

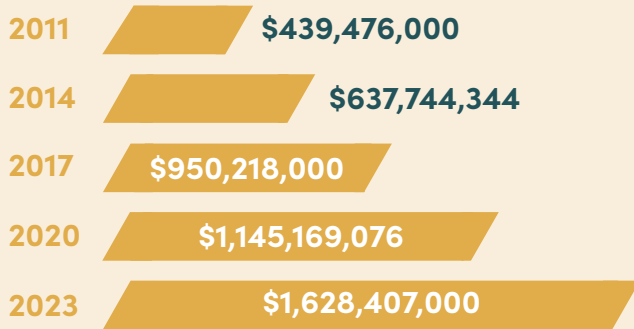
Early Childhood Education Report



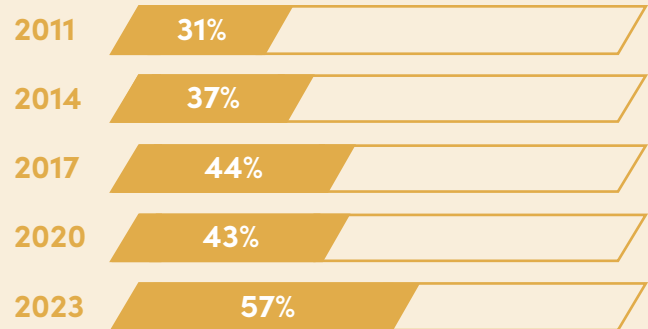
ALBERTA

Profile 2023

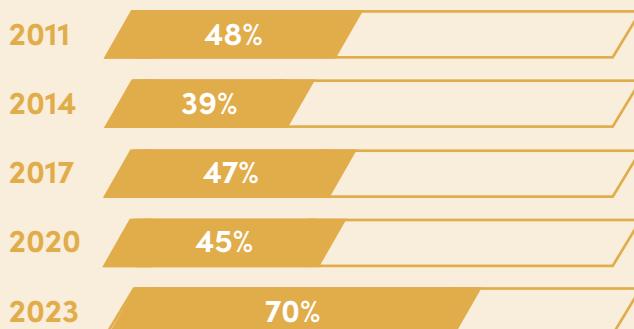
CHANGE IN ECEC SPENDING



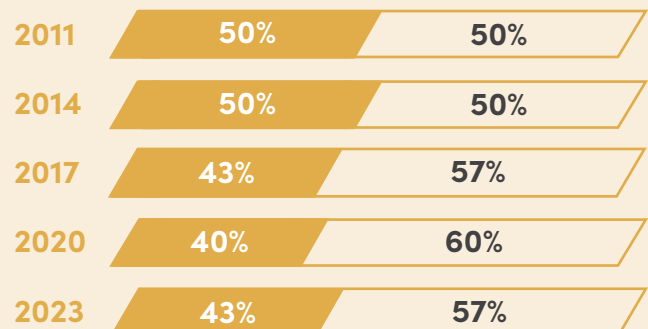
ECEC CAPACITY TO PERCENTAGE OF 2- TO 4-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN



ECE WAGES AS A PERCENTAGE OF TEACHER WAGES



PERCENTAGE OF ECE FACILITIES (NON-PROFIT/PROFIT)





Early Childhood Education Report



ABOUT THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION REPORT BENCHMARKS

The Early Childhood Education Report (ECER) is produced by the Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto and the Abilio—Childhood Knowledge Dissemination Centre, formerly the Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development, at the Université Laval and Université de Montréal. Twenty-one benchmarks are organized into five equally weighted categories, totalling a score of 15. The benchmarks evaluate governance structures, funding levels, access, quality in early learning environments, and the rigour of accountability mechanisms. Results are populated from detailed provincial and territorial profiles developed by the researchers and reviewed by provincial and territorial officials. For the federal overview, a detailed look at the benchmarks, the full methodology, and all provincial and territorial profiles, please visit [ECEReport.ca](https://ecereport.ca).

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NEW DEVELOPMENTS

This Alberta profile captures early learning and child care initiatives to March 31, 2023. The New Developments section highlights activities occurring after this date.

The Government of Alberta released the *Inclusive Child Care Program Guide* in June 2023. It details provisions in the *Early Learning and Child Care Act*, which came into effect on February 1, 2021, requiring all licensed child care to respect and value diversity in the abilities of all children in the program.¹

In September 2023, schools began implementing the first new curriculum guides for areas of study

in Kindergarten to Grade 3. These are the first steps to developing new guides for all subject areas to Grade 12.²

On October 10, 2023, Alberta announced \$28 million in funding from the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement to support private operators to open new child care spaces. The expansion supports up to 22,500 licensed child care spaces.³

On February 16, 2024 responsibility for the child care system was moved from Children and Family Services to the Ministry of Jobs, Economy and Trade.

CANADA—ALBERTA CANADA-WIDE EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE AGREEMENTS (CWELCC)

Alberta signed the *Canada—Alberta Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement*⁴ on November 14, 2021. This followed a series of agreements with the Government of Canada promoting early learning and child care, beginning with the 2017 to 2020 bilateral agreements,⁵ which were extended for one year to 2021.⁶ Subsequent agreements and action plans cover the years 2021 to 2025⁷ and 2021 to 2026.⁸ The latter agreement was amended⁹ to broaden access to federal funding to expand spaces provided by for-profit operators.

The Canada-wide agreements provide a federal investment of \$3.8 billion over five years in addition to \$291 million in bilateral and workforce funding.

Funding will be used to accomplish the following:

- Reduce parent fees for children younger than 6 years old attending licensed child care to an average of \$10 per day by 2025–26.
- Create up to 42,500 licensed child care spaces in the non-profit and public sector, plus 3,700 in the for-profit sector.
- Create a for-profit expansion plan and cost containment guidelines for commercial providers receiving federal funding.
- Provide a wage top-up for all certified early childhood educators (ECEs) in regulated child care.
- Increase the number of educators with Levels 2 and 3 ECE certification by 15 per cent (4,000 educators by 2026).
- Expand the Inclusive Child Care model to serve up to 2,000 children in 800 programs per year.
- Develop an engagement plan for Indigenous families in partnership with Indigenous organizations.
- Expand implementation of curriculum frameworks, standards, and tools.

GOVERNANCE

TABLE 1.1 ALBERTA GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Lead Ministry/Department	Jobs, Economy and Trade ^a
Related Ministry/Department	Alberta Education ^b
ECE Supervisory Unit	Child Care Strategy and Policy Division School Accreditation, Monitoring and Print Services
Policy Framework	<i>Guide to Education: ECS to Grade 12</i> ^c <i>Funding Manual for School Authorities 2023–2024</i> ^d <i>Annex 2 – Alberta’s Fiscal Year 2021 to 2022 to Fiscal Year 2022 to 2023 Canada-Wide Action Plan</i> ^e
Legislation	<i>The Education Act (2012)</i> ^f <i>Early Childhood Services Regulation, Alberta Regulation 126/2022</i> ^g <i>Private Schools Regulation, Alberta Regulation 127/2022</i> ^h <i>Early Learning and Child Care Act (2022)</i> ⁱ <i>Early Learning and Child Care Regulation, Alberta Regulation 143/2008 (2020)</i> ^j
Related Legislation	<i>Children First Act (2013)</i> ^k
Local Service Delivery	414 school authorities operate 2,582 schools: 42 public, 17 separate, 4 francophone, 21 charter, 32 provincial, 167 private, 96 private ECS operators, and 35 First Nations Authorities ^l Early Learning and Child Care: 7 Child and Family Services delivery regions ^m and Métis and Indigenous Settlements ⁿ
Community/Sector Oversight	n/a

^a Government of Alberta. *Ministry of Jobs, Economy and Trade*. Retrieved from: <https://www.alberta.ca/jobs-economy-and-trade>

^b Government of Alberta. Alberta Education. *Ministry of Education*. Retrieved from: <https://www.alberta.ca/education.aspx>

^c Government of Alberta. Alberta Education. *The Guide to Education* is made available in advance of the school year. Retrieved from: <https://www.alberta.ca/guide-to-education>

^d Government of Alberta. Alberta Education. *Funding Manual for School Authorities 2023/24 School Year*. Retrieved from: <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/8f3b4972-4c47-4009-a090-5b470e68d633/resource/c8a1946e-f466-4e0f-91ae-6078068ecef/download/edc-funding-manual-2023-2024-school-year.pdf>

^e Government of Canada. *Annex 2 – Alberta’s Fiscal Year 2021 to 2022 to Fiscal Year 2022 to 2023 Canada-Wide Action Plan*. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/early-learning-child-care-agreement/agreements-provinces-territories/alberta-canada-wide-2021.html#h2.17.Government%20of%20Alberta>

^f Province of Alberta. Alberta King’s Printer. *Education Act, Statutes of Alberta, 2012 Chapter E-0.3*. Current to September 1, 2023. Retrieved from: <https://kings-printer.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/e00p3.pdf>

^g Province of Alberta. Alberta King’s Printer. *Education Act, Early Childhood Services Regulation, Alberta Regulation 87/2019*. Current to February 1, 2023. Retrieved from: https://kings-printer.alberta.ca/1266.cfm?page=2022_126.cfm&leg_type=Regs&isbncln=9780779839810

^h Province of Alberta. Alberta King’s Printer. *Education Act, Private Schools Regulation, Alberta Regulation 127/2022*. Current to February 1, 2023. Retrieved from: https://kings-printer.alberta.ca/1266.cfm?page=2022_127.cfm&leg_type=Regs&isbncln=9780779840052

ⁱ Province of Alberta. Alberta King’s Printer. *Early Learning and Child Care Act, 2022, Statutes of Alberta, 2007 Chapter E-0.1*. Retrieved from: https://kings-printer.alberta.ca/1266.cfm?page=E00p1.cfm&leg_type=Acts&isbncln=9780779837021

^j Province of Alberta. Alberta King’s Printer. *Early Learning and Child Care Regulation, Alberta Regulation 143/2008*. Current as of February 1, 2021. Retrieved from: https://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Regs/2008_143.pdf

^k Province of Alberta. Alberta King’s Printer. *Children First Act, Statutes of Alberta, 2013 Chapter C-12.5*. Retrieved from: <https://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/c12p5.pdf>

^l Government of Alberta. Alberta Education. *Alberta Schools and Authorities*. Retrieved from: <https://education.alberta.ca/alberta-education/school-authority-index/everyone/alberta-schools/>

^m Government of Alberta. *Children’s Service Offices*. Retrieved from: <https://www.alberta.ca/childrens-services-offices>

ⁿ Government of Alberta. *Métis and Indigenous Children’s Services Offices*. Retrieved from: <https://www.alberta.ca/metis-and-indigenous-childrens-services-offices.aspx>



DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION

The Ministry of Jobs, Economy and Trade oversees child care, early childhood development, child intervention, and foster and adoption programs, including the regional support staff for these program areas, as well as Indigenous and Métis connections. The ministry is responsible for child care licensing and monitoring, the certification of staff, the distribution of child care grant funding to operators, parent subsidy funding, and parenting resources and supports. It also oversees the implementation of the action plans in the *Canada–Alberta Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement*.

Alberta Education is responsible for Early Childhood Services (ECS) through to Grade 12. ECS are educational programs for children aged 2.8 years to younger than 6 years old.¹⁰

POLICY FRAMEWORK

The *Guide to Education* is made available to school districts in advance of each school year. It includes detailed guidance for program planning, curriculum, hours of instruction, etc.

Annex 2—Alberta’s Fiscal Year 2021 to 2022 to Fiscal Year 2022 to 2023 Canada-Wide Action Plan is part of the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement that Alberta signed with the federal government. It outlines actions, timelines, and benchmarks the province will achieve in the areas of child care affordability, access, quality, and accountability.

SERVICE DESIGN

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The *Education Act* allows for the provision of funding to school authorities (public, separate, and francophone school boards; private and charter schools; and private ECS operators). There are also 35 Federal First Nations school authorities operating 81 schools.

EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES (ECS): ECS programming is provided for eligible children from the age of 2.8 to less than 6 years as of

September 1. It takes place in a variety of settings, including schools, ECS sites, and licensed child care. ECS operators may not charge fees for the minimum instructional hours.¹¹

KINDERGARTEN: Kindergarten is part of ECS programming. It is non-compulsory and available for children who are 5 years old on or before December 31. A minimum of 475 hours of instruction during a school year is required. Most Kindergarten is part-day but school authorities may operate full-day programs.

PRE-KINDERGARTEN: Pre-Kindergarten is part of ECS programming and is intended for children aged 2.8 to 4.7 years who require additional supports prior to their Kindergarten year. Eligible children include those who are learning English as an additional language or who require francization, those who are gifted, and those who are diagnosed with a mild, moderate, or severe disability or delay. The age and eligibility of the child determines the minimum hours of instruction.

REGULATED CHILD CARE¹²

Alberta’s Early Learning and Child Care Act requires a licence for anyone caring for more than six children, not including the person’s own children. A child is defined as an individual under the age of 13 years or an individual 13 or 14 years of age who requires child care because of a special need. There are two types of licensed child care: centre-based and family day home agency.

CENTRE-BASED CHILD CARE

DAYCARE: Child care provided by a facility-based program for infants, preschool children, and Kindergarten-aged children for four or more consecutive hours each day the program is provided.

PRESCHOOL CARE: Child care provided by a centre-based program to preschool and Kindergarten-aged children for less than four hours per child per day.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL CARE: Child care provided by a centre-based program to Kindergarten- and school-aged children to age 13 before and after school, during lunch, and when schools are closed.

INNOVATIVE CHILD CARE: Centre-based child care approved by the provincial director of child care that is designed to meet unique child care needs. As of February 1, 2021, Alberta no longer licenses innovative child care programs. Existing innovative programs were granted open-ended licences and are allowed to operate indefinitely under the former *Child Care Licensing Act* and *Child Care Licensing Regulation*.

FAMILY DAY HOME AGENCY

FAMILY DAY HOME PROGRAM: A child care program that is offered or provided by an individual in the individual's private residence and under the oversight of a licensed family day home agency. Programs provide child care to children under the age of 13 years or to children 13 or 14 years of age who require child care because of a special need.

UNREGULATED CHILD CARE

UNLICENSED CARE: Unlicensed child care is regulated through Alberta's *Early Learning Child Care Act (ELCCA)*, which limits the number of children an unlicensed caregiver may care for at six children, not including their own children. Furthermore, the ELCCA allows the province to

take enforcement action if there are more than six children in care or if there is an imminent threat to the health, safety, or welfare of any children in care. Municipalities have the authority to impose local operating restrictions that can improve the quality of unlicensed child care within their boundaries through local municipal business licence bylaws. The ministry does not monitor or fund unlicensed caregivers.

LOCAL SERVICE DELIVERY

A total of 414 school authorities operate 2,582 public, separate, francophone, provincial, private, charter, and First Nations schools. This includes 96 private operators offering 134 ECS programs.

Staff in seven regional offices plan and deliver a range of services that receive funding through the Ministry of Jobs, Economy and Trade, including licensing, monitoring, and issuing enforcement actions for child care programs.¹³ The ministry also offers culturally specific supports through its Indigenous, First Nations, and Métis Settlement offices.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT/OVERSIGHT

n/a



FUNDING

TABLE 2.1 ALBERTA EXPENDITURES FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE TO MARCH 31, 2023

Child care affordability and access ^a	\$760,636,378
Child care quality and worker support	\$177,684,754
Inclusion	\$7,714,674
Administration	\$29,970,721
Capital ^b	\$8,762,000
Federal funding through CWELCC agreement	\$645,200,630
Total regulated child care funding	\$976,007,000

^a Government of Alberta. 2023–24 Government Estimates: General Revenue Fund. P. 49. Retrieved from: <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/65514c30-e9f9-4951-9bae-7134edbe293c/resource/c67dc3b7-d124-4754-8f9b-d642a04b4cfe/download/budget-2023-estimates-government-2023-24.pdf>

^b Government of Alberta. 2023–24 Government Estimates: General Revenue Fund. Total for capital grants and acquisitions. PP. 49–50. Retrieved from: <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/65514c30-e9f9-4951-9bae-7134edbe293c/resource/c67dc3b7-d124-4754-8f9b-d642a04b4cfe/download/budget-2023-estimates-government-2023-24.pdf>

TABLE 2.2 ALBERTA EXPENDITURES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION/CHILD CARE TO MARCH 31, 2023

Public, separate, francophone, and charter schools	\$484,000,000
Private schools	\$34,500,000
Private early childhood services operators	\$133,900,000
Early Childhood Services total spending ^a	\$652,400,000
Regulated child care (Table 2.1)	\$976,007,000
Total ECEC funding^c	\$1,628.407,000
Total provincial budget spending estimate ^b	\$68.7 billion
ECEC as a % of provincial budget	2.4%

^a The Alberta Ministry of Education was unable to provide 2023 data. The last verified amounts for Early Childhood Services are from the Alberta profile in the *Early Childhood Education Report 2020*. Retrieved from: https://ecereport.ca/media/uploads/2021-profiles-en/alberta_profile_2020.pdf

^b Government of Alberta. *Budget 2023*. Retrieved from: <https://www.alberta.ca/budget>

The Funding Manual for School Authorities 2023/24 School Year details allocations for all school functions, including facilities, administration, teaching, auxiliary staff, student transportation and nutrition, etc. These allocations are for all Alberta school types, including public, separate, francophone, private, and charter, along with private Early Childhood Service operators.¹⁴

ACCESS

TABLE 3.1 ALBERTA CHILD POPULATION 0 TO <6 YEARS (2022)

Child population 0 to <6 years ^a	313,783
0 to <24 months	99,452
24 months to <5 years	158,059
5 years	56,272
Total population of Alberta ^b	4,695,290
Children 0 to <6 years as % of total population	6.6%

^a Statistics Canada. Table 17-10-0005-01. Population estimates on July 1, 2022, by age and sex (accessed on January 10, 2023).

^b Government of Alberta. *Quarterly Alberta Total Population Estimates: 1951-2023* (updated September 27, 2023). Retrieved from: <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/c45f2f78-0d6c-4a7e-98bc-313fbb232040/resource/1b346528-5188-47ee-8fef-b3d41e3db7c0/download/population-estimates-ab-quarterly-1951-to-current.xlsx>

TABLE 3.2 ALBERTA LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION OF MOTHERS BY AGE OF YOUNGEST CHILD

	Number of mothers in labour force by age of youngest child	Labour force participation rate of mothers by age of youngest child
0 to <24 months	55,300	66.3%
24 months to <5 years	60,100	68.3%
5 years	23,300	73.3%
Total mothers in labour force with child 0 to <6 years	138,700	
Average labour force participation of mothers with youngest child 0 to <6 years		68.3%

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey. 0620_13 Table 3— Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates of mothers by age of youngest child, Canada, provinces, territories, annual average, 2022.

TABLE 3.3 ALBERTA ECE SCHOOL PROGRAMS (2022-23)

Number of children attending ECE private centres	11,523
Children attending 5-year-old ECS Kindergarten in public, separate, and charter schools ^{a,b}	55,492
5-year-old child population	56,272
% of children attending ECS Kindergarten	98.6%

^a Early Childhood Services (ECS) refers to all programs for eligible children aged 2.8 to <6 years, including those registered for home schooling; it does not include enrolment in First Nations schools.

^b Government of Alberta. 2022/2023 School Enrolment Data as of October 2022. Retrieved from: https://www.alberta.ca/system/files/custom_downloaded_images/educ-school-enrolment-data-2022-2023.xlsx

TABLE 3.4 ALBERTA REGULATED AND APPROVED CHILD CARE TO MARCH 31, 2023

Number of spaces in child care centres by age group^a

Infant (0 to <19 months)	8,733
Preschool (19 months to <6 years; full- and part-time)	106,389
School-age (Kindergarten to <13 years)	31,992
Total spaces centre-based programs	147,115
Approved family day homes	14,976
Approved group family child care	150
Innovative child care	505
Total capacity regulated child care	162,746

Facilities by type

Daycare (0 to <6 years)	1,368
Preschool (19 months to <6 years)	631
Out-of-school care program (Kindergarten to <13 years)	1,338
Family day home (0 to <13 years)	76
Group family child care (0 to <13 years)	15
Innovative child care	19

Child care centres by auspice

Non-profit centres ^b	1,048
For-profit centres	1,386

^a Numbers are estimates using percentage enrolment for each age group (5.9%, 72.3%, and 21.7% respectively) and applying it to the total number of centre-based spaces.

^b Includes centres operated by municipalities and First Nations.

TABLE 3.5 ALBERTA ECE CAPACITY TO PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN BY AGE GROUP TO MARCH 31, 2023

Child Ages	Number of Children ^a	Child Care Spaces ^b	Early Childhood Services/ Kindergarten ^c	Other ECE Programs	Capacity to % of Children
0 to <24 months	99,452	22,738			29%
24 months to <5 years	158,059	78,462	11,523		57%
5 years	56,272		55,492		98.6%

^a Statistics Canada. Table 17-10-0005-01. Population estimates on July 1, 2022, by age and sex (accessed on January 10, 2023).

^b Spaces are not licensed by age group in Alberta. In addition, Alberta does not break down enrolment by age group for 0 to <2 years, 2 years to <5 years, and 5 years age groups, so calculations were done to approximate the number of spaces in those age groups. Personal communication. Government of Alberta. Child and Family Services. October 20, 2023.

^c ECS enrolment estimate based on last available confirmed data.

AFFORDABILITY

The ministry's annual report for 2022–23 outlines several avenues taken to improve child care affordability through subsidies to child care providers.¹⁵

- Affordability Grants to licensed child care programs have resulted in a 50 per cent reduction in parent child care fees for families of children from birth to school age. A total of 2,228 licensed child care providers have received \$475 million in grant funding, impacting fees for 114,054 children.
- To offset inflationary pressures and keep parent fees stable, in March 2023 eligible operators with Affordability Grants were able to apply for one-time funding in lieu of increasing parent fees. A total of 1,950 operators received the funding, totalling \$11 million.
- The Infant Care Incentive program encourages licensed child care providers to offer child care for infants up to 18 months of age. Providers receive \$150 each month for infants receiving child care for eight or more hours per month. As of March 31, 2023, funding was provided for child care for 7,942 infants, an increase of 1,091 infants over the previous year.

In addition to these fee-reducing measures, funding is also available to eligible parents to help with child care costs.¹⁶

- Parent fee subsidies are offered for families of children up to Kindergarten-age attending full-time child care (100+ hours per month) with a gross income under \$179,999 annually.
- Amounts range from \$106 to \$266 per month, depending on income. A flat rate of \$125 per month for all income brackets is applied to children attending preschool programs.

Subsidies for school-age care (Kindergarten to Grade 6) are available for families with a gross income under \$90,000 annually and range from \$92 to \$366 per month. In 2023, subsidy rates were increased for the summer months, from \$161 to \$644 per month. The Child Care Subsidy program was expanded to include previously ineligible families. As of March 31, 2023, 1,819 temporary residents with work permits and refugees, including 777 Ukrainian newcomers fleeing the war, received subsidies.

An Extended-Hours Subsidy provides an additional \$100 per month per child for eligible parents who work or attend classes during evenings or weekends.¹⁷

In total, \$252 million was spent on parent fee subsidies, providing some degree of support for 74,143 children as of March 31, 2023.

The province's online child care subsidy estimator tool¹⁸ considers income and deductions (e.g., tuition and medical expenses).

INCLUSION

Alberta Education has an inclusive education policy.¹⁹ *Standards for the Provision of Early Childhood Special Education* outlines the standards for ECS and education programming and services for eligible children with special education needs.²⁰ The *Funding Manual for School Authorities* states that approved ECS operators must accept and organize programming for all funded children for whom programming is requested, including children with special needs.²¹

The Inclusive Child Care Program is designed to support child care providers to include children who have extra support needs. It is intended to increase families' access to child care and prevent the exclusion or removal of children from care. Services are delivered by designated agencies with expertise in early learning and child care and provide a range of resources, including consultation and guidance strategies, professional training, and coaching.²² In 2023, 705 licensed child care programs participated in the program compared to 535 the previous year.

As part of the federal agreement, Alberta has targeted funding for improving diversity and inclusion in Alberta's child care system. Between 2023 and 2026, Alberta will spend approximately \$95.6 million to create more inclusive child care settings.





LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

TABLE 4.1 ALBERTA CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS

Program	Framework Document
Kindergarten/Early Childhood Services	<p><i>The Kindergarten Program Statement (2008)</i>^a</p> <p>The curriculum for English, French, and French immersion language instruction is in development.^b</p> <p><i>Programme d'éducation de maternelle – immersion</i>^c</p>
Child care	<p><i>Flight: Alberta's Early Learning and Care Framework (2014)</i>^d</p> <p><i>Envol: Cadre pour les programmes d'apprentissage et de garde des jeunes enfants en Alberta</i>^e</p>

^a Government of Alberta. Ministry of Education. *Kindergarten Program Statement (2008)*. Retrieved from: <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/931076c3-0fa2-47e8-96cf-53d7371a354f/resource/70c79133-a66a-48ea-a423-fcbeab021283/download/4270152-2008-kindergarten-program-statement.pdf>

^b Government of Alberta. Alberta Education. *Curriculum Development*. Retrieved from: <https://www.alberta.ca/curriculum-development>. Alberta's Kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum guides are under review. Piloting began in the 2023–24 school year

^c Government of Alberta. Alberta Education. *Refonte du curriculum M à 6*. Retrieved from: <https://www.alberta.ca/fr/curriculum>

^d Makovichuk, L., Hewes, J., Lirette, P., & Thomas, N. (2014). *Flight: Alberta's Early Learning and Care Framework*. Retrieved from: <https://flightframework.ca>. The Flight framework adapted the principles of the Alberta Education Kindergarten Program Statement to build continuity between the early learning and child care field and formal schooling.

^e Makovichuk, L., Hewes, J., Lirette, P., & Thomas, N. (2014). *Envol: Cadre pour les programmes d'apprentissage et de garde des jeunes enfants en Alberta*. Retrieved from: https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/6238b139a5a3027d035ca6a3/624358b635fec0b46bb0d766_Flight%20Framework%20Document%20French%20Web%20F.pdf



WORK ENVIRONMENT

TABLE 4.2 ALBERTA GROUP SIZE AND STAFF/CHILD RATIO IN REGULATED CHILD CARE

Age	Staff:Child Ratio	Maximum Group Size
Full-day centre-based care		
0 to <12 months	1:3	6
12 months to <19 months	1:4	8
19 months to <3 years	1:6	12
3 years to <4 years	1:8	16
4 years and older	1:10	20
Adjusted ratios are permitted for mixed age groupings.		
Out-of-school care: part-day programs		
Kindergarten to <13 years	1:15	30
Preschool		
19 months to <3 years	1:6	
3 years to <6 years	1:12	

Source: Province of Alberta. Alberta King's Printer. *Early Learning and Child Care Act, Early Learning and Child Care Regulations, Alberta Regulation 143/2008*. Section 27 (1). Retrieved from: https://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Regs/2008_143.pdf

KINDERGARTEN CLASS SIZE: Class sizes were last reported by the Ministry in October 2019. The provincial average class size for Kindergarten to Grade 3 in 2018–19 was 20.4 children.

CHILD CARE CENTRE SIZE: Early learning and child care regulations define the minimum net floor area (in square metres) of primary play space for centre-based licenses. Licensed capacity refers to the maximum number of children who may receive care in a program. There is no limit on facility size.

EDUCATORS

TABLE 4.3 ALBERTA EDUCATOR QUALIFICATIONS

<p>Kindergarten/Early Childhood Services^a</p>	<p>All ECS teachers must have a valid certificate from the Minister of Education, obtained through the Office of the Registrar. To obtain a Permanent Professional Certificate, teachers must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complete a Bachelor of Education, including a minimum of 10 weeks of supervised student teaching • complete two years of successful teaching • receive two formal evaluations based on the knowledge, skills, and attributes for permanent certification outlined in the Teaching Quality Standard • receive a recommendation to the Registrar for permanent certification from a Designated Signing Authority
<p>Early Childhood Educators^b</p>	<p>Staff working in licensed child care programs must be certified by the Alberta Child Care Staff Certification Office within six months of being hired.</p> <p>The three levels of ECE certification are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 1 Early Childhood Educator: A minimum of one post-secondary three-credit course in early learning and child care (ELCC) or equivalent • Level 2 Early Childhood Educator: A minimum of a one-year ELCC certificate or equivalent • Level 3 Early Childhood Educator: A minimum of a two-year ELCC diploma or equivalent

^a Government of Alberta. *Teacher Certification*. Retrieved from: <https://www.alberta.ca/teacher-certification.aspx>. All teachers in accredited independent schools offering ECS programming must hold a valid Alberta teaching authority issued by Teacher Certification. AISCA. *Teacher Certification Handbook 2022–2023*. Retrieved from: <https://www.aisca.ab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/AISCA-Teacher-Certification-Handbook-2022-2023.pdf>

^b Government of Alberta. *Certification Guide for Early Childhood Educators*. Retrieved from: <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/ed0e3162-0431-441d-a16c-61090c65adb0/resource/64f479d3-50f2-4886-a5bc-13d6ab7c0156/download/cs-certification-guide-for-early-childhood-educators-2022-10.pdf>. Staff who have not yet received certification cannot be left alone to supervise children.

As of March 31, 2023, there were 24,101 certified ECEs working in licensed child care programs. This is a 33 per cent increase since the signing of the *Canada–Alberta Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement* in November 2021. Broken down by certification level, this represents an increase of 32 per cent in Level 1 ECEs, 21 per cent in Level 2 ECEs, and 12 per cent in Level 3 ECEs in 2022–23.²³

TABLE 4.4 ALBERTA PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION AND DEVELOPMENT

	Teachers	Early Childhood Educators
Professional Recognition	The Office of the Registrar is responsible for the certification of teachers as legislated in the Certification of Teachers Regulation. ^a	The Alberta Child Care Staff Certification Office certifies staff working in licensed child care, preschool, out-of-school care, and approved family day home and group family child care programs. ^c
Professional Development	Teachers are required to engage in career-long professional learning. ^b	<p>Although professional development (PD) is not required, certified ECEs are encouraged to build skills and knowledge through PD funding and release-time funding (RTF). RTF allows certified ECEs to be paid while studying, completing post-secondary coursework, and attending workshops and conferences that have been approved for PD funding.^d</p> <p>PD funding rates include up to \$500 per year for workshops and conferences and up to \$1,500 per year for post-secondary coursework and textbooks, for a maximum of \$2,000 per year.</p> <p>Release-time rates paid to ECEs are \$800 per three-credit course (up to two three-credit courses per fiscal year) for post-secondary coursework and \$17.50 per hour (up to 45 hours per year) for workshops and conferences.</p> <p>Release-time rates are paid to employers and are \$60 per course for post-secondary coursework and \$1.33 per hour for workshops and conferences to offset wage-related expenses.^e</p>

^a ECS teachers are not required to have ECE qualifications. Government of Alberta. *Education Act, Certification of Teachers and Teacher Leaders Regulation, Alberta Regulation 84/2019*. Retrieved from: <https://www.alberta.ca/teacher-certification>

^b Government of Alberta. Alberta Education. *Teacher Quality Standard*. Retrieved from: <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/14d92858-fec0-449b-a9ad-52c05000b4de/resource/09cd735a-3a02-4f1f-8e23-51a11e6dfb06/download/educ-teaching-quality-standard-2023.pdf>

^c Government of Alberta. *Certification Guide for Early Childhood Educators*. Retrieved from: <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/ed0e3162-0431-441d-a16c-61090c65adb0/resource/64f479d3-50f2-4886-a5bc-13d6ab7c0156/download/cs-certification-guide-for-early-childhood-educators-2022-10.pdf>

^d Licensed daycare, out-of-school care and preschool programs, and licensed family day home agencies can apply for grant funding to support the professional development of educators. Government of Alberta. *Alberta Child Care Grant Funding Program*. Retrieved from: <https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-child-care-grant-funding-program#jumplinks-0>

^e Release-time funding is available to all early childhood educators who are eligible for the professional development funding. This funding allows educators to be paid while studying, completing post-secondary coursework, and/or attending workshops that have been approved for professional development funding. Educators are eligible for release-time funding regardless of when training occurs, including outside of regular working hours.

TABLE 4.5 ALBERTA DENSITY OF QUALIFIED STAFF IN CHILD CARE CENTRES

Total number of early childhood educators as of March 31, 2023	24,101
Level 1 (as % of total ECEs)	45.7%
Level 2 (as % of total ECEs)	15.6%
Level 3 (as % of total ECEs)	38.7%

Source: Province of Alberta. Alberta King's Printer. *Early Learning and Child Care Act, Early Learning and Child Care Regulations, Alberta Regulation 143/2008*. Section 27 (1). Retrieved from: https://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Regs/2008_143.pdf. A licence-holder must ensure that "a minimum of one in every two of the primary staff members has first aid certification acceptable to the statutory director." ELCC Regulation 25(1)(b).

TABLE 4.6 ALBERTA ECE ANNUAL WAGE AS A PERCENTAGE OF TEACHER WAGE (2023)

Teachers ^a	Early Childhood Educators ^b	ECE Wage as a Percentage of Teacher Wage
\$79,957	\$56,140	70%

^a Government of Alberta. *Occupations in Alberta: Elementary School Teacher*. Retrieved from: <https://alis.alberta.ca/occinfo/occupations-in-alberta/occupation-profiles/elementary-school-teacher/>

^b Government of Alberta. *Alberta Child Care Grant Funding Program*. Retrieved from: <https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-child-care-grant-funding-program#jumplinks-0>. Based on FTE ECE Level 3, in receipt of the wage top-up and working a 37.5 hour week.

Wages and Salaries in Alberta: Early Childhood Educators and Assistants, produced by the Government of Alberta, shows an annual average wage of \$18.59, or \$33,564 annually for all classifications.²⁴ The Alberta Child Care Grant Funding Program allows operators to apply for wage top-up funding for all staff working with children, including supervisors, alternate supervisors, and family child care consultants working with a licensed family day home agency. Amounts were increased in January 2023.²⁵ The following table shows average hourly wage per certification level after applying the wage top-up.²⁶

Early Childhood Educator Certification Level	Hourly Wage Top-Up (added to minimum wage)	Average Hourly Wage With Wage Top-Up as of March 2023
Level 1 Early Childhood Educator	\$2.64	\$19.57
Level 2 Early Childhood Educator	\$5.05	\$23.39
Level 3 Early Childhood Educator	\$8.62	\$28.79

Source: Government of Alberta. *Alberta Child Care Grant Funding Program*. Retrieved from: <https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-child-care-grant-funding-program#jumplinks-0>



ACCOUNTABILITY

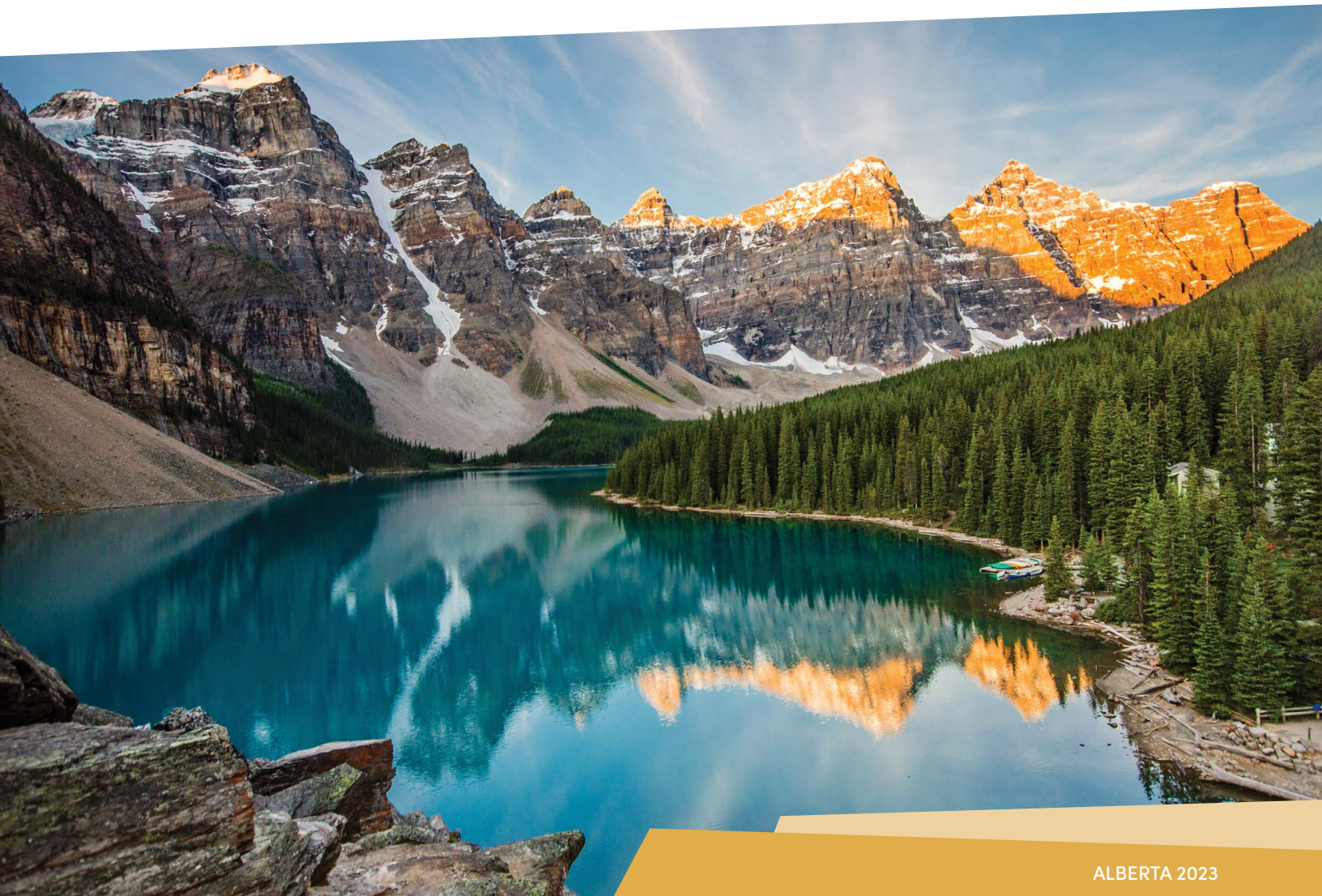
PROGRESS REPORTS: The latest annual report was released in June 2023, with data current to March 2023.²⁷

PROGRAM STANDARDS: Every licensed facility-based child care program has at least two inspections annually to ensure compliance with the Act and Regulations. Licensing officers also investigate complaints, inspect for initial licensing and licensing renewals, and consult with facilities to support compliance. Parents can use the Child Care Lookup tool to find information about licensed child care programs and family day home agencies.²⁸ This tool provides information about the location, ages and number of children served, the program's status, and recent inspection results. Alberta's *Open Data, Child Care Information* system regularly updates the status of child care facilities and family daycare homes.²⁹

EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES: The *Early Childhood Services Regulation* sets out the requirements for the establishment and operation of early childhood services, including standardized age of entry for Kindergarten, the application process, safety standards, programs and policies, teacher qualifications, financial reporting and auditing, and insurance.³⁰

THE ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK: This allows Kindergarten to Grade 12 schools to assess progress and demonstrate success against performance measures. Schools and school authorities share their results through their Annual Education Results Report.³¹

POPULATION MONITORING: Alberta is currently developing a strategy to conduct a province-wide online parent survey.



ENDNOTES

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- ⁹ Government of Canada. *Agreement to Amend the Canada – Alberta Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement – 2021 to 2026*. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/early-learning-child-care-agreement/agreements-provinces-territories/alberta-canada-wide-2021/amendment.html#h2.0>
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