



Reflecting on Progress

Shaping the Future of Early Childhood Education

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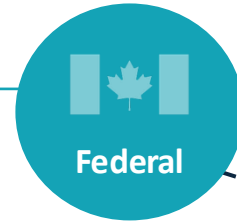
The Atkinson Centre
for Society and Child Development
OISE | University of Toronto

New Brunswick, July 2026

Early Years Governance

Federal Government

Provides funding and negotiates access and affordability targets.



Local
economy

Ministry Responsible

Responsible for legislation, policy direction, and funding.



Equity &
inclusion

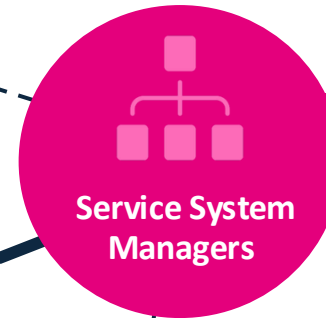
Geography

Regional
planning

Workforce
availability

47 Service System Managers (Ontario)

Responsible for planning, management, implementation, and accountability of Ministry policy and funding within their regions.



Partnerships

Training
access

Early Years Programs

Service delivery agents.

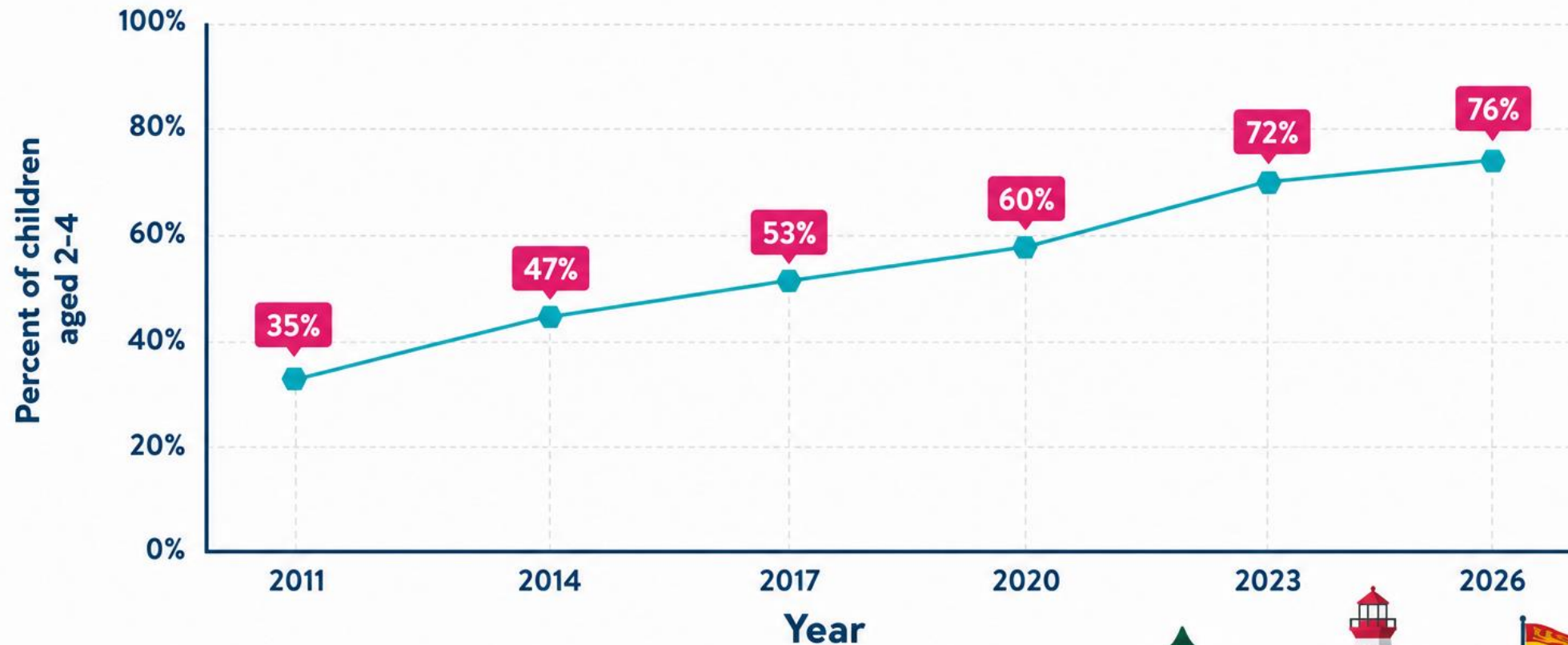


New Brunswick

Child Care Capacity for 2-4 Year Olds

ECER 2026
Early Childhood Education Report

Percent of children aged 2-4 with access to regulated child care spaces.



Source: Early Childhood Education Report,
Atkinson Centre of Society and Child Development.

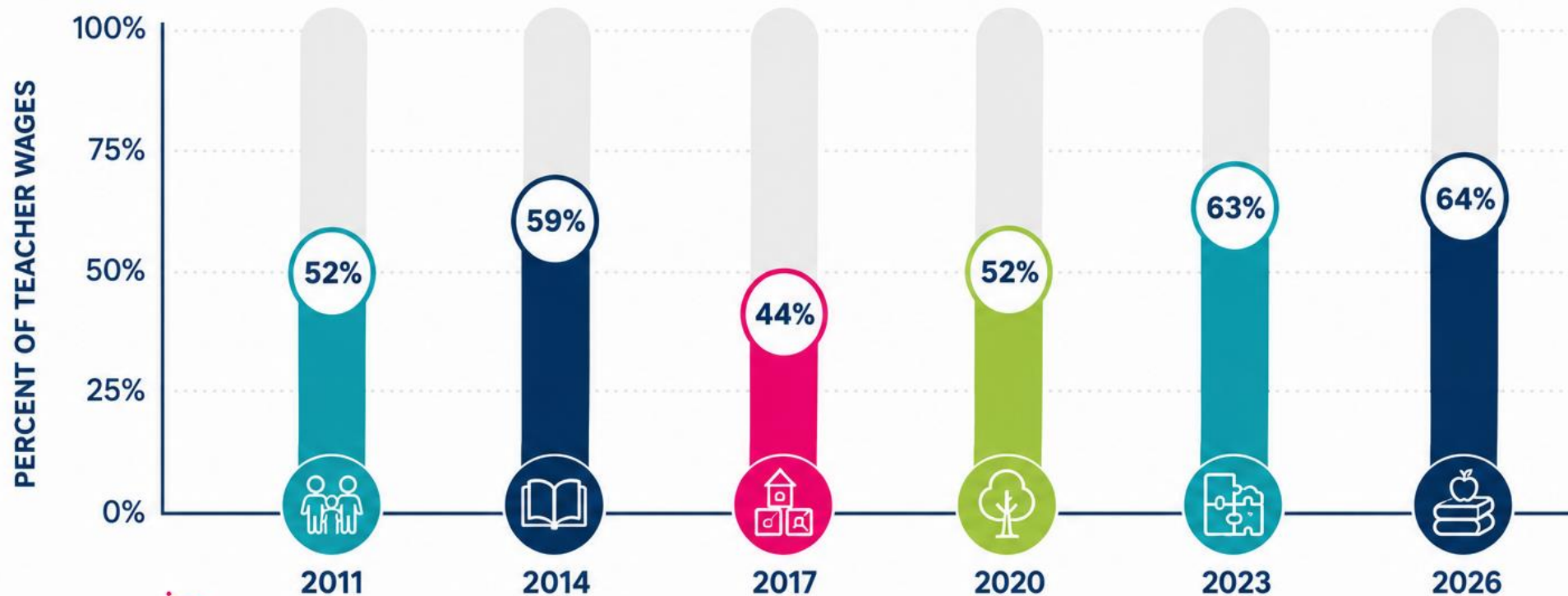


ECE WAGES AS A PERCENT OF TEACHER WAGES

ECER 2026

Early Childhood Education Report

NEW BRUNSWICK

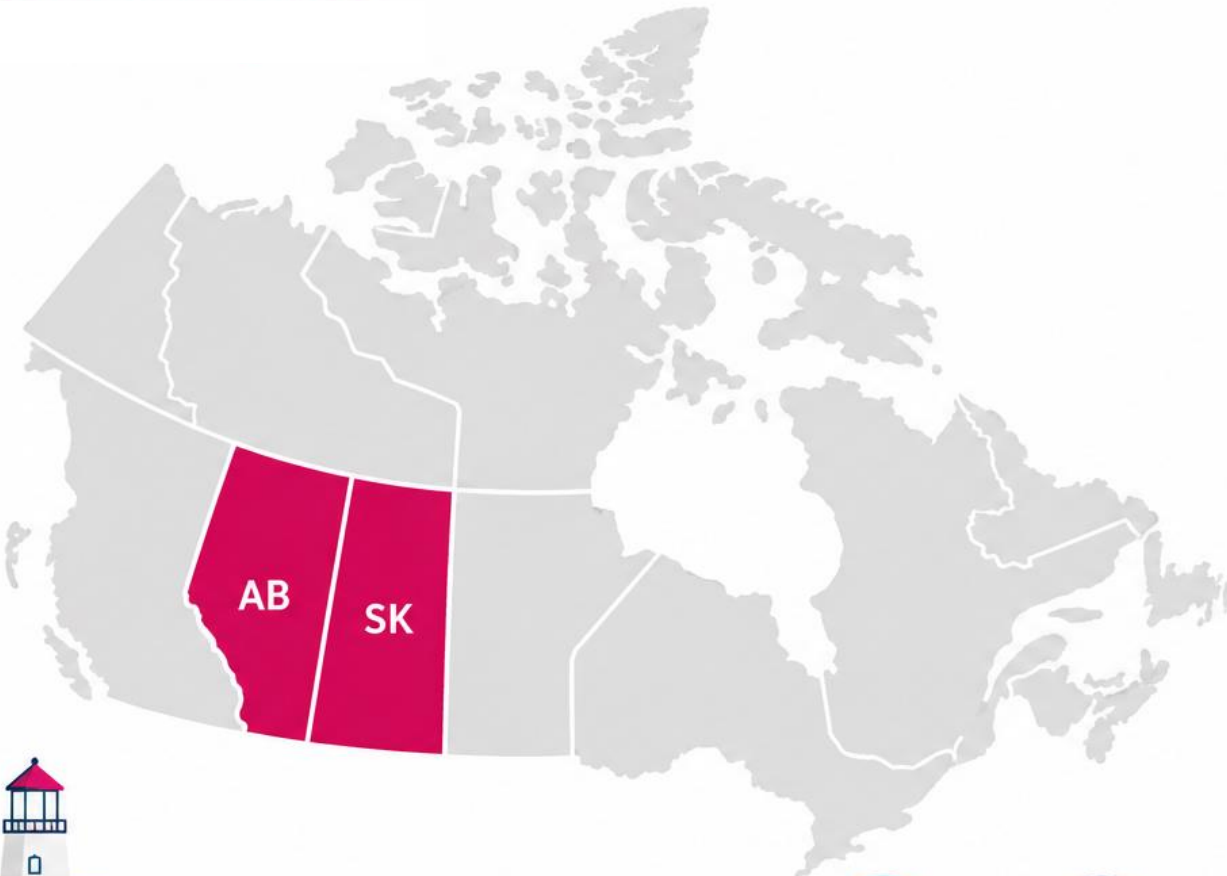


Source: Early Childhood Education Report,
Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development.

Provinces That Have Removed Low Income Parent Fee Subsidies

ECER 2026

Early Childhood Education Report



Alberta & Saskatchewan

Have removed low income parent fee subsidies.



Without income-based subsidies, many families face higher costs and fewer choices. This is not equitable.



Source: Early Childhood Education Report, Atkinson Centre of Society and Child Development.

NEW BRUNSWICK (NB)

OUTDOOR & LAND-BASED EARLY LEARNING FRAMEWORK & REGULATORY SNAPSHOT



AT A GLANCE

OLB Content: **Limited**

Indigenous Content: **Limited**

NB has OLB content (only jurisdiction with any in guidelines). Indigenous content appears in citations and examples, not as explicit guidance.



REGULATIONS

Early Childhood Services Act – Early Learning & Childcare Regulation

- ✓ Outdoor play required daily and in all weather conditions.
- ✓ Language: “must ensure,” “shall provide,” “must maintain.”
- ✓ Some reference to health and safety requirements for outdoor play structures. No CSA Z614 named.



STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

Government / Quality Framework – Guidelines



Outdoor space requirements, maintenance, safety, and supervision emphasized.



The Minister may approve use of a curriculum based on Indigenous culture for designated facilities – this could support land-based learning approaches.



Safety standards frame outdoor environments as licensed spaces requiring upkeep and hazard control.



EARLY LEARNING FRAMEWORK

NB Curriculum Framework for Early Learning and Child Care



Outdoor & Land-Based Provisions

Outdoor play required daily and in all weather conditions.



EARLY LEARNING FRAMEWORK OUTDOOR PEDAGOGY HIGHLIGHTS



Be outdoors daily, in a range of weather conditions. Educators provide outdoor time and access to the natural world and wild places, and share in the joy at being outside.



Quality outdoor environments in home and centre-based care.



Healthy risk-taking, and quality outdoor play.



What materials are rotated through outdoor areas, and what activities are available in the outdoors?



Increased valuing of outdoor play and being in the outdoors.



INDIGENOUS CONTENT



- Mentions Indigenous languages of the region (Maliseet/Passamaquoddy) in citations.
- The Minister may approve use of a curriculum based on Indigenous culture for designated facilities, which could support land-based learning and Indigenous knowledge.
- Indigenous content appears in citations and examples rather than explicit program-level guidance.



KEY TAKEAWAY

The NB Curriculum Framework shows strong emphasis on pedagogy, children's rights, culture, and nature. Land-based and risky play concepts are present, though less extensively than BC or NWT. Regulation emphasizes compliance and operational standards, with both documents referencing outdoor play but not integrating land-based or Indigenous content strongly enough to constitute intentional OLB pedagogy.



NB IS UNIQUE

NB is the only jurisdiction in Canada with any OLB content in professional guidelines. Indigenous content is present but limited.



LIMITED, NOT SUBSTANTIVE

OLB competencies are touched upon but not defined, required, or embedded as core professional expectations. Indigenous content is similarly limited.

RISKY PLAY, RISK-BENEFIT, EDUCATOR TRAINING & SUPERVISION SUMMARY AT A GLANCE



Risky Play (Framework):

Present – “healthy risk-taking” explicitly referenced; one of few frameworks to name this.



Risk-Benefit (Regulation):

Absent – regulation focuses on maintenance, safety, and supervision; no risk-benefit framework.



Educator Training for OLB:

Limited – no OLB training requirements; guidelines have limited OLB content (only jurisdiction with any).



Outdoor Supervision:

Compliance-based – supervision and maintenance emphasized; outdoor space requirements and hazard control.

RISKY PLAY & RISK-BENEFIT ASSESSMENT



The Curriculum Framework explicitly references “healthy risk-taking, and quality outdoor play” – one of few jurisdictions to name this.



Positions outdoor environments as contexts for inquiry, participation, and challenge – consistent with a risk-benefit orientation.



Regulation contains no risk-benefit assessment framework. Supervision, maintenance, safety, and hazard control dominate regulatory language.



Educator Training & Professional Preparation for OLB

Only jurisdiction with any OLB content in guidelines, but far short of defined competency requirements. No OLB training, ecological literacy, or outdoor pedagogical competency requirement in regulation or quality framework.



Outdoor Supervision Requirements

Supervision and maintenance emphasized. Outdoor environments are licensed spaces requiring upkeep and hazard control. Standard field trip/excursion rules apply; no specialized supervision protocols for nature-based settings. Gap between framework's call for outdoor play in all weather conditions and regulation's hazard-control framing.



REFERENCE: Beverlie Dietze, Kelsey Robson, and Melanie Manitowabi. *An Environmental Scan of Outdoor and Land-Based Early Learning in Canada: Evidence, Policy Gaps, and Recommendations for Action*. July 2026. Toronto: Lawson Foundation. Available at <https://lawson.ca/OLBEnvScan/>

Care Is a Public Good:

Transcending Market Boundaries to Build Equitable Early Childhood Education Systems



Across Canada,
policy choices
determine
who benefits.

ECEC is strongest when it is treated as a public good—funded publicly, managed responsibly, and accountable to children and communities.

WHY IT MATTERS



Shapes access, quality,
inclusion and workforce stability



Ensures accountability
for public investment



Advances children's rights
and equity



Protects public dollars
for the public good



Builds trust in our
public systems

THE RISK: PUBLIC DOLLARS IN PRIVATE HANDS



PUBLIC
INVESTMENT



PUBLIC DOLLARS
IN PRIVATE HANDS



PROFITS PRIORITIZED
OVER PUBLIC GOOD



- Less public accountability
- Funds leave communities
- Pressure on wages and quality
- Inequitable outcomes for children and families

CANADA: DIFFERENT PATHS, DIFFERENT RESULTS



Comparing provinces and territories helps us
learn what works—so we can build stronger
systems for every child, everywhere.

WHAT STRONG PUBLIC SYSTEMS DELIVER



More access
for families



Stable, supported
workforce



High-quality
learning
environments



Inclusive
communities



Stronger public
trust and value

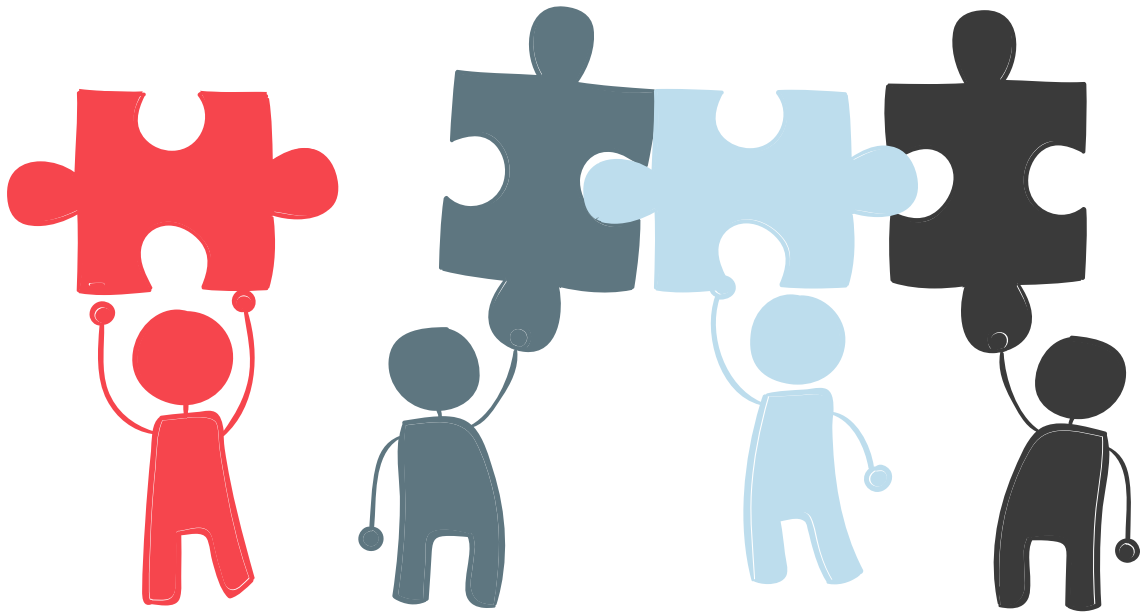
A photograph of a woman and a young girl sitting at a table, smiling and painting. The woman is on the left, wearing a light blue shirt, and the girl is on the right, wearing a white patterned dress. They are surrounded by various paint containers and brushes. The background is slightly blurred, showing a home environment.

Evidence Informed Mentorship Framework

Shared Visions, Shared Objectives



Better Together
For Early Years



Project Summary

- This year 12 Service System Managers from 12 Ontario communities have come together to develop an implementation-ready, mentorship framework for the ECE workforce
- Grounded in the shared need to build capacity for mentorship within the ECE workforce, exploring evaluation of promising practices, and developing a proposed framework to support program decisions
- Many mentorship 'packages' exist. What are the factors that research shows makes mentorship effective and how can we monitor the impact?



THANK

YOU

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