Canada-wide early learning and child care system to ensure that all families have access to high-quality and affordable early learning and child care no matter where they live.

Almost all provinces and territories have a curriculum framework in place, with the exception of Nunavut and Yukon, where curriculum frameworks are being developed, and Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Northwest Territories, where draft frameworks are being piloted. Most provinces have in place an integrated curriculum framework covering children aged 0 to 5 in all settings. The implementation of curricula is compulsory in all settings in Nova Scotia, Ontario and New Brunswick, and in pre-primary settings in most provinces and territories.

Curriculum frameworks typically have broad goals and build on the idea of active children, recognising play as crucial for their development. The importance of children's experiences and relationships is emphasised. Curricula aim to support the quality of children's interactions with ECEC staff and other children and also provide guidance to support high-quality relationships between staff and parents, families and local communities. Process quality is, therefore, at the core of the curricula. Staff are encouraged to flexibly implement curricula in order to respond to every child's needs. In some provinces, curriculum frameworks are accompanied by guidelines to support implementation. The development of curricula was based on collaborative processes in all provinces and territories. The range of stakeholders involved in the design of curriculum frameworks was broader in some than in others.

Staff working in regulated settings are required to have a two-year post-secondary ECEC diploma in the majority of jurisdictions. In Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario and Québec, there are standards for initial education programmes, including practicum requirements. In addition to qualification requirements, jurisdictions generally use professional certification that might involve additional training that depends on the level of certification. Professional certification is required in all jurisdictions for pre-primary teachers.

A minimum number of hours of professional development is required in several provinces and territories (British Columbia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island). Also, in several jurisdictions (Alberta, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Québec and Saskatchewan), ECEC staff are given time reserved for activities separate from their direct contact with children, namely for attending training. Other types of support for professional development are in place in many jurisdictions, including financial support in Alberta, British Columbia and Québec. Most aspects of the ECEC sector working conditions that go beyond those mandated in labour legislation are unregulated, and one of the most pressing issues across Canada is recruiting and retaining highly qualified ECEC staff.

Responsibilities for monitoring ECEC quality in Canada are shared between provincial/territorial governments and individual ECEC settings. All provinces and territories regularly monitor structural quality, including aspects key to the quality of interactions in ECEC settings, such as staff professional development. Some provinces have developed mechanisms and tools to measure and support process quality and curriculum implementation.

Governance, standards and funding

In Canada, ECEC refers to provision for children under the age of 6 and is split between what is known as ELCC and pre-primary education (kindergarten) for the year (or two years in some provinces) just before entry into primary school, which also corresponds to entry into the formal education system. Provinces and territories have primary responsibilities for the provision of ECEC services. In eight of the 13 provinces and territories, ECEC is under the ministries or departments of education. In the remaining four provinces and territories, ministries and departments of health, family, and/or social services are also involved and responsible for ECEC (except pre-primary education, which is under the Ministry of Education). Education ministers work together on pan-Canadian initiatives on ECEC through the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). In addition, in 2021, federal, provincial and territorial governments began discussions on the development of a Canada-wide early learning and child care system to ensure that all families have access to high-quality and affordable early learning and child care regardless of where they live.

The administration of pre-primary education provision in Canada differs from the rest of ECEC provision. It is free, publicly funded and universally accessible for 5-year-olds in most of the country (and for 4- and 5-year-olds in some provinces). While pre-primary education is usually provided through the school

system, the provision of early learning and child care differs across provinces and territories but generally involves public, and not-for-profit and for-profit private settings, and includes both centre-based and home-based settings. As there is limited data gathering at the country level, there is little international data on ECEC covering the full country. Data from 2017 indicate that enrolment of children at the age of 5 in pre-primary education was almost universal in Canada and that the percentage of children aged 2 to 4 attending ECEC ranged from 34% in **Newfoundland and Labrador** to 73% in **Québec** (Akbari and McCuaig, 2018[1]).

The Budget for 2021 highlights that high fees for parents make ECEC unaffordable to some families. All provinces and territories have their own initiatives to support access to ECEC for vulnerable populations. **Québec** is seen as a best performer in ensuring equitable access to ECEC with a low-fee system. The province offers subsidies to ECEC providers to support quality and facilitate access of children with special needs or from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. Québec is also the province that spends the largest part of its budget on ECEC.

For almost 20 years, Canadian provinces and territories have been engaged in the development and implementation of ECEC curriculum frameworks to guide pedagogical practice and improve quality in ECEC settings. ECEC policies have also been guided by a joint vision, "Learn Canada 2020", which emphasises that all children should have access to high-quality ECEC. In April 2021, the Federal Government of Canada, as part of Budget 2021, announced a Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Plan that reiterated the goal to support more equitable child development. To support quality, the main strategies in Canada have been to increase the proportion of certified providers, to link certification to participation in professional development, and to support providers that implement innovative methods, such as an evidence-based curriculum framework for ECEC.

Curriculum and pedagogy

Governance and coverage of curriculum frameworks

In Canada, provinces and territories are responsible for developing curriculum frameworks. Provinces also collaborate via the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) in developing documents from a pan-Canadian perspective to provide guidance for the development of provincial and territorial frameworks. Almost all provinces and territories have a curriculum framework in place, with the exception of **Nunavut and Yukon**, where the curriculum framework is in development, and **Newfoundland and Labrador**, and the **Northwest Territories**, where draft frameworks are being piloted. The implementation of curricula is compulsory in all settings in **Nova Scotia**, **Ontario** and **New Brunswick**, and in pre-primary settings in most provinces and territories.

Most provinces have in place an integrated curriculum framework covering children aged 0 to 5 in all settings. **Manitoba** has separate frameworks for children aged 0 to 2 and 2 to 5/primary school entry. In the case of **New Brunswick**, a dual curriculum system is in place, with distinct frameworks that exist based on language within the same age groups, one for the English and one for the French ECEC sector. Two distinct integrated curricula for children aged 0 to 5 are in place, and two distinct frameworks are in place for ages 3 to 5. While separate curricula for children in different sectors and contexts can help adapt goals and content to their specific interests, backgrounds and needs, collaboration and synergies across the sectors are needed to ensure high quality within and across the provinces.

Goals and content of curriculum frameworks

The goals of ECEC curriculum frameworks across Canada are typically broad learning goals or pathways rather than academic goals. Goals stated in the curricula of most provinces include the holistic development of children, educational continuity and transitions, co-operation with families and

communities, as well as guidance for staff to foster children's skills, knowledge, competencies or attitudes and guidance on activities and materials to support them. In **Alberta**, **New Brunswick** and **Nova Scotia**, goals are expressed in terms of broad strands of concepts/competencies and principles and values (e.g. well-being and belonging, play, discovery and experimentation). In **Québec**, the curriculum framework sets developmental goals in different domains (e.g. socio-emotional, physical, moral and cognitive).

Curriculum frameworks across provinces emphasise the importance of children's experiences, relationships, and family and community. They aim to support the quality of children's interactions with ECEC staff and other children, and provide guidance to support high-quality relationships between staff and parents, families and local communities. Process quality is, therefore, at the core of the curricula. **New Brunswick**'s curriculum for ages 0 to 5 in the English-speaking sector recognises the role of families as children's first educators and it encourages staff to develop solid relationships with parents and guardians. In **Québec**, too, the role of parents as children's first educators is recognised in the curriculum's principles. ECEC staff are encouraged to use documentation to collect information on the child's development and share it with parents in order to strengthen communication and continuity across the centre- and home-learning environments. In **Alberta**, the framework encourages ECEC staff to foster interactions with elders and community leaders and members who can provide meaningful experiences to children, linking the curriculum to their living experience. **Nova Scotia** also recognises the importance of children's experiences and deep understanding of different communities' cultures and values, in particular of the four cultural groups in the province: Indigenous people, the Acadian/Francophone population, African Nova Scotians and the Gaels.

Design of curriculum frameworks

The development of curriculum frameworks was based on collaborative processes in all provinces. In some jurisdictions, though, the range of stakeholders involved was broader than in others. In **Québec**, the process included government agencies as well as researchers, representatives of ECEC pre-service training programmes and associations of ECEC professionals. In **Nova Scotia**, the range was broader, also including ECEC staff and community groups. **Alberta** included a broader range than all other provinces and participating countries, also involving parents and children. In **New Brunswick**, the curricula for children aged 0 to 5 involved more stakeholders than for pre-primary settings. In the English-speaking sector for children aged 0 to 5, it included government agencies, researchers, representatives of ECEC pre-service training programmes and associations of ECEC professionals. In the French-speaking sector, it included parents and community groups, in addition to ECEC staff. Provinces where curricula were developed with the involvement of a limited range of stakeholders need to make sure to implement mechanisms to regularly consult all relevant actors in the ECEC sector.

Implementation and pedagogy

Across Canada, ECEC staff are encouraged to flexibly implement the curricula in order to respond to every child's needs. In some provinces, curriculum frameworks are accompanied by guidelines to support implementation. In **New Brunswick**, there are implementation guidelines that support ECEC centres, parents and community groups and agencies. In **Québec,** implementation guidelines are targeted at supporting ECEC centres, which are encouraged to take into consideration each child's context, environment and resources when applying the curriculum framework. Similarly, in **Nova Scotia**, the framework encourages settings to implement the curricula's goals flexibly, considering the interest of children, as well as their cultural backgrounds. In provinces where there are no guidelines for implementing curriculum frameworks, it is important to support staff through training opportunities and material resources to ensure their understanding of the curricula.

All frameworks build on the idea of active and capable children who are co-constructors of their learning, and they recognise play as crucial for children's development, including different types of play. For example, curricula in **Alberta** and **New Brunswick** incorporate "dizzy play", understood as rough and tumble play where children experience exhilarating physical release and laughter. For example, New Brunswick's English curriculum framework incorporates "dizzy play" as an activity where children take pleasure in being on the edge. Alberta's curriculum recognises that important learning and development happens with "dizzy play", which allows children to create disorder and reorder within playful experiences.

Figure 1. Features of curriculum frameworks and pedagogy: Canada

2019
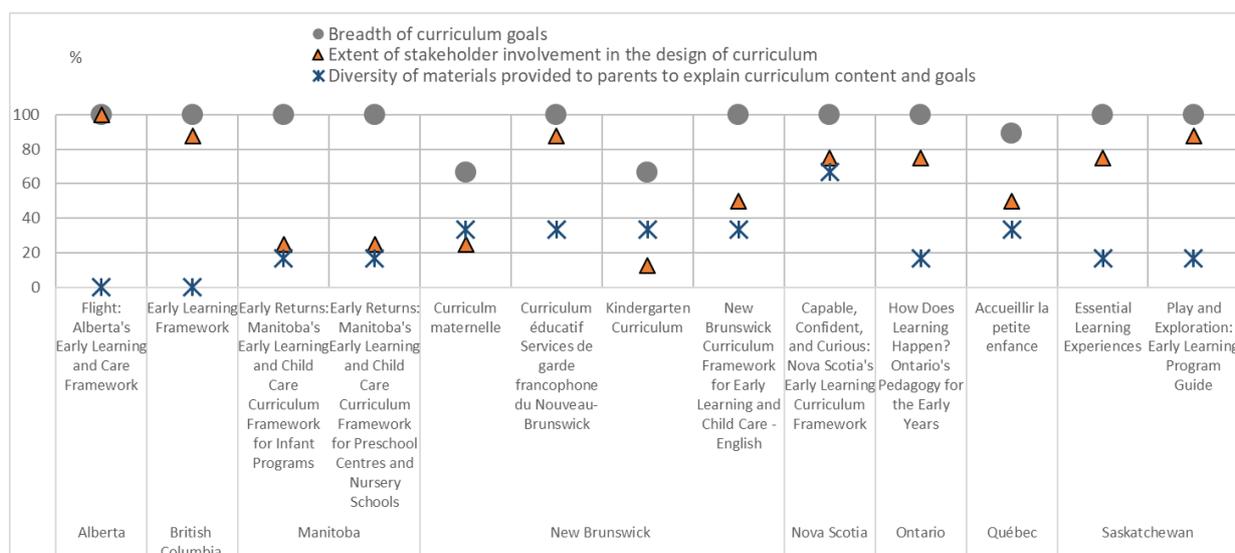
Notes: *Breath of curriculum goals* corresponds to the percentage of goals included in the policy questionnaire (nine goals) stated in the curriculum. Goals include, for instance, "to provide guidance on the holistic development, learning and well-being goals for children", "to provide guidance that facilitates educational continuity and transitions", and "to highlight the importance of co-operation with families to support the goals for children".

Extent of stakeholder involvement in the design of curriculum corresponds to the percentage of actors (e.g. ECEC staff, parents, children, researchers – eight categories in total) involved in the development of the most recent version of the curriculum framework.

Diversity of materials provided to parents to explain curriculum content and goals corresponds to the percentage of types of material provided to parents to explain the content and goals of the curriculum (e.g. website, social media, meetings at the ECEC setting – six categories in total).

Source: *Quality beyond Regulations* database.

Workforce development

Qualification requirements and certification

Across jurisdictions, the most commonly required qualification for teachers is a two-year post-secondary ECEC diploma, although it is common to find a mix of qualifications within settings, according to the specific requirements of each province or territory. In addition to qualifications, jurisdictions generally use professional certification that might involve additional training that depends on the level of certification. In **Alberta**, staff are required to hold a professional ECEC certification that is granted after completion of additional training relevant to the age group. In **Nova Scotia**, certifications are issued for staff based on their training and education credentials, and staff qualifications are checked through licensing and

inspection processes. In **New Brunswick** and **Québec**, ECEC certifications are not issued, but the requirements for staff qualifications are also checked through licensing and inspection processes.

Other jurisdictions (British Columbia, Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador, Ontario, Prince Edward Island and Yukon) also require certification for ECEC teachers. For example, in **Newfoundland** and **Labrador**, the Association for Early Childhood Educators of Newfoundland and Labrador is responsible for the certification process and manages the additional training courses necessary to meet certification. In **Ontario**, the College of Early Childhood Educators, which is a legislated non-governmental body, is responsible for the certification requirements, as well as for the ethical and professional standards of the workforce. Professional certification is required in all jurisdictions for pre-primary teachers.

Due to the continuous challenges in recruiting qualified staff in ECEC, in **Alberta**, **New Brunswick**, and **Québec**, there are time-limited exemptions to the requirements for qualified staff for settings facing difficulties in the recruitment of qualified staff.

Standards for initial education programmes are set in **Alberta**, **British Columbia**, **Nova Scotia** and **Québec**. This is also the case in **Labrador**, **Manitoba**, **Newfoundland** and **Ontario**. Nevertheless, the breadth of the initial education programmes for teachers varies greatly across provinces and territories. In **Alberta** and **Nova Scotia**, initial education programmes cover a broad range of areas, including curriculum and pedagogy, playful learning, diversity and family engagement. In these provinces and territories, a practicum is also required as part of initial education programmes. In contrast, in **New Brunswick** and **Québec**, although some contents are usually included in the initial education programmes, the required contents are fewer.

The initial education programmes for assistants usually cover fewer required contents, compared to teachers, although in **Alberta** and **Nova Scotia**, required contents include a range of aspects such as child health or personal care, facilitating play, use of space and materials and working with children from diverse backgrounds.

Figure 2. Breadth of content of initial education programmes for the ECEC workforce: Canada

2019
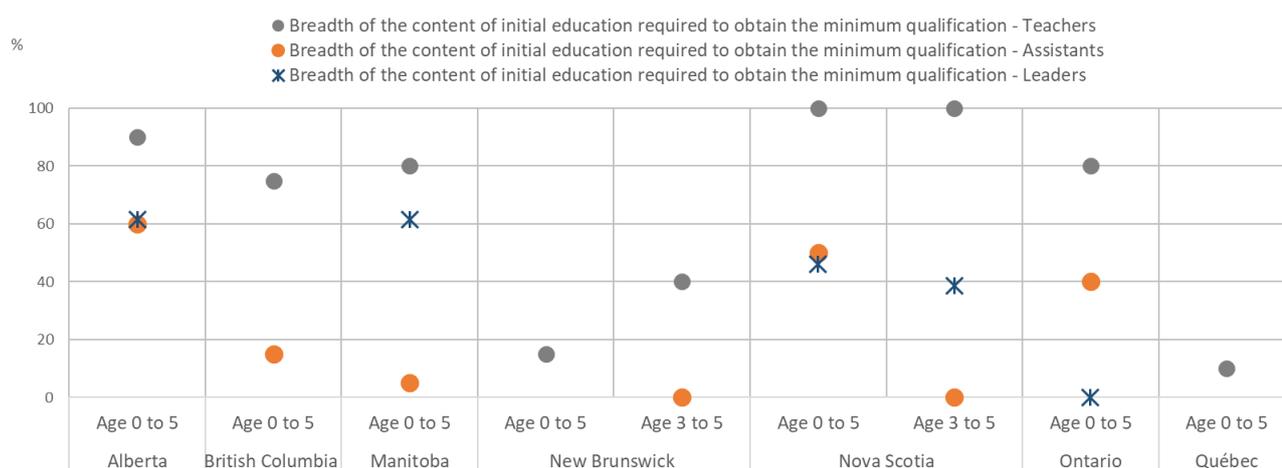
Notes: *Breath of the content of initial education required to obtain the minimum qualification* corresponds to the percentage of content areas required to obtain the minimum qualification among the 20 considered areas that can be grouped into the following categories: child development; child health; curriculum and pedagogy; playful learning; classroom management; diversity; transitions; and family and community engagement. For jurisdictions with multiple settings within an age group, the indicator represents the average across settings in that age group. Data are missing or not available for the following provinces: Nunavut, Saskatchewan and Yukon.
Source: OECD *Quality beyond Regulations* database.

Regarding qualification requirements for leaders, most provinces and territories have specific requirements. For example, in **New Brunswick**, leaders must hold the highest level of certification issued by the jurisdiction. In **Nova Scotia**, leaders are required to hold at least an International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) Level 5 degree, or have completed an approved programme for recognition of prior learning to meet the qualification required. Other jurisdictions require a minimum of years of experience. Further qualification requirements are not common. One exception is in **Manitoba**, in which leaders are required to complete a post-diploma specialisation, covering topics related to leadership and administration. In other jurisdictions, such as **Québec**, there are no specific requirements for leaders.

Table 1. Requirement on the inclusion of a practicum and recognition of prior learning: Canada

2019

	Provinces	Age groups	Teachers	Assistants	Leaders
Practicum required for staff, Canada	Alberta	Age 0 to 5	Yes	No	
	British Columbia	Age 0 to 5	Yes	No	
	Manitoba	Age 0 to 5	Yes	No	
	New Brunswick	Age 0 to 5	No	a	
		Age 3 to 5	Yes	No	
	Nova Scotia	Age 0 to 5	Yes	Yes	
		Age 3 to 5	Yes	a	
	Nunavut	Age 0 to 5	No	a	
		Age 3 to 5	No	a	
	Ontario	Age 0 to 5	Yes	No	
	Québec	Age 0 to 5	a	a	
		Age 3 to 5	m	a	
	Saskatchewan	Age 0 to 5	a	a	
		Age 3 to 5	a	a	
	Yukon	Age 0 to 5	a	a	
		Age 3 to 5	a	a	
Percentage of settings with practicum required for staff, all countries and jurisdictions			34%	3%	
Recognition of prior learning to meet qualification requirement, Canada	Alberta	Age 0 to 5			a
	British Columbia	Age 0 to 5			a
	Manitoba	Age 0 to 5			No
	New Brunswick	Age 0 to 5			No
		Age 3 to 5			m
	Nova Scotia	Age 0 to 5			Yes
		Age 3 to 5			No
	Nunavut	Age 0 to 5			m
		Age 3 to 5			m
	Ontario	Age 0 to 5			Yes
	Québec	Age 0 to 5			a
		Age 3 to 5			a
	Saskatchewan	Age 0 to 5			a
		Age 3 to 5			m
	Yukon	Age 0 to 5			a
		Age 3 to 5			a
Percentage of settings recognising prior learning to meet qualification requirement, all countries and jurisdictions					6%

Notes: Values of percentage of settings are taken over 108 settings included in the database.

Grey cells: Information not asked for this category of staff.

"a" = Information not available.

"m" = Information missing.

Source: OECD *Quality beyond Regulations* database.

Professional development

In several jurisdictions, staff participation in professional development is required. In some provinces and territories, a minimum of hours of professional development is set, while in others, some of the content of professional development is also regulated. For example, in **New Brunswick** and **Nova Scotia**, ECEC teachers must complete a minimum number of hours of professional development to renew their certification. In these provinces, the required professional development must be aligned with the curriculum framework. In **Nova Scotia**, a provincial committee on leadership is responsible for approving and delivering professional development for both staff and leaders. Opportunities must be aligned with the principles and practices of the curriculum framework. In **Nova Scotia** and **Québec**, professional development is also required for home-based ECEC providers. In Québec, for home–based providers, in addition to a minimum of annual hours of professional development, for half of the required hours, content must be related to child development and the educational programme.

Recent efforts to improve the design, content and delivery of professional development include partnerships involving stakeholders. For example, in **Alberta**, the collaboration among faculty from publicly-funded post-secondary institutions has led to greater alignment in various initiatives, including the development of communities of practice. In **New Brunswick**, partnerships involving several stakeholders, such as post-secondary institutions and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, have also resulted in the development of communities of practice aiming to provide opportunities for reflection and joint discussion among staff. In **British Columbia**, assistants are also required to complete a minimum of hours in recognised professional development programmes. In some jurisdictions, specific contents are also regulated.

ECEC staff are given time reserved for activities separate from direct contact with children so they can participate in training in **Alberta**, **New Brunswick**, **Nova Scotia** and **Québec**. In addition, support for professional development is provided through several means, including funding. For example, in **Alberta**, funding is available to cover costs associated with tuitions, materials and attendance of conferences or workshops. In **Québec**, funding is provided directly to ECEC settings that are responsible for defining types of professional development based on specific needs. Other types of support are in-kind, for instance, through the availability of consultants that collaborate with settings in quality improvement initiatives, or through the development of tools to facilitate access to professional development, such as in the case of **Manitoba**, in which an online platform containing several resources is freely available to staff.

Figure 3. Protected time for activities without children: Canada

2019
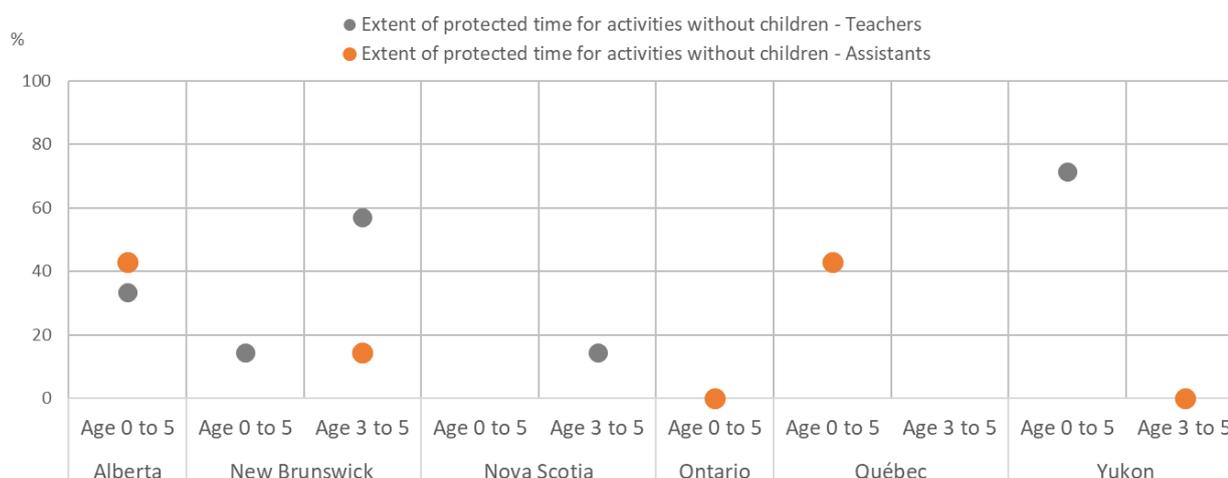
Notes: *Extent of protected time* corresponds to the percentage of tasks for which there is protected time among the seven following tasks, namely: individual planning or preparing play and/or learning activities; collaborating and speaking with colleagues and parents or guardians within the ECEC setting; documenting children's development, well-being and learning; participating in the ECEC setting management, staff meetings and general administrative work (including communication, paperwork and other clerical duties); attending professional development activities; reflecting on work; laundry, tidying-up, cleaning, shopping or cooking. For jurisdictions with multiple settings within an age group, the indicator represents the average across settings in that age group. Data are missing or not available for the following provinces: British Columbia, Manitoba, Nunavut, Saskatchewan and Yukon.
Source: OECD *Quality beyond Regulations* database.

Regarding professional development opportunities for leaders, in many provinces and territories, leaders have professional development opportunities through networking, which is mainly facilitated through non-governmental professional ECEC organisations. In **British Columbia**, the Early Years Professional Development Hub has been recently developed with the aim of providing large-scale online professional development opportunities.

The assessment of professional development needs and barriers to participation is not regulated in most jurisdictions, except in **Ontario**, in which the College of Early Childhood Educators regulates professional development through individual professional learning plans. Also, in **Québec**, the identification and assessment of professional development needs for home-based ECEC providers are regulated and under the responsibility of one committee, the Development and Continuing Education Committee, which is funded by the government.

Working conditions

Across jurisdictions, staff working conditions are not addressed in specific regulations, although career progression opportunities are a common practice in **Nova Scotia**. In some provinces, such as **Nova Scotia** and **Québec**, recognition of prior learning is available for staff to achieve higher qualifications, which can contribute to career progression and salary increases. In **Yukon**, after consulting community partners who have identified access barriers to initial education programmes, several initiatives were put in place to increase the likelihood of higher qualifications of staff, such as bringing university staff to communities and increasing the online course offer.

In recent years, several surveys funded by governments, federations or councils, have been conducted on workforce issues, namely recruitment, retention, job satisfaction and well-being in the workplace. In general, findings show recruiting and retaining qualified staff as one of the most pressing challenges across jurisdictions. An ageing workforce is pointed to as one of the reasons for staff shortages, but also the low job satisfaction with respect to professional recognition, wages, benefits and working conditions (OECD, 2019[2]). An additional challenge that has contributed to a shortage of qualified staff in the ECEC sector is the continuous recruitment, over past decades, by the public education system of ECEC teachers to work as education or classroom assistants. The difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified staff are likely to affect the efforts to expand access to ECEC.

Monitoring and data

Governance of monitoring

Responsibilities for monitoring ECEC quality in Canada are shared between provincial and territorial governments and individual ECEC settings. Provinces and territories are in charge of developing regulatory frameworks for licensing and monitoring, which define minimum requirements for structural quality in settings (e.g. physical space, group sizes, staff-child ratios for different age groups and settings and workforce composition). These regulations are similar in all provinces and are monitored through licensing inspections, which occur at regular intervals (annual or biannual). All provinces regularly monitor certain aspects of structural quality that are key for the quality of interactions in ECEC settings. For example, as already discussed, most provinces require a minimum number of hours of professional development for ECEC staff. Apart from licensing inspections, most aspects of quality monitoring take place at the setting level and are not mandatory. Within centre-based settings, leaders are responsible for regulatory compliance, including financial reporting for public funding.

Monitoring of process quality and curriculum implementation

Provinces have developed different mechanisms to ensure process quality in ECEC settings, although not all provinces monitor process quality directly. Some provinces developed monitoring tools that are aligned with concepts from their own curricula. For example, in **New Brunswick**'s Anglophone sector, an assessment tool highlights practices that describe the curriculum framework in action. This aims to support staff's reflective practice and provide them with concrete examples of interactions with children. In the French-speaking sector, a similar tool allows staff to self-reflect and then be evaluated to identify strengths and challenges in their practices. In **Québec**, the evaluation of process quality takes place through the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), along with interviews for ECEC setting leaders and staff as well as questionnaires for parents. Monitored areas include interactions between staff and children, and staff and parents; the nature and variety of the activities offered to children; and the physical structure and materials that surround them. Recently, **Québec** has introduced legislation to make this assessment mandatory for all ECEC settings.

Some provinces also directly monitor the implementation of their curriculum frameworks. For example, monitoring of curriculum implementation takes place at least once a year and is mandatory in **New Brunswick** for the two frameworks covering children aged 0 to 5. In the English-speaking sector, the breadth of interactions monitored includes interactions among children, between children and materials, and between ECEC staff and children. In the French-speaking sector, the same interactions are monitored, and in addition, interactions between ECEC staff and parents are included. In New Brunswick, methods used for monitoring curriculum implementation include inspections, staff self-assessment/evaluation and portfolios. In this province, portfolios serve to document ECEC staff's reflections and pedagogical learning journeys.

Continuous quality improvement processes are also in place in some provinces, including **Alberta, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick** and **Québec**. For example, Nova Scotia has an initiative in place that evaluates ECEC settings' compliance with regulations and the quality of the programme, including implementation of the curriculum framework and different areas of process quality. This process takes place through the completion of a self-assessment tool and the development of a quality improvement plan by the centre.

While some provinces have experience in regularly monitoring process quality and curriculum implementation, other provinces do not systematically evaluate it. To ensure high-quality interactions across provinces, it is important to collaborate in developing monitoring systems and tools that capture relevant dimensions of process quality and inform quality support systems.

Table 2. Monitoring curriculum implementation: Canada

2019

Mandatory external monitoring of curricula	Alberta	Flight: Alberta's early learning and care	No
	British Columbia	Early learning framework	No
	Manitoba	Early Returns: Manitoba's early learning and child care curriculum framework for infant programs	No
		Early Returns: Manitoba's early learning and child care curriculum frameworks for preschool centres and nursery schools	No
	New Brunswick	Curriculum maternelle	No
		Curriculum éducatif services de garde francophone du Nouveau-Brunswick	Yes
		Kindergarten curriculum	No
		New Brunswick Curriculum framework for early learning and child care - English	Yes
	Nova Scotia	Capable, Confident and Curious: Nova Scotia's early learning curriculum framework	No
	Ontario	How does learning happen? Ontario's pedagogy for the early years	Yes
	Québec	Accueillir la petite enfance	No
	Saskatchewan	Essential learning experiences	No
		Play and exploration for infants and toddlers: Early learning program guide	No

Source: OECD *Quality beyond Regulations* database.

What is the *Quality beyond Regulations* project and how does it apply in Canada?

The *Quality beyond Regulations* policy review was initiated to support countries and jurisdictions to better understand the different dimensions of quality in early childhood education and care, focusing on process quality in particular. The first phase of the project culminated in a literature review and meta-analysis of the links between different dimensions of quality and children's learning, development and well-being, published under the title *Engaging Young Children* (OECD, 2018[3]).

The second phase of the project builds on this research base to address the overarching question: How can policies enhance process quality and child development and what are good examples of these policies? To address this question, countries in the OECD's Early Childhood Education and Care Network were invited to share information on relevant policies by completing a questionnaire. Twenty-six countries responded to this invitation, resulting in a rich database of information on ECEC systems around the world and their efforts to promote high-quality ECEC as of the year 2019.

In addition, six countries (Australia, Canada, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg and Switzerland) participated in the *Quality beyond Regulations* project by completing in-depth country background reports. These reports were undertaken by national governments, as well as provincial governments in Canada. The reports were

based on a common framework developed by the OECD to facilitate comparative analysis and maximise the opportunities for countries and jurisdictions to learn from each other. The country background reports are complementary to the information collected in the policy questionnaire, and together, these two sources provide the data for the main analyses presented in this publication.

This note builds on information provided by Canada through the policy questionnaire and its country background report as well as other international databases (i.e. the OECD Education at a Glance database). In the policy questionnaire, Canada reported information on curriculum frameworks and ECEC settings across provinces and territories as presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 3. ECEC settings included in the *Quality beyond Regulations* questionnaire: Canada

Province or territory	Setting	Actual ages covered	Standardised age group covered (Age range)
Alberta	Approved family day homes	Infants, toddlers, pre-school aged, and school-aged children	Integrated for age 0 to 5/primary school entry
	Day care	Infants less than 12 months – 5 years	
	Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Centres ($25/day pilot program)	Infants less than 12 months – 5 years	
	Pre-school	19 months – 5 years	
British Columbia	Family Child Care	0-12 years	Integrated for age 0 to 5/primary school entry
	Group Care	Under 36 months; 30 months – 5 years; school age	
	In-Home Multi-Age Child Care	0-12 years	
	Multi-Age Child Care	0-12 years	
	Pre-school	30 months – 5 years	
Manitoba	Infant Early Learning and Child Care	12 weeks – 2 years	Age 0 to 2
	Nursery School	12 weeks – 6 years	Integrated for age 0 to 5/primary school entry
	Preschool Early Learning and Child Care	2-5 years	Age 3 to 5/primary school entry
New Brunswick	Early learning and childcare facilities/Garderie éducative	Infants – 12 years	Integrated for age 0 to 5/primary school entry
	Kindergarten/Maternelle	From age 5 prior to 31 December	Age 3 to 5/primary school entry
Nova Scotia	Centre-based	0-12 years	Integrated for age 0 to 5/primary school entry
	Family Home		
	Pre-primary	from 4 years	Age 3 to 5/primary school entry
Nunavut	Daycare	0-6 years	Integrated for age 0 to 5/primary school entry
	Family Day Home	0-12 years	
	Preschool	3-5 years	Age 3 to 5/primary school entry
Ontario	EarlyON Child and Family Centres	0-6 years	Integrated for age 0 to 5/primary school entry
	Licensed child care centres	0-12 years	
	Licensed home child care agencies/providers		
Québec	Childcare centre (CPE)	0-4 years	Integrated for age 0 to 5/primary school entry
	Daycare centre		
	Home childcare services	0-4 years	
	Maternelle	4-5 years	Age 3 to 5/primary school entry
Saskatchewan	Licensed Child Care Facilities	0-12 years	Integrated for age 0 to 5/primary school entry
	PreKindergarten	3-4 years	Age 3 to 5/primary school entry
Yukon	Child Care Centre Program	0-12 years	Integrated for age 0 to 5/primary school entry
	Family Day Home Program		
	School Age Program	grade 1 to 12 years	Age 3 to 5/primary school entry

Source: OECD *Quality beyond Regulations* database.

Table 4. Curriculum frameworks included in the *Quality beyond Regulations* questionnaire: Canada

Province or territory	Name of the curriculum framework	Standardised age group covered (Age range)
Alberta	Flight: Alberta's Early Learning and Care Framework	Integrated for age 0 to 5/primary school entry
British Columbia	Early Learning Framework	Integrated for age 0 to 5/primary school entry
Manitoba	Early Returns: Manitoba's Early Learning and Child Care Curriculum Framework for Infant Programs	Age 0 to 2
	Early Returns: Manitoba's Early Learning and Child Care Curriculum Framework for Preschool Centres and Nursery Schools	Age 3 to 5/primary school entry
New Brunswick	*Curriculum maternelle*	Age 3 to 5/primary school entry
	Curriculum éducatif Services de garde francophone du Nouveau-Brunswick	Integrated for age 0 to 5/primary school entry
	Kindergarten Curriculum	Age 3 to 5/primary school entry
	New Brunswick Curriculum Framework for Early Learning and Child Care -English	Integrated for age 0 to 5/primary school entry
Nova Scotia	Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework	Integrated for age 0 to 5/primary school entry
Ontario	How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years	Integrated for age 0 to 5/primary school entry
Québec	*Accueillir la petite enfance*	Integrated for age 0 to 5/primary school entry
Saskatchewan	Essential Learning Experiences	Age 3 to 5/primary school entry
	Play and Exploration for Infants and Toddlers: Early Learning Program Guide	Age 0 to 2

Source: OECD *Quality beyond Regulations* database.

In the *Quality beyond Regulations* project, the term "teachers" refers to the individuals with the most responsibility for a group of children at the class- or playroom-level. They may also be called pedagogues, educators, childcare practitioners or pedagogical staff. The term "assistants" refers to ECEC staff whose role is to provide support to the teachers or lead staff member with a group of children. The term "leader" refers to the person who has the most responsibility for administrative, managerial and/or pedagogical leadership at the ECEC centres. In Canada, the "teacher" category corresponds to educators or home-based providers, and other staff are included in the "assistant" category.

References

Akbari, E. and K. McCuaig (2018), *Early Childhood Education Report 2017*, http://ecereport.ca/media/uploads/2017-report-pdfs/ece-report2017-en-feb6.pdf. [1]

OECD (2019), *Good Practice for Good Jobs in Early Childhood Education and Care*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/64562be6-en. [2]

OECD (2018), *Engaging Young Children: Lessons from Research about Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care*, Starting Strong, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264085145-en. [3]