

Who is Building Canada's Child Care?

CWELCC by the numbers

2021

Launch of the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) Plam

$27 Billion

In federal funding over five years

2031

Year agreements extended, except Alberta and Ontario

$10-a-day

Child care fees

$5.8 Billion

Added 2027-29

250.000

New public/non-profit spaces

Canada Early Learning and Child Care Act (2025) directs funding "in particular" to public and non-profit operators

Yet for-profit providers accounted for 66% of net new spaces and 65% of net new child-care facilities between 2022 and 2026



Source: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), Childcare Licensing and Accessibility by Region (CLAR) Database



New centre-based spaces for children 0-5 Years by Type of Ownership, 2022–2026

135,114

New spaces

65.8%



For-profit

Note: Non-profit operators includes co-operatives, Indigenous governing bodies, municipalities, non-profit organizations, public post-secondary institutions, and school boards. Excludes home child care. Part-time preschool spaces are prorated at 0.5 (i.e., two part-time spaces are counted as one full-time equivalent space). All totals are rounded to the nearest whole number. Figures represent net change between Q4 2022 and Q1 2026.

Source: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), Childcare Licensing and Accessibility by Region (CLAR) Database



% new facilities by ownership 2022-2026

CANADA-WIDE

2,568

New facilities

64.6%



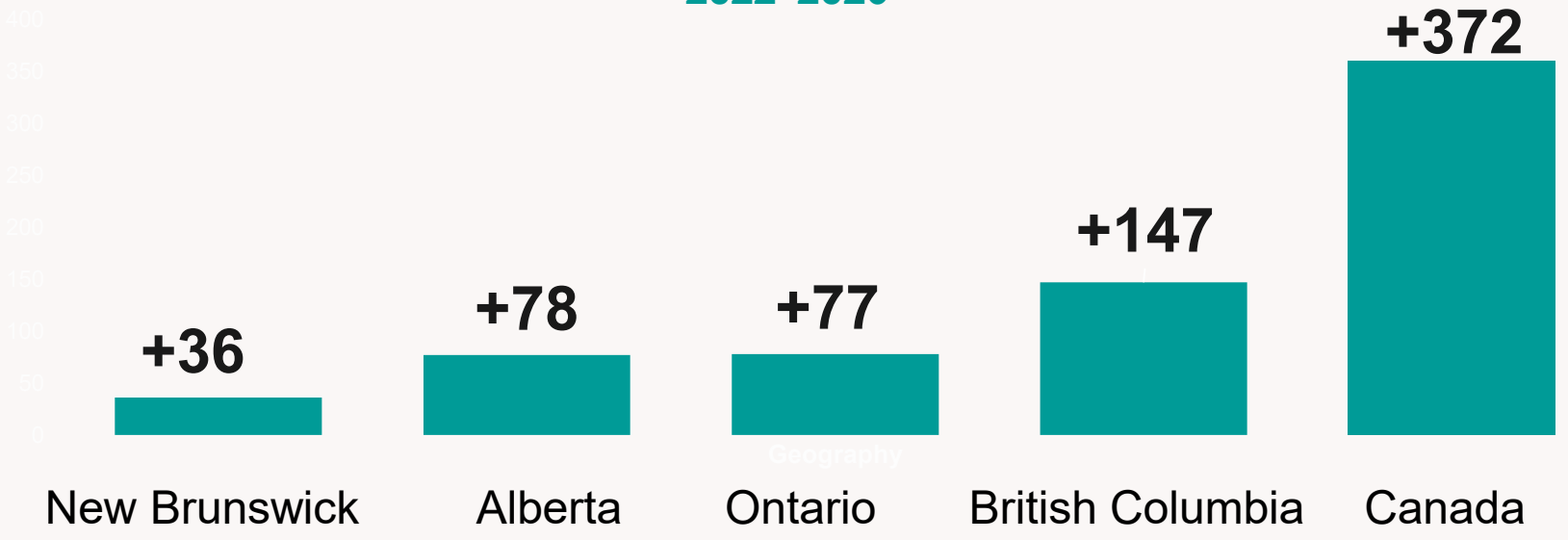
For-profit owned

CLAR 2026:

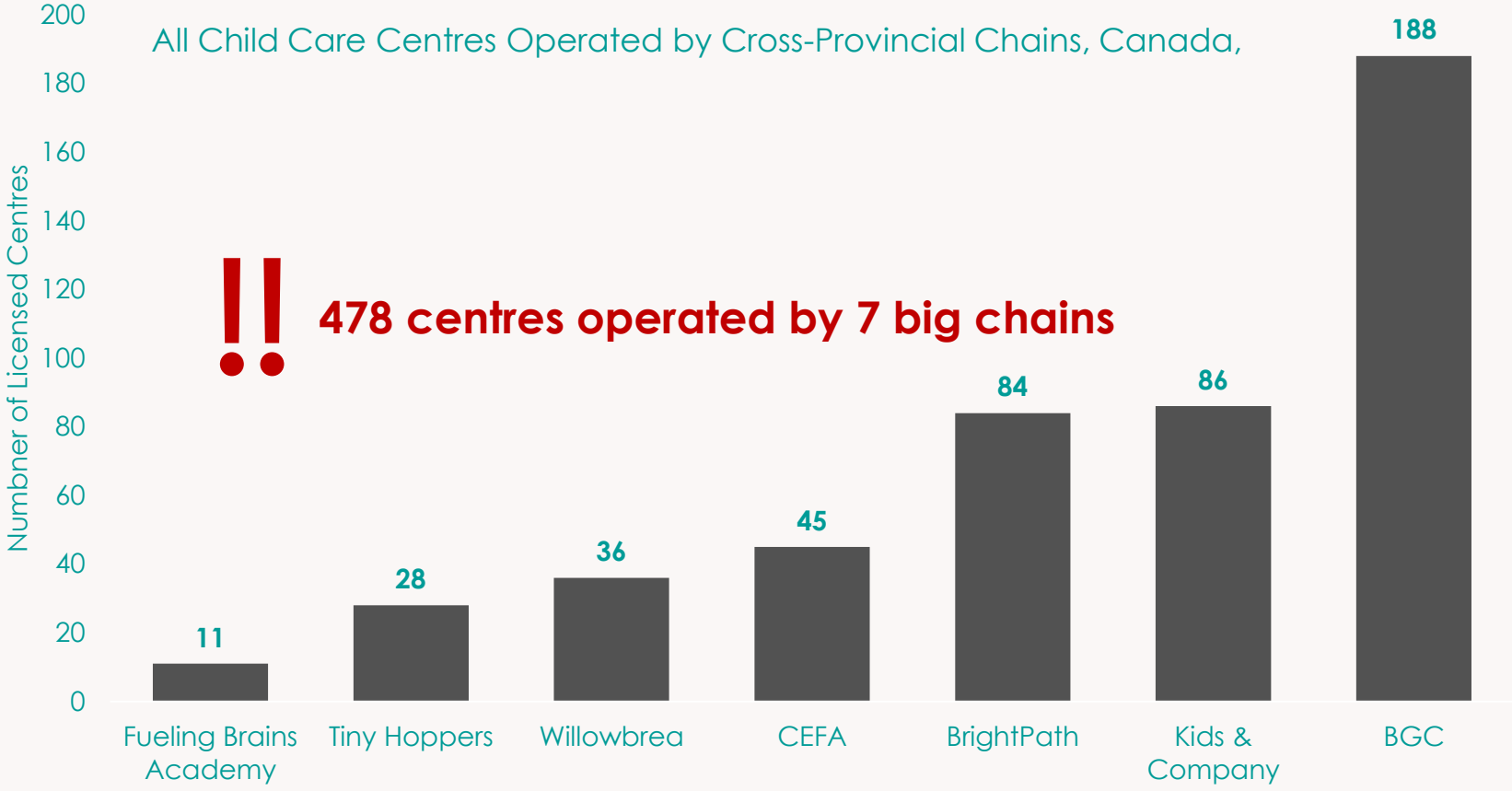
Note: Non-Profit facilities include co-operatives, Indigenous governing bodies, municipalities, non-profit organizations, public post-secondary institutions, and school boards. Excludes home child care. A **facility** refers to an individual licensed child care centre. Figures represent net change between Q4 2022 and Q1 2026.

Large chains driving for-profit growth

New For-Profit Child Care Centre Growth by Chains with 6+ Locations, by Province
2022–2026

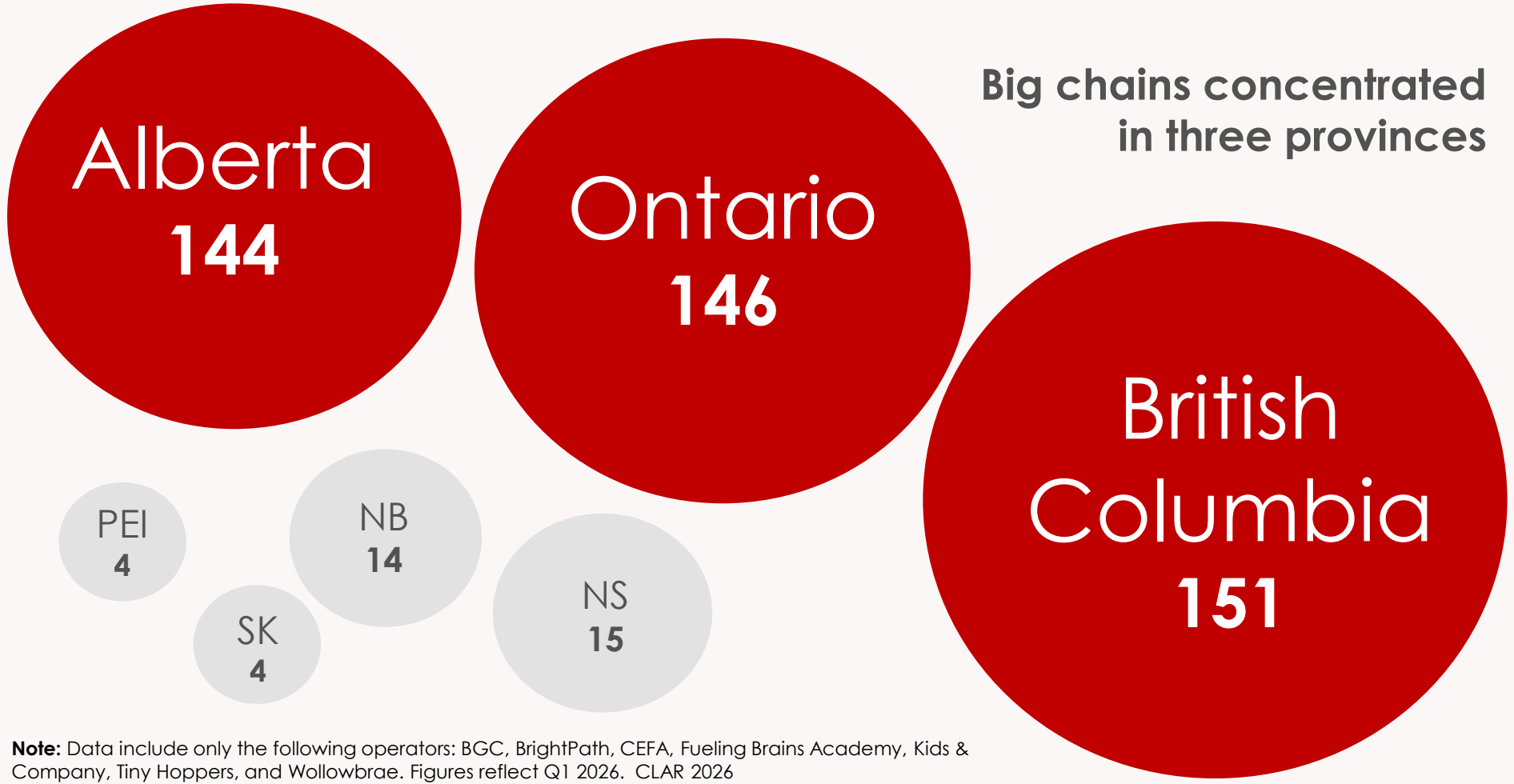


Child care chains with national presence



Note: Figures reflect CLAR Q1 2026 data.

All Child Care Centres Operated by Large National Chains, by Province, 2026

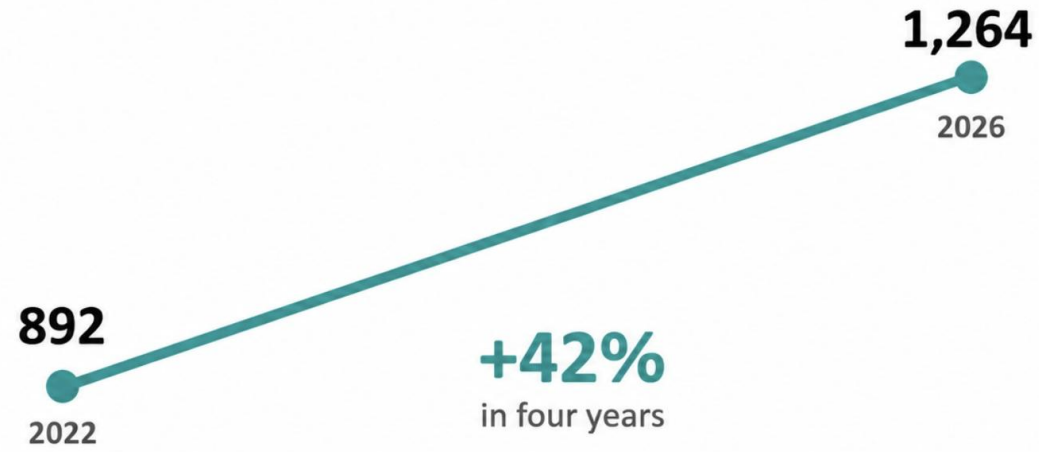


Big chains concentrated in three provinces

Note: Data include only the following operators: BGC, BrightPath, CEFA, Fueling Brains Academy, Kids & Company, Tiny Hoppers, and Wollowbrae. Figures reflect Q1 2026. CLAR 2026

Large for-profit child care chains are growing

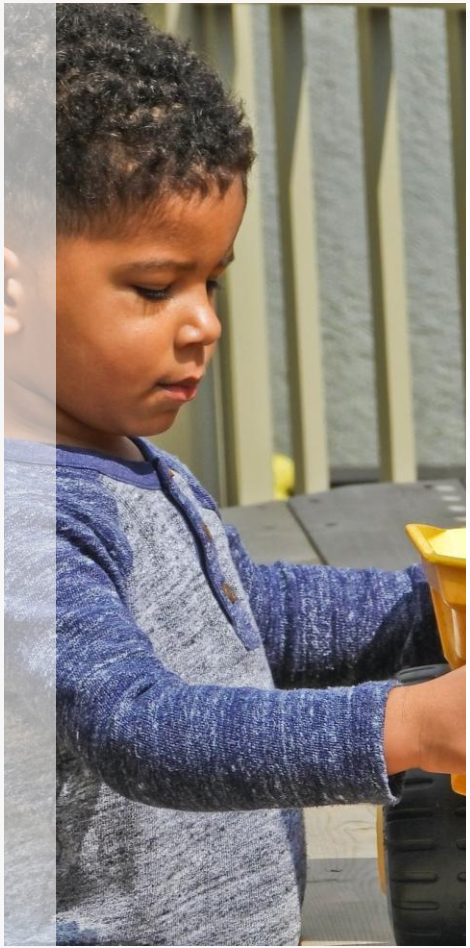
Licensed centres operated by chains with 6+ locations



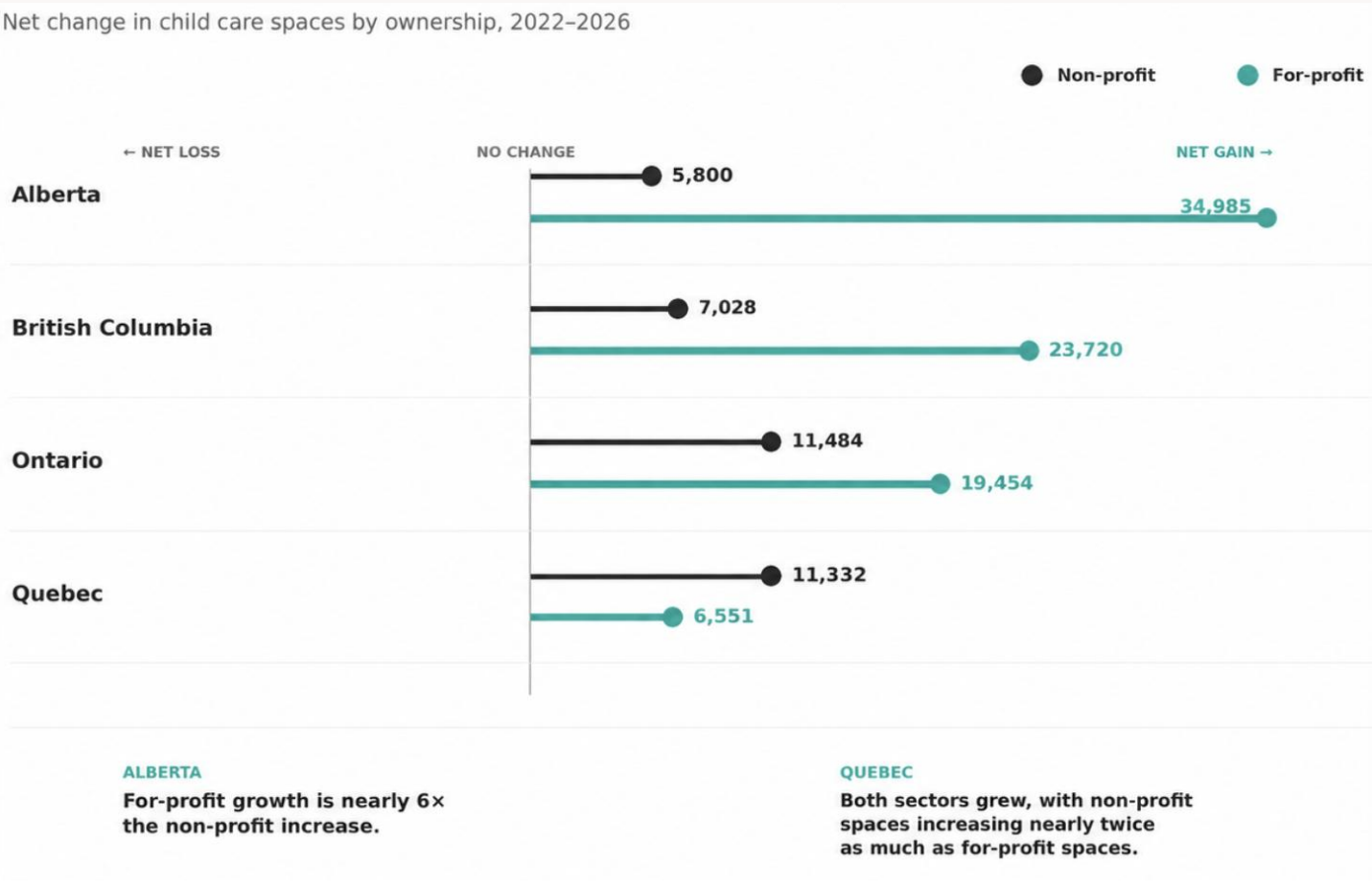
Large for-profit chains operated 360 more licensed child care centres in 2026 than in 2022.



The national story masks major provincial differences



Net change in child care spaces by ownership, 2022–2026



ALBERTA

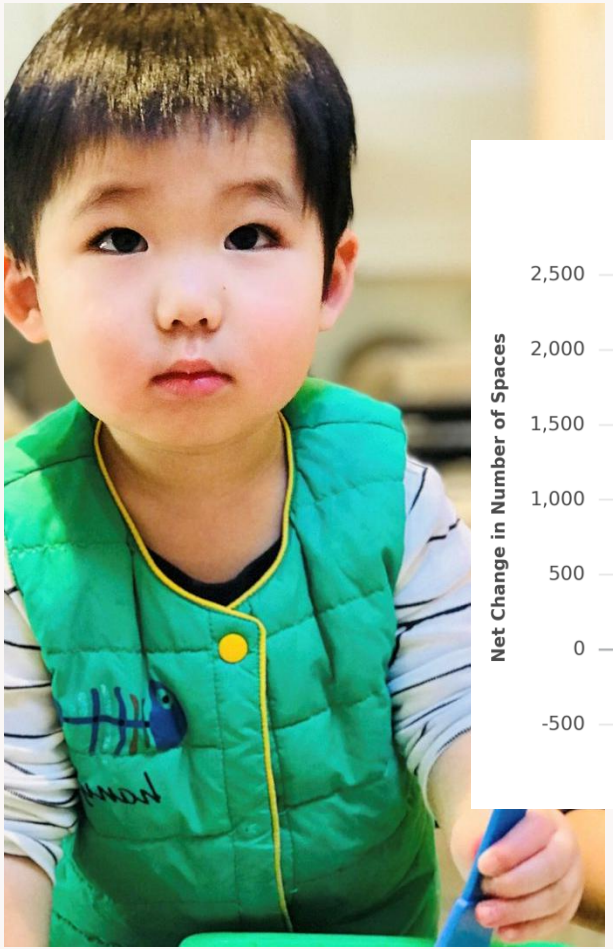
For-profit growth is nearly 6× the non-profit increase.

QUEBEC

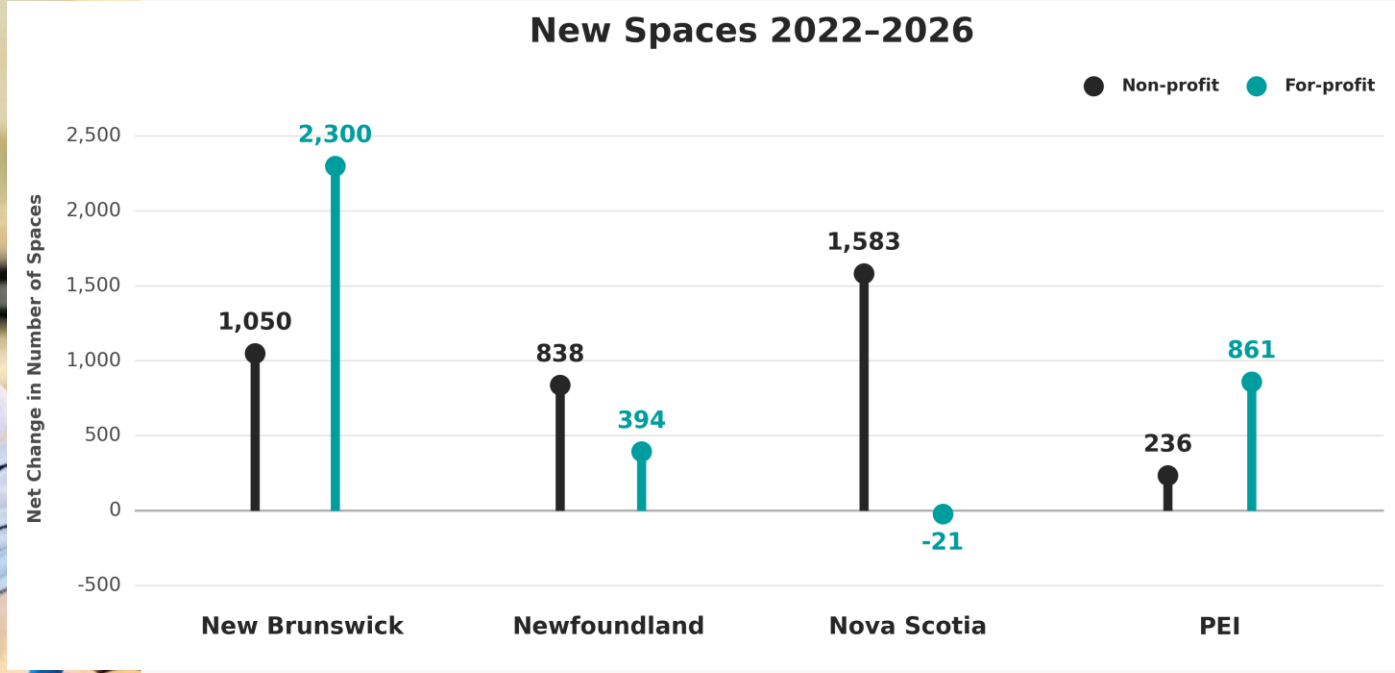
Both sectors grew, with non-profit spaces increasing nearly twice as much as for-profit spaces.

Bars show the net change in the number of spaces—not the total number of spaces.

Source: CLAR 2026

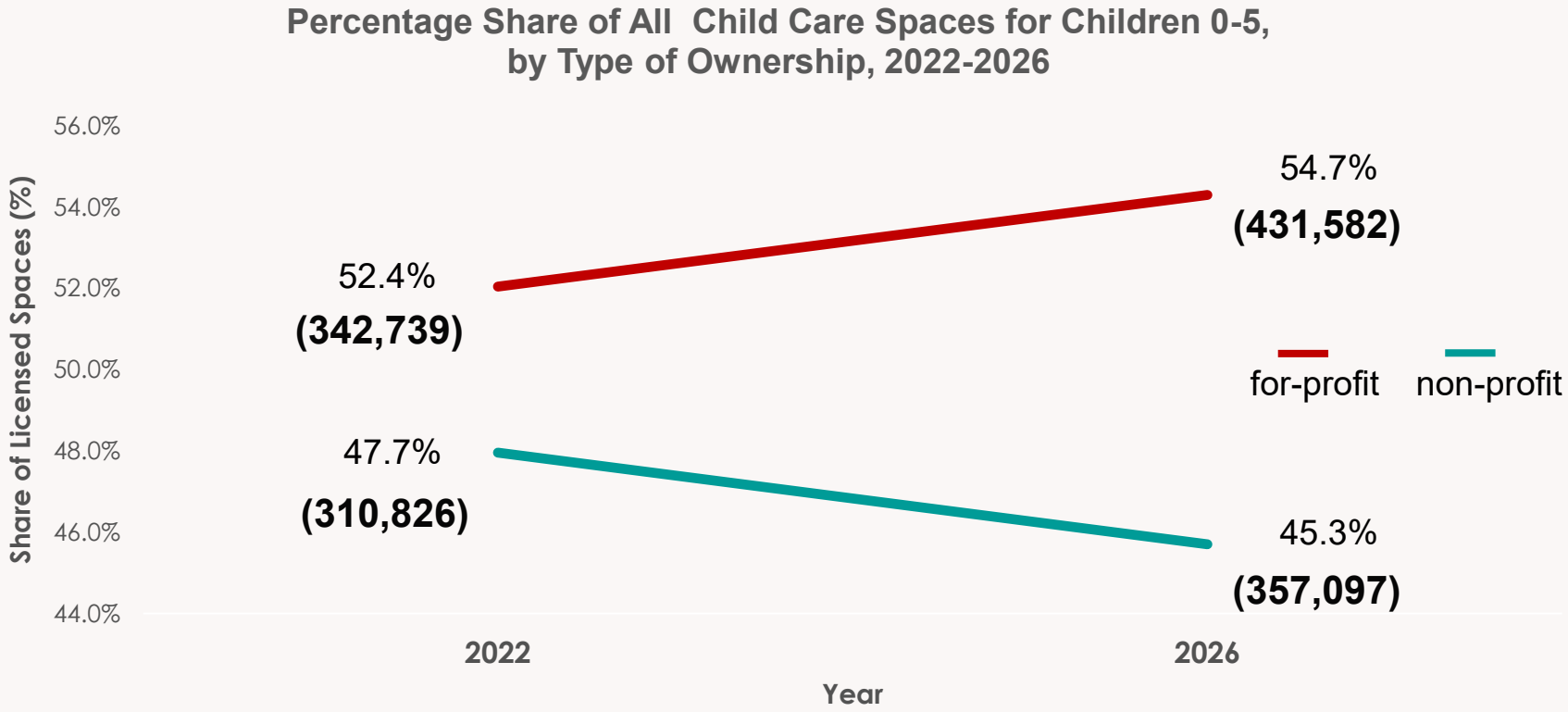


Patterns vary across Atlantic Canada



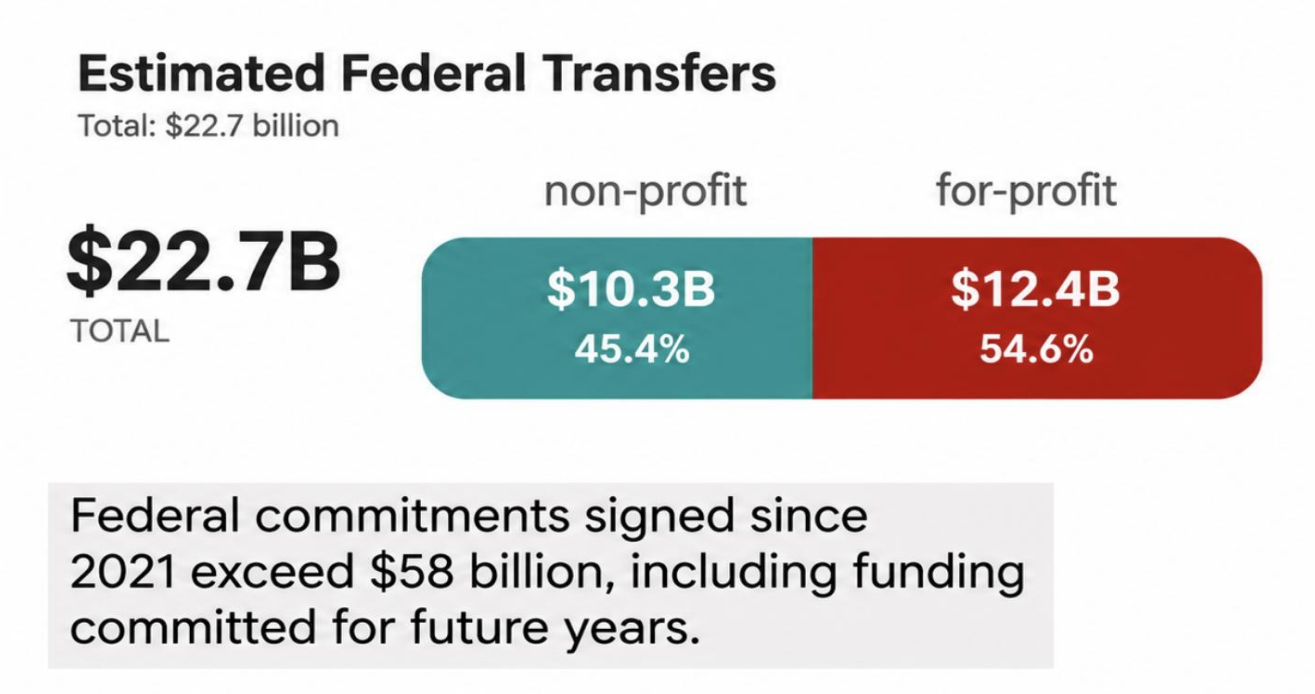
Source: CLAR 2026

The balance of provision is shifting



Non-Profit operators includes co-operatives, Indigenous governing bodies, municipalities, non-profit organizations, public post-secondary institutions, and school boards. Excludes home child care. Part-time preschool spaces are prorated at 0.5 (i.e., two part-time spaces are counted as one full-time equivalent space). All totals are rounded to the nearest whole number. Figures represent net change between Q4 2022 and Q1 2026.

Distribution of Federal ELCC Transfers 2022-2026



What does this mean?



More Capacity

Canada added more than 87,000 net licensed spaces for children aged 0–5.



Growth is Concentrated

About 72% of net new spaces and 93% of the net increase in centres were for-profit.



Larger chains are becoming more prominent

Centres operated by for-profit chains with six or more locations increased by 360.

Data source & methodology notes

Source

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), Childcare Licensing and Accessibility by Region (CLAR) Database.

Scope and comparison

Analysis compares Q4 2022 with Q1 2026.
Includes licensed centre-based child care for children aged 0–5.
Licensed home child care is excluded from the analysis.
The territories are not included because comparable CLAR data were not available for the analysis.

How change is measured

Changes in centres, operators and spaces are reported as net change between the two quarters, not the total number of openings. This means openings and expansions are offset by closures and reductions over the same period.

Definition of *chains*

For this analysis, a chain is an operator with six or more licensed child-care centre locations.

Sources

Employment and Social Development Canada. (2026, September 15). *Toward $10-a-day: Early learning and child care*. Government of Canada. https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/campaigns/child-care.html

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Employment and Social Development Canada. (2026, June 19). *Minister of Jobs and Families announces new funding to maintain affordable early learning and child care in Canada*. Government of Canada. https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/news/2026/06/minister-of-jobs-and-families-announces-new-funding-to-maintain-affordable-early-learning-and-child-care-in-canada.html

Thank you

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