An in-depth review of early education and child care across Canada

Dr. Emis Akbari, Dr. Shelly Mehta, Kerry McCuaig

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

The School of Early Childhood | George Brown College

Moderated by: Bernice Cipparrone
Director | School of Early Childhood | George Brown College
Established in 2011, the Early Childhood Education Report is released every three years to evaluate the quality of provincial/territorial early years services against a 15-point-scale. Results are populated from detailed profiles of each jurisdiction. ECER 2023 is the 5th edition.
The OECD released *Starting Strong II*. Canada exposed as a policy laggard in ECEC.

The OECD released *Starting Strong II*. Canada exposed as a policy laggard in ECEC.

The Early Years 3 study laid the groundwork for Canadian children and recommendations to improve the quality of ECEC services.

The Early Childhood Education Report 2014 reported on cross-jurisdictional improvements in ECEC.

The 3rd status report takes a snapshot of ECEC across Canada and sees improvements in all jurisdictions.

The 4th status report saw the impact of the bilateral agreements and acted as a baseline measure for the CWELCC.

The 5th status report evaluates the impact of CWELCC at the midpoint.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>PTs</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>PTs</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>PTs</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td></td>
<td>Min 2/3 CC finding to program operations</td>
<td></td>
<td>Full-day Kindergarten</td>
<td></td>
<td>ECEC curriculum framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td></td>
<td>Managed salary/fee scale in licensed CC</td>
<td></td>
<td>Licensed capacity min 50% for 2-4 yr olds</td>
<td></td>
<td>ECEC curriculum framework mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td></td>
<td>Min 3% of overall budget to ECEC</td>
<td></td>
<td>Funding conditional on inclusion</td>
<td></td>
<td>Program alignment with Kindergarten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common ministry</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common ECEC supervisory unit</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>Managed salary/fee scale in licensed CC</td>
<td></td>
<td>Licensed capacity min 50% for 2-4 yr olds</td>
<td></td>
<td>ECEC curriculum framework mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common ECEC policy framework</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Min 3% of overall budget to ECEC</td>
<td></td>
<td>Funding conditional on inclusion</td>
<td></td>
<td>Program alignment with Kindergarten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common local authority</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15 POINTS

**Governance**
- Min 2/3 CC finding to program operations (0.5 PTs)
- Full-day Kindergarten (1 PTs)

**Funding**
- Managed salary/fee scale in licensed CC (0.5 PTs)
- Licensed capacity min 50% for 2-4 yr olds (1 PTs)

**Access**
- Min 3% of overall budget to ECEC (1 PTs)
- Funding conditional on inclusion (1 PTs)

**Learning Environment**
- ECEC curriculum framework (0.25 PTs)
- ECEC curriculum framework mandatory (0.25 PTs)

**Accountability**
- Current and posted annual progress report (1 PTs)
- Facility standards that include Kindergarten (1 PTs)
- Population measures collected for preschool (1 PTs)

**Common ministry**
- Min 2/3 staff qualified for 2-4 yr olds (0.5 PTs)
- Kindergarten Educators require ECE qualifications (0.5 PTs)
- Wages of ECEs at least 2/3 of teachers (0.5 PTs)

**Common ECEC supervisory unit**
- ECE professional recognition required (0.25 PTs)
- ECE professional development required (0.25 PTs)

**Common ECEC policy framework**
- Min 2/3 staff qualified for 2-4 yr olds (0.5 PTs)
- Kindergarten Educators require ECE qualifications (0.5 PTs)
- Wages of ECEs at least 2/3 of teachers (0.5 PTs)
- ECE professional recognition required (0.25 PTs)
- ECE professional development required (0.25 PTs)

**Common local authority**
- Min 2/3 staff qualified for 2-4 yr olds (0.5 PTs)
- Kindergarten Educators require ECE qualifications (0.5 PTs)
- Wages of ECEs at least 2/3 of teachers (0.5 PTs)
- ECE professional recognition required (0.25 PTs)
- ECE professional development required (0.25 PTs)
Each provincial and territorial profile was populated with publicly available data, reviews of collective agreements, custom Statistics Canada runs, and data provided by ministry officials. Quebec’s profile was developed under the direction of the Abilio—Childhood Knowledge Dissemination Centre, at the Université Laval and Université de Montréal.

Data is current to March 31, 2023.

Each profile was reviewed and approved by provincial/territorial officials.

Benchmark results were obtained in collaboration and consultation with ministry officials.
Regions that have reached or surpassed 50% licensed capacity for 2- to 4-year-olds
At the onset of the report in 2011, only 4 jurisdictions had an integrated governance, and had child care and education under one ministry.

Across the country, governance is now integrated with the exception in Alberta and Quebec. Alberta has moved their responsibility for child care from the Ministry of Children and Families to the Ministry of Labour. Although Quebec has separated ministries, they have an integrated coordinating group between the ministries.

Due to CWELCC and its policy coverage of 0- to 5-year-olds, we have seen fragmentation of policy frameworks and ECEC supervisory units between that of child care and education.
Change in Spending on Regulated Child Care by Province and Territory (2020 ● 2023)

Includes federal funding
Expenditures per Child in school Programs and per Child Care Space by Province and Territory (school programs & child care)
CHANGE IN ECEC SPENDING AS A PER CENT OF TOTAL PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL BUDGET

2020 • 2023

NL: 3.0% → 1.5%
PE: 3.1% → 1.7%
NS: 2.0% → 2.2%
NB: 2.4% → 3.0%
QC: 3.9% → 4.8%
ON: 3.7% → 2.4%
MB: 3.6% → 2.5%
SK: 3.2% → 2.5%
AB: 2.5% → 2.4%
BC: 2.0% → 2.5%
NU: 0.7% → 1.0%
NT: 1.5% → 1.8%
YT: 1.3% → 2.0%
Change in Total Provincial/Territorial ECEC Spending

Per cent change from previous report:

- 2011: $7,497,341,600
- 2014: $10,706,197,393 (42.8% increase)
- 2017: $11,685,981,210 (9.1% increase)
- 2020: $14,275,530,942 (25.2% increase)
- 2023: $18,342,217,434 (28.5% increase)
Child Care Spending on For-Profit Facilities by Province and Territory (2023)

- SK and MB license for-profit centres, but they are not eligible for funding.
- NU and NT only license and fund non-profit and public centres.

### Canada
- For-Profit Centres: $2,134,728,000
- Non-Profit Centres: $556,323,990

### Provinces and Territories
- **NL**: $95,167,000 (59% for-profit, 41% non-profit)
- **PE**: $38,162,620 (62% for-profit, 38% non-profit)
- **NS**: $89,554,810 (56% for-profit, 44% non-profit)
- **NB**: $125,535,008 (64% for-profit, 36% non-profit)
- **QC**: $2,134,728,000 (54% for-profit, 46% non-profit)
- **ON**: $969,907,523 (25% for-profit, 75% non-profit)
- **MB**: $0 (100% non-profit)
- **SK**: $0 (100% non-profit)
- **AB**: $556,323,990 (57% for-profit, 43% non-profit)
- **BC**: $812,037,960 (57% for-profit, 43% non-profit)

- **NU**: $0 (100% non-profit)
- **NT**: $0 (100% non-profit)
- **YT**: $24,251,319 (60% for-profit, 40% non-profit)
- **Canada**: $4,845,668,229 (42% for-profit, 58% non-profit)
Percent Change in For-Profit Facilities/Spaces by Province and Territory (2020 • 2023)

SK and MB license for-profit centres, but they are not eligible for funding.

NU and NT only license and fund non-profit and public centres.
JURISDICTIONS WHERE PUBLIC FUNDING FOR CHILD CARE IS CONDITIONAL ON INCLUDING CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Prince Edward Island
In Designated Early Years Centres only

New Brunswick
In Designated Early Learning and Child Care centres only

Manitoba
In all publicly funded child care programs

Alberta
In Early Childhood Services programs only
Percent Change in Regulated Child Care Spaces 0 to 12 Years of Age (2020 • 2023)

QC does not have CWELCC goals, new spaces are on election commitment
Changes in the Number of Child Care Spaces 0 to 5 Years Old (2020 • 2023)

QC does not have CWELCC goals, new spaces are on election commitment.
All 13 provinces and territories now have a curriculum framework in place.

Their use is mandatory in all jurisdictions except for YT, AB, and SK.

In some regions such as BC and ON, their use is mandated in specific programs such as StrongStart or EarlyON centres.

In all regions early years curriculums are aligned with that of Kindergarten.
## Kindergarten/Pre-Kindergarten Teacher Qualifications by Province/Territory

### Kindergarten

- **NL**: ECE degree or Kindergarten experience
- **PE**: ECE diploma
- **NS**: ECE-BA or ECE diploma
- **NB**: BA with EC specialty + ECE diploma
- **QC**: B.Ed. + ECE with diploma
- **ON**: BA with EC specialty
- **MB**: BA + 2 years EC experience
- **SK**: BA + education specialty
- **AB**: BA + education specialty
- **BC**: B.Ed. or ECE Diploma
- **NU**: B.Ed.
- **NT**: B.Ed. or equivalent
- **YT**: B.Ed. or equivalent

### Pre-Kindergarten

- **NL**: ECE degree or Kindergarten experience
- **PE**: ECE diploma
- **NS**: ECE-BA or ECE diploma
- **NB**: BA with EC specialty + ECE diploma
- **QC**: B.Ed. + ECE with diploma
- **ON**: BA with EC specialty
- **MB**: BA with EC specialty
- **SK**: BA + 2 years EC experience
- **AB**: Teacher + ECE with diploma
- **BC**: B.Ed. or ECE Diploma
- **NU**: B.Ed.
- **NT**: B.Ed. or equivalent
- **YT**: B.Ed. or equivalent
ECE Wages as a Percent of Teacher Wages (2023)
Change in ECE Wages (2011-2023)

$ CHANGE FROM 2020

- NL $13,662
- PE $21,320
- NS $14,531
- NB $3,944
- QC $2,343
- ON $1,269
- MB $5,615
- SK $12,896
- AB $21,449
- BC $9,528
- NU $21,029
- NT $9,250
- YT $1,560
Accountability

All regions have an annual progress report. Although data collections remains uneven.

Most regions now have facility standards that include Kindergarten, except PEI and NU.

All regions collect population measures for preschool children, however use different tools and thus not comparable.
FINDINGS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Governance</th>
<th>Funding</th>
<th>Access</th>
<th>Learning Environment</th>
<th>Accountability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NL</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NS</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NB</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QC</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ON</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MB</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SK</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NU</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YT</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denotes a special status or condition.
Aftermath of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Program Closures

Job loses
Attention to the Workforce

Respect

Decent Work

Rights
Percentage of New Child Care Spaces (0 to 5 years) Created Against 2026 Goals (spaces added/lost • 2026 CWELCC goal)

QC does not have CWELCC goals, new spaces are on election commitment

= % achieved
The for-profit challenge
Leadership in a time of change
Maintenance