



**Early Childhood
Education Report
2014**

TERMS USED IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION REPORT 2014

Early childhood education (ECE) refers to programs for young children based on an explicit curriculum delivered by qualified staff and designed to support children's development and learning. Settings may include child care centres, nursery schools, preschools, pre- or junior kindergarten and kindergarten. Attendance is regular and children may participate on their own or with a parent or caregiver.

Early childhood educators refers to the adults who work directly with children in early childhood education settings, have ECE post-secondary education credentials and are recognized by provincial/territorial legislation as qualified to teach in licensed child care, nursery schools, preschool or kindergarten programs.

Curriculum is a way of structuring learning experiences as an organized program of activities. In early childhood education, learning experiences include everything that happens to a child from arrival to departure.

The following abbreviations of provincial/territorial names are used in this report:

NL	Newfoundland and Labrador
PE	Prince Edward Island
NS	Nova Scotia
NB	New Brunswick
QC	Québec
ON	Ontario
MB	Manitoba
SK	Saskatchewan
AB	Alberta
BC	British Columbia
YK	Yukon
NT	Northwest Territories
NU	Nunavut

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Departments contacted included:

Newfoundland and Labrador

Department of Child, Youth and Family Services
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Department of Health and Community Services

New Brunswick

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Nova Scotia

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Prince Edward Island

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Québec

Ministry of Children and Youth Services
Ministry of Education, Leisure and Sports

Ontario

Ministry of Education

Manitoba

Healthy Child Manitoba
Family Services
Education and Advanced Learning

Saskatchewan

Ministry of Education

Alberta

Alberta Children and Youth Services
Alberta Education

British Columbia

Ministry of Children and Family Development
Ministry of Education

Northwest Territories

Department of Education, Culture and Employment

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Emis Akbari, Kerry McCuaig

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Early Education Report 2014

Public policy shapes early childhood programs

In Canada, education and child care fall primarily within the jurisdiction of provinces and territories, although there is a long history of federal involvement both through transfers to individuals and to provincial and territorial governments. While the federal government has been an inconsistent player in early childhood policy, it has influenced provincial and territorial programs and priorities.

The 2004 Speech from the Throne announced that the federal government would work with the provinces to create a national system of early learning and child care. As a condition of \$5-billion in funding over 5 years announced in the 2005 federal budget, provinces signed bi-lateral agreements-in-principle committing to develop detailed action plans that identified their spending priorities for early learning and child care. Plans were to address the four QUAD principles: quality, universality, accessibility and developmental programming. A federal election and a new government terminated this funding. In March 2007, the \$5-billion commitment disappeared. Instead, \$250 million a year was earmarked for a Community Child Care Investment Program and transferred to provincial and territorial governments. A 25 percent tax credit was made available to businesses to create licensed child care spaces in the workplace.¹ The latter, as predicted, received very little take up (see Figure 1.1).

Despite its short tenure, QUAD left a legacy. Many provinces continued to develop and pursue their action plans, even without federal funding. In fact, investments in early learning and care across Canada more than doubled from \$3.5 billion in 2006 to \$7.5 billion in 2011. By 2014, provinces and territories were spending \$10.9-billion on early education and child care. Remnants of other federal/provincial efforts to develop a pan-Canadian approach to supporting young children and their families also remain.

Early Childhood Development Initiative (2000)

The Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI) provides \$500 million annually for programs to promote infant and maternal health, improve parenting and community supports and strengthen early learning and child care. The agreement was significant as it took a holistic view of early childhood as a process that begins in utero and continues to formal schooling. Most provinces focused their efforts on information and parenting resources, while scant amounts were targeted to early learning and care programs.

Multilateral Framework Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care (2003)

To address the deficiency in the ECDI, the 2003 Multilateral Framework Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care (MFA) provided \$250 million annually exclusively for programs for preschool-aged children. Provinces and territories were to meet broad principles in their spending and agreed to enhance accessibility, quality, inclusion and parental choice. Unlike past agreements for child care, funding was not targeted to low-income families, and the concept of accountability was introduced. Both the ECDI and MFA had specific requirements for each jurisdiction to issue annual reports on their progress.^a

The MFA and the QUAD coincided with the release of an assessment by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) of Canada's early education and care services. Together, they opened a public discussion that helped change policy-makers' perceptions about child care. No longer was it primarily viewed as labour market support for low-income parents. The inclusion of early learning into the agreements' names reflected an understanding of the need for environments that support children's earliest development.

^aWhile Quebec receives funding, it is not a signatory to these agreements.

The requirement that provinces and territories develop plans promoting access and quality as a condition of funding was also a departure. Until then, most provinces/territories had limited their involvement to program licensing and assessing the eligibility of low-income working parents for subsidies. An opening was created for community planning, for support for the early childhood workforce and to establish curriculum and accountability frameworks.

Child Care Spaces Initiative (2007)

The Child Care Spaces Initiative (CCSI) was developed to provide an incentive to employers to create workplace child care. The initiative again defined child care as a program primarily for working parents. By bypassing provincial/territorial governments, it undermined their newly-found role in early childhood service development. Following a report by a government-appointed committee pointing out the plan's flaws, the funds were transferred to provincial and territorial governments.²

Funding from all the above initiatives has since been rolled into the Canada Social Transfer, a block transfer to provinces/territories. As a portion of all early education and care spending, it is a resource available to provincial and territorial governments for early childhood services.

Direct Federal Funding to ECE Programs

The federal government has a direct role in funding early childhood programs on First Nations reserves, for military personnel, for federal prisoners and for refugees and immigrants to Canada. Funding levels have largely remained stagnant and some have been reduced for 2014–2015.

First Nations and Aboriginal Peoples

Four federal departments are responsible for early learning programs to Aboriginal people: Health Canada, Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). These departments transfer funds to First Nations communities for on-reserve and off-reserve school tuitions; Aboriginal Head Start on- and off-reserve; family support and maternal and child health programs on- and off-reserve; and the First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative. In addition, through intergovernmental agreements with Alberta and Ontario, the federal government reimburses a portion of the costs for on-reserve early childhood programming.

AANDC also transfers funds to First Nations for schools on-reserve and for tuitions for students attending schools off-reserve. Federal transfers for education have been held at a 2 percent increase annually since 1996, an amount that has not kept pace with inflation nor funding increases in provincial schools. In 2012, on a per capita basis, AANDC provided about \$3,000 less per full time Aboriginal student than what was spent on students in provincial schools.^{3,4}

Flatlined funding challenges First Nations communities to provide equitable programming for their children.⁵ Tuitions for First Nations students attending provincial schools have increased, putting First Nations in deficit positions with local school boards. The development of full-day kindergarten in some

provinces has not rolled out at the same rate in First Nations communities because federal funding does not recognize the increased costs. In addition, obstacles to the recruitment and retention of qualified educators are magnified in Aboriginal communities. Administrators and educators are not required to have the same qualifications as educators working in provincial schools and programs. They do not have access to the same supports or professional development opportunities, nor do they enjoy the same remuneration or job security available to the largely unionized education sectors in the provinces.

Funding formulas and agreements between First Nation communities and four federal government departments and their provincial counterparts create a jurisdictional quagmire that impedes service development and provision.⁶ First Nations communities face additional social and structural barriers. The pain of residential schools has left a legacy of suspicion of group educational programs for children, particularly those influenced by non-Aboriginals.⁷

Military Families

The Department of National Defence/Canadian Forces supports Military Family Resource Centres in Canada and abroad.⁸ Their mandate covers child and youth development, parenting and family supports. Some provide child care on-site, while others act as a referral service. A 2009 report identified a significant gap between the need for and the availability of child care services for Canadian Forces families. In particular, there was a lack of emergency care to deal with deployment, evening and weekend work, respite care and casualty support. Despite the shortage of trained educators for Canadian Forces programs, there is no strategy for training or recruitment.⁹

Community Action Program for Children (1993)

The Community Action Program for Children (CAPC) supports activities targeted to children between birth and 6 years of age living in challenging circumstances. These programs are funded through ministerial agreements between the Public Health Agency of Canada and provinces/territories, and are managed through joint management committees in each province/territory.

Other Programs

Approximately two-thirds of federally sentenced women have dependent children. Correctional Service Canada mother-child programs allow preschool-age children to reside with their mother with the option of attending preschool programs in the community or in the prison.¹⁰ At the time of writing, only one facility—Edmonton—has the program, and only one child is enrolled.¹¹

The Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration offers funding for Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC). A child care component, available for children ages 6 months to 6 years, helps parents attend LINC classes by covering the costs of informal care on-site or in local licensed child care centres.¹² Funding was reduced in the 2014 budget.

The Child Care Human Resources Sector Council was one of the industry councils funded by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. Through research and networking, it developed and disseminated information and tools for early

childhood educators and program operators. Funding for all councils ended in March 2013.

The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY), developed jointly by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and Statistics Canada, followed the development of children in Canada through regular monitoring of factors that influence their well-being. Its final report was tabled in 2012. Statistics Canada developed one round of data collection with the Survey of Young Canadians with a questionnaire based on the NLSCY.¹³ The file is now inactive.

Figure 1.1 Federal Investments in Early Learning and Child Care

Policy	Program Name	Lead Department	Annual Expenditure
Major transfers to P/T governments	Canada Social Transfer	Finance Canada	\$1.2-billion for support of children's programs. Increases by 3% annually. ^a
Income transfers	Universal Child Care Benefit	ESDC	3.1 billion ^b
Tax expenditures	Child Care Expense Deduction	CRA	\$955-million ^c
	Investment Tax Credit for Child Care Spaces		Less than \$2.5-million ^d
Programs for Aboriginal Children	Aboriginal Head Start Urban and Northern Affairs	PHAC	\$41.3-million ^e
	Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve	PHAC	\$59-million ^f
	First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative	ESDC	\$56.6-million ^g
	Child Care on Reserve (ON, AB)	AANDC	\$21-million ^h
Other spending	Military Families, newcomers, research, etc.	Various	N/A

^aFinance Canada website, August 2014. Based on the following FPT agreements: \$500 million for ECDI; \$250 million for ELCC; \$250 million for new child care spaces; ^bBudget 2014-2015 estimates¹⁴; ^cTax Expenditures and Evaluations, projection for 2013-14; ^dTax Expenditures and Evaluations, projection for 2013-14; ^ePublic Health Agency of Canada program evaluation, allocation for 2014-15. Of this, \$36.3 million is ongoing funding and \$5 million is funding which is due to sunset in 2014-15; ^f\$46.5 million base funding, \$7.5 million ongoing initiatives, \$5 million due to sunset in 2014-15; ^gHuman Resources Social Development Canada website, for 2008-09; ^hAboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada website fiscal year 2006-07.

1. Budget 2014-15. The Government Expenditure Plan and Main Estimates. Retrieved from www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ems-sgd/me-bpd/20142015/me-bpd-eng.pdf
 2. Department of Finance Canada. (2014). Tax Expenditures and Evaluations 2013. Retrieved from www.fin.gc.ca/taxexp-depfisc/2013/taxexp13-eng.asp
 3. Ibid.
 4. Public Health Agency of Canada. (2014). Evaluation of the Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities Program at the Public Health Agency of Canada. Retrieved from www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/about_apropos/evaluation/reports-rapports/2011-2012/ahsunc-papacun/index-eng.php
 5. Ibid.

POLICY DEVELOPMENTS: THE PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES

1. Governance

Early childhood services are split between education, parenting and care programs. Kindergarten is delivered as an extension of public education, an entitlement for all and with no fees charged. Parenting programs have a mix of public and community sponsors. Where available, they are generally offered at no or minimal cost to parents. Neither kindergarten nor parenting programs address the need for non-parental care—that falls to child care. Market delivery dominates the delivery of child care

services, leaving them fragmented, unaccountable and vulnerable.

In 2006, the OECD released *Starting Strong*, the most comprehensive examination of early childhood education and care ever undertaken.¹⁴ Its investigation of services in 20 countries found that in jurisdictions where the policy and delivery of education and child care are divided, similar challenges prevail:

- Coverage is sparse.
- Not all families receive the services they are eligible for.
- Service location and affordability are barriers.
- Service hours and parents' work schedules often conflict.
- Families with multiple needs have difficulty fitting services together.
- Families lose needed services as children age or their circumstances change.

Service providers are also challenged:

- There is no ongoing contact with families during their children's early years.
- Inflexible mandates and funding criteria prevent the delivery of cohesive support.
- Funding is based on outputs rather than outcomes, making it difficult to tailor services to families' diverse needs and circumstances.
- Mandates are focused on the treatment of deficiencies rather than their prevention or the promotion of healthy development.

The OECD's 2004 profile of Canada fit the description of countries with divided policy and delivery of early education and child care.¹⁵ Funding and access challenges were highlighted, but the absence of coherent legislative and policy frameworks was also identified. There is a need for more public investment, the OECD suggested, but how it is spent requires equal consideration.

Since then, a convergence of opinion among policy-makers, academics, parents and educators has agreed that early childhood programs should be structured to capture young children's exuberance for learning and prepare them for school. In *Learn Canada 2020: Joint Declaration Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Education*, the prekindergarten years were named as the first of the four pillars of lifelong learning. High-quality early education should be available to all children, the declaration stated.¹⁶

A more mature understanding of the role of public policy in supporting early childhood education has spurred jurisdictions to adopt a more comprehensive view of the early years. Most provinces/territories have produced policy frameworks with visions and goals. In addition, education departments more actively promote learning for young children.

Since 2006, eight jurisdictions have appointed a lead department responsible for early childhood services. Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Ontario, Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and most recently, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, have combined their education, child care and related early years

services under their ministries of education. In Quebec, schools have been responsible for after-school programs for children ages 5 to 12 years since 1998. Manitoba's five-year plan for child care (2014) includes a commission to examine service delivery.

Co-locating responsibilities for the early years within the same ministry does not necessarily result in policy and funding coherence. Some jurisdictions have established divisions within their ministries responsible for addressing the unique needs of young learners. These units have adopted a holistic view of child development, assisting schools to create environments suitable for younger learners and helping to allay reasonable concerns that schools are not sufficiently responsive to very young children. The early years mandate of New Brunswick education from birth to age 8 is reflected in the reexamination of its pedagogical approaches in the primary grades. Newfoundland and Ontario are reviewing their grades 1–3 curriculum to extend the experiential learning frameworks that have been successful with younger children.

Moving child care under the wing of education departments is limited if on-the-ground service delivery remains fragmented. Parents still struggle to find affordable, reliable services, and service providers continue to answer to multiple funding and regulatory masters. In a major reorganization, New Brunswick has aligned all its early years' services to match seven new school divisions. Amendments to Ontario's new child care legislation require school boards and service providers to cooperate with municipal children's services managers in the planning and delivery of early years' services.

Creating an early childhood education system out of a service patchwork is tough work, but it is worth it. When early education is organized so it also supports parents' workforce participation, it more than pays for itself. Parents who are able to work pay taxes and draw less on social transfers. Children who are nurtured and stimulated in their early years are less likely to require expensive special education programs. Getting governance structures right is the foundation to growing effective ECE services.

Figure 1.2. Governance for Early Childhood Education by Province/Territory

Province/Territory	Single ECE Department	Common ECE Supervisory Unit	Integrated ECE Framework	Local Authority	Public Advisory
NL	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development	In development	<i>Early Learning Framework: Learning from the Start</i> (2012). <i>Caring for Our Future: Provincial Strategy for Quality, Sufficient and Affordable Child Care in Newfoundland and Labrador</i> (2012-2022)	Kindergarten: 2 school districts; 1 English with 4 regions, 1 French Early Years Programs: 4 regions	
PE	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development	Division of Early Childhood Development	<i>Securing The Future For Our Children: Preschool Excellence Initiative</i> (May 2010)	Kindergarten: 1 English and 1 French language school board Early Years Programs: Child Care Facilities Board	Early Years Advisory Committee (to be established)
NS	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development	Early Years Branch	In development	Kindergarten: 9 school boards; 7 English, 1 French, 1 Aboriginal Early Years Programs: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development	Advisory Council on the Early Years Provincial Early Years Partnership
NB	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development	Early Childhood Development	<i>Be Ready for Success</i> (2008) <i>Action Plan: Putting Children First</i> (2012)	Kindergarten: 7 district education councils; 4 Anglophone, 3 francophone Early Years Programs: Early Childhood Services Coordinators are located within the department's 7 districts	Francophone and Anglophone early childhood service networks
QC			<i>Strategic Plan 2012–2017</i>	Kindergarten and after-school programs: 69 school boards, 60 French, 9 English Early Years Programs: 165 regional coordinating offices of the Ministère de la famille et des aînés	Regional advisory committees
ON	Ministry of Education	Early Years Division	Ontario Early Years Policy Framework (2013)	Kindergarten and after-school programs: 72 school boards; 31 English Public, 29 English Catholic, 4 French Public, 8 French Catholic, plus 10 School Authorities Early Years Programs: 47 regional service managers	
MB			<i>Starting Early, Starting Strong: Manitoba's Early Child Development Framework</i> (November 2013). <i>Family Choices: Manitoba's Plan to Expand Early Learning and Child Care</i> (2014)	Kindergarten: 37 school divisions including 1 Division Scolaire Franco-Manitobaine Early Years Programs: Provincial licensing staff work out of the Winnipeg community area and regional offices throughout the province	Provincial Healthy Child Advisory Committee Child Care Regulatory Review Committee The Parent Child Coalitions
SK	Ministry of Education	Early Years Branch		Kindergarten: 28 school divisions including Conseil des écoles fransaskoises Early Years Programs: 3 regional offices of the Early Learning and Child Care Program	Regional Intersectoral Committees Early Years Networks linked to RICS and KidsFirst

Figure 1.2. Governance for Early Childhood Education by Province/Territory (con't)

Province/Territory	Single ECE Department	Common ECE Supervisory Unit	Integrated ECE Framework	Local Authority	Public Advisory
AB			<i>Together We Raise Tomorrow, An Alberta Approach to Early Childhood Development</i> (2013)	Early Childhood Services: 41 public, 16 separate, 4 Francophone, 142 private school authorities, 96 private ECS school authorities, 35 First Nations Early Years Programs: 10 regional Child and Family Services Authorities	Family and Community Engagement Councils
BC			<i>The Family's Agenda for British Columbia; Building Sustainable Quality Early Years Strategy to Support BC Families</i> (2013)	Kindergarten: 60 school districts, Conseil scolaire francophone, independent schools Early Years Programs: Community Care Licensing Branch, Ministry of Health	Provincial Childcare Council
NT	Department of Education, Culture and Employment	Early Childhood Development and Learning	<i>Right from the Start: A Framework for Early Childhood Development in the Northwest Territories</i> (2013)	Kindergarten: 8 educational jurisdictions Early Years Programs: 6 regions	

Source: Provincial and Northwest Territories profiles (2014)

2. Funding

Despite government changes and differences in capacities, ranging from surpluses in the west to deficit challenges in middle Canada and the east, every jurisdiction maintained their contributions to the early years in 2014, while most increased their funding over 2011.

Figure 2.1 Provincial/Territorial Budget Balance 2014/2015 (millions)

Province /Territory	Budget
NL	(\$349)
PE	(\$40)
NS	(\$279)
NB	(\$391)
QC	(\$2,350)
ON	(\$12,500)
MB	(\$357)
SK	\$71
AB	\$1,385
BC	\$184
NT	\$200

Numbers based on 2014 budget estimates as reported by individual governments.

Newfoundland earmarked \$34.5-million for full-day kindergarten to begin in 2016. Ontario's ambitious plan for full-day kindergarten for all its 265,000, 4- and 5-year-olds was realized this year, as was the beginning of 4-year-old full-day kindergarten in the Northwest Territories. Saskatchewan expanded its prekindergarten sites. Nova Scotia is piloting integrated children's centres in its schools, including a universal program for 4 year olds. British Columbia has approved 12 provincially branded Early Years Centres to better coordinate early childhood services.

Quebec's 2014 budget plan commits to increasing state-subsidized child care spaces by 6,500 this year and 4,000 a year until the network is complete. Included is a 10-year, \$807 million capital fund. Saskatchewan allocated \$52.7 million to add another 500 child care spaces in 2014-15. Manitoba upped its budget by \$5.5 million to add more spaces and enhance support to the workforce. Alberta's child care budget increased by \$18 million for access, quality and wage improvements. The 2014 budget added \$17.7 million in British Columbia for new spaces, with an emphasis on spaces located in schools. Newfoundland enhanced its budget by \$11.4 million.

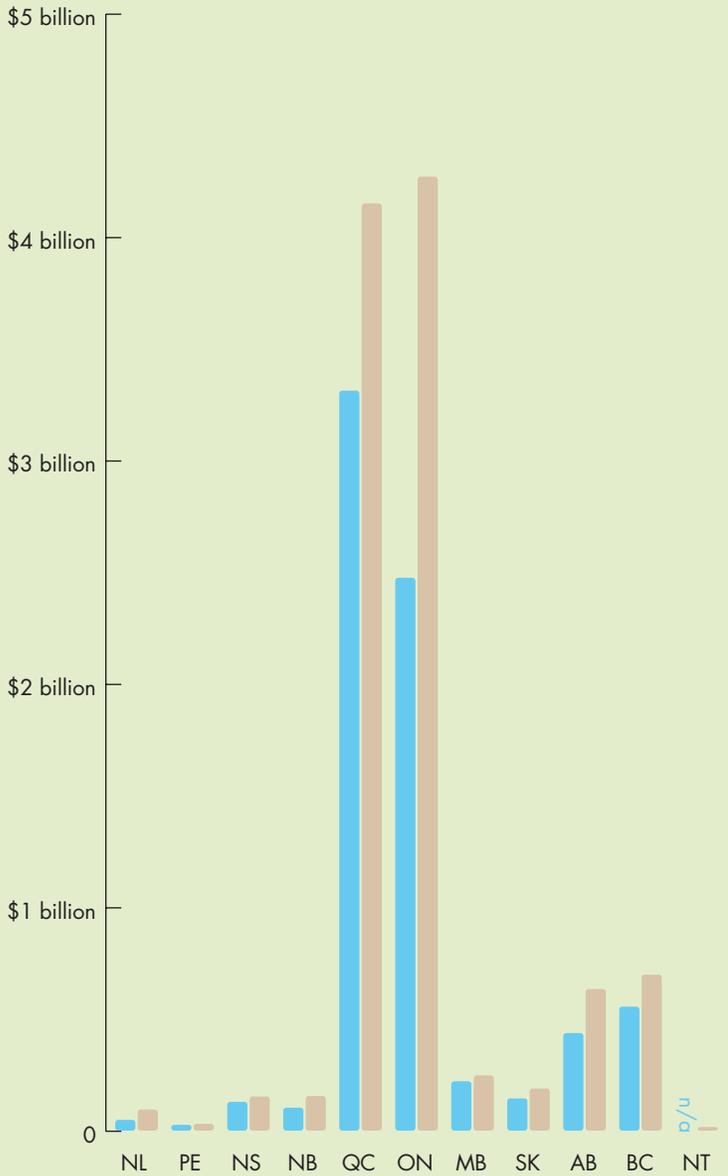
But public funding for early childhood services still remains low and, on the child care side, is primarily directed to priming the market, encouraging operators to establish or expand services.

Figure 2.2 ECE Budget as a Percentage of Provincial/Territorial Budgets

Province/Territory	Kindergarten	Licensed Child Care	Other ECE	Total ECE Budget	P/T Budget	ECE Budget as % of P/T Budget
NL	\$47,000,000	\$39,139,000	\$8,885,300	\$95,024,300	\$7,501,613,000	1.3%
PE	\$15,917,877	\$14,750,500		\$30,668,377	\$1,657,000,000	1.9%
NS	\$100,812,000	\$52,925,000		\$153,737,000	\$9,935,694,000	1.5%
NB	\$87,302,200	\$43,906,900	\$24,600,800	\$155,809,900	\$8,427,214,000	1.8%
QC	\$908,812,000	\$3,245,511,100	\$232,249,000	\$4,177,572,100	\$97,400,000,000	4.3%
ON	\$3,002,663,929	\$1,295,691,820		\$4,298,355,749	\$130,400,000,000	3.3%
MB	\$97,428,766	\$148,945,000	\$2,465,782.00	\$248,839,548	\$11,358,486,000	2.2%
SK	\$99,479,000	\$71,740,000	\$18,482,000	\$189,701,000	\$11,803,200,000	1.6%
AB	\$349,991,344	\$287,753,000		\$637,744,344	\$40,432,000,000	1.6%
BC	\$360,972,000	\$324,211,000	\$17,278,000	\$702,461,000	\$44,416,000,000	1.6%
NT	\$11,767,075	\$4,517,000		\$16,284,075	\$1,466,824,000	1.1%

Source: Provincial and Northwest Territories profiles (2014)

Figure 2.3 Change in Provincial and Territorial Early Childhood Education Spending* — 2011/2014



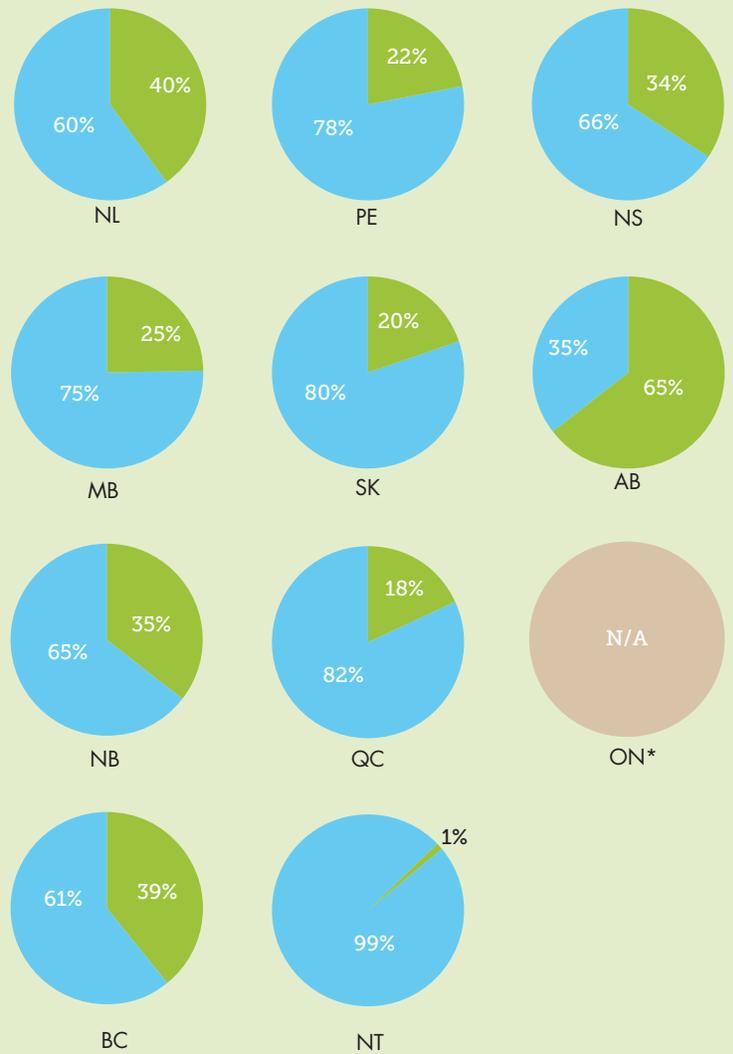
*Budget estimates as reported by individual governments 2011/2014
Source: Early Childhood Education Report 2014 (Provincial and Northwest Territories profiles)

Public funding for regulated child care takes two approaches:

1. Funding families through fee subsidies for low-income parents, or through tax deductions or credits.
2. Funding programs usually through operating grants to offset wage costs or to support the participation of children with special needs, and one time grants for capital, equipment and start-up.

All provinces and territories provide some form of direct operating funding to child care programs. Direct funding takes the pressure off parent fees and provides a level of stability to programs that parent fees alone cannot provide. Quebec, Manitoba and Prince Edward Island are the jurisdictions with more publicly-managed services, including assured operating funds, along with provincially-established wage floors and parent fees.

Figure 2.4 Licensed Childcare Program Funding versus Fee Subsidy Spending 2014



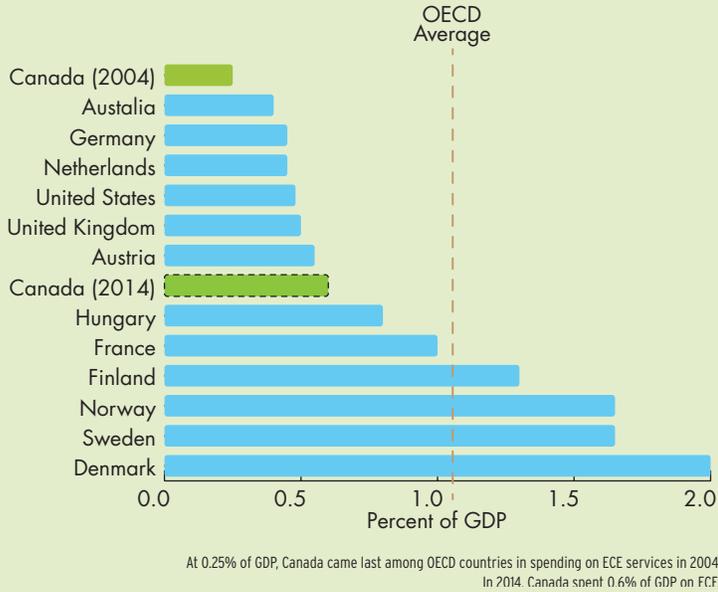
*Ontario no longer specifies a funding breakdown for operations or fee subsidies in its transfers to regional children's service managers.
Source: Provincial and Northwest Territories profiles (2014)

While funding for child care has increased since we last reported in 2011, the percentage of operating funding to fee subsidy spending has remain relatively constant.

Funding methodology also determines who participates in programs. Government subsidy levels often do not match the fees licensed centres must charge to attract and keep qualified staff. Low-income families are unable to pay for the gap between the fees charged and the subsidies governments provide, forcing them to settle for unregulated options.

Since the OECD's embarrassing exposé, the provinces have upped their contribution from .25 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to .6 percent. This includes \$3 billion added to provincial/territorial ECE budgets since 2011. Canada is now on its way to spending the 1 percent of GDP that would bring it in line with early education investments made by other OECD countries.

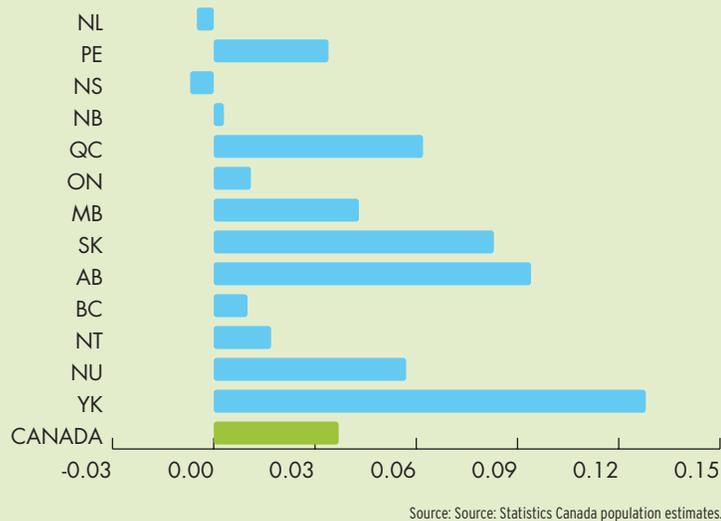
Figure 2.5 Public Expenditures (2004) on ECE Services (0–6 years) in Selected OECD Countries as a percentage of GDP



3. Access

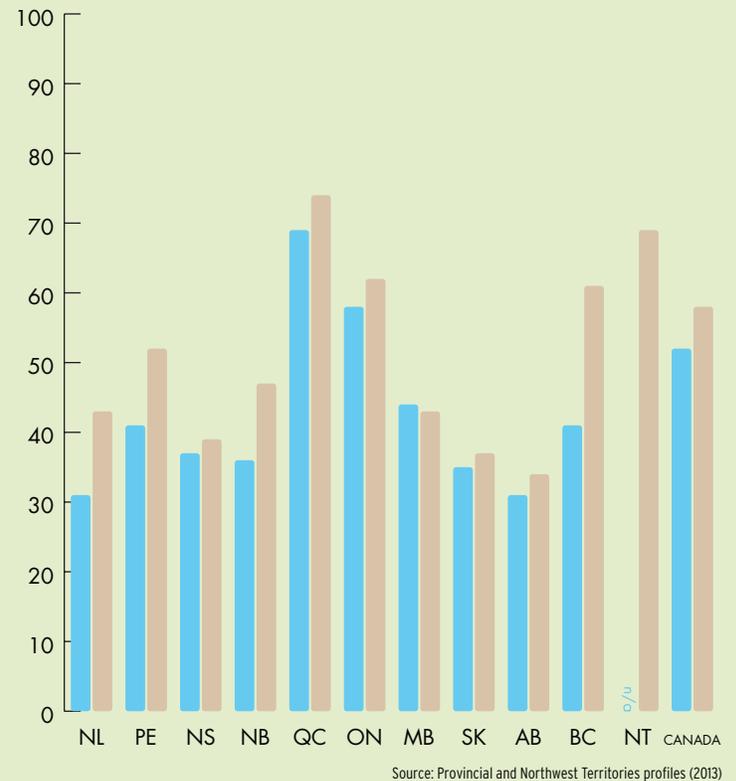
Provinces and territories have increased their investments in early education programs, but access has not kept pace with the mini-baby boom happening in this some parts of the country. The population of children aged 4 years and younger increased 4 percent overall between 2011 and 2013. Population increases may be uneven, but child population growths do not necessarily result in a corresponding bump in resources for young children.

Figure 3.1 Proportion Change in Population of Children 0 to 5 years of age by Province/Territory (2010 to 2013)



Some jurisdictions have opted to expand access to early childhood programs through their education systems. Seven out of the 13 provinces and territories now offer full-day kindergarten for 5-year-olds, with Newfoundland readying for 2016 enrolments. Ontario and the Northwest Territories are extending full-day programming for 4-year-olds, and Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta have expanded access to 3- and 4-year-olds in at-risk circumstances. Education departments have also become more proactive in preparing preschoolers for kindergarten. School boards in Ontario and British Columbia

Figure 3.2 Percentage Change in ECE Attendance by Children 2 to 4 Years Old — 2011/2014



directly operate drop-in centres that provide a consistent program during the school year, staffed by early childhood educators. New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Quebec offer intensive orientations to kindergarten.

While education departments have increased their comfort level with young children, other than Quebec, they are reluctant to operate programs beyond regularly scheduled school hours. Regional school boards have responded to the needs of modern families by providing extended hour programming. In addition to Quebec, some school boards in the Northwest Territories, Alberta and Ontario provide before- and after-school programs.¹⁷ In Ontario, where four school boards have opted to directly provide out-of-school care, access has quadrupled, fees have decreased and early childhood educators are enjoying the benefits of public sector employment.¹⁸

For child care operators, full-day kindergarten can be destabilizing. Quebec and Prince Edward Island managed the introduction of full-day kindergarten with a comprehensive transition plan that refocused child care operators to provide services for younger-aged children. Child care programs in these provinces now enjoy greater stability and families have more options.

Under pressure from child care operators, Ontario abandoned its short-lived trial requiring school boards to offer extended hours as part of a seamless day for children in full-day kindergarten. But providing after-hours activities for children in full-day schooling is no economic lifeline for child care. Despite stabilization efforts Ontario child care programs are losing qualified early childhood educators, who prefer to work in the school system rather than the split shifts of daycare.¹⁹

Figure 3.3 Percentage of 2-4 Year Olds Regularly Attending an ECE Program by Province/Territory

Province/Territory	Child Population 2-4 years	Child Care/Preschool	Prekindergarten ^a	Other ^b	Total Attending	% Attending ECE Program
NL	15,184	5,927		800	6,727	44
PE	4,470	2,091		250	2,341	52
NS	26,199	9,500	790		10,290	39
NB	21,959	10,211			10,211	47
QC	269,605	180,153	19,425		199,578	74
ON	432,316	137,926	126,347	4,300	268,573	62
MB	47,732	19,436		1,000	20,436	43
SK	43,827	11,144		4,875	16,019	37
AB	157,439	56,474		1,150	57,624	37
BC	134,014	48,370		33,300	81,670	61
NT	2,036	1,057	150	200	1,407	69
CANADA	1154781	482,289	146,712	45,875	674,876	58

^a Includes pre-primary in Nova Scotia, pre-maternelle in Québec, JK in Ontario and Northwest Territories.
^b Includes Aboriginal Head Start, unlicensed nursery school in Saskatchewan, Strong Start in British Columbia and parent/child programs in Ontario.

Figure 3.4 Enrolment Rates in Early Childhood and Primary Education at age 4 — Full/Part-Time in Public and Private Institutions



Source: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2014)

While there are more educational opportunities for young children than ever before, the schism between publicly-delivered early education and child care continues, requiring parents to piece together programs to meet their work and family demands.

Public debates concerning the validity of early childhood programming often revolve around the rubric of “parental choice.” Opponents point to the large numbers of young children who do not regularly attend programming as an indication that parents either do not want or do not need organized programs for their young children. But family preferences may be disguised by a number of barriers. Are programs available in accessible locations? Do they operate during hours that meet work and family schedules? Are they affordable? Are they responsive to the language, culture and routines of the community?

Whether or not children attend programming can also be influenced by the family’s knowledge of what early education is and the benefits it offers their children. Poor health and poverty, with their related economic and social demands, may also limit parents’ views of their options. There are other ways of gauging demand. Where early years programs are present, affordable and of reasonable quality, they are well-used. Kindergarten is available for 5-year-olds across the country. Even where attendance is non-compulsory, up to 99 percent of children attend.²⁰ In Quebec, where 60 percent of children age 1- to 4-years have a place in a state-subsidized children’s centre, 40 percent of families without a place want one.²¹

While access to ECE has increased, overall Canada lags behind the majority of its OECD counterparts, which have made ECE a universal program for most 4 year olds.

4. Learning Environments

Educators and what they do in early childhood education programs are essential to determining how effective programs are and how much children and their families benefit. Educators who have early childhood development knowledge and pedagogy use curriculum to design effective learning environments.

The *You Bet I Care!* study of Canadian child care programs concluded that physically safe environments with caring, supportive adults are the norm in the majority of centres in Canada. However, fewer than half of the preschool rooms (44.3%) and slightly more than a quarter of the infant/toddler rooms (28.7%), are also providing activities and materials that support and encourage children's development".²² Stimulating environments were more likely when staff compensation and educational levels were higher, the study found. Reasonable salary and benefits, clear job responsibilities and obligations, and health and safety protections create a positive working climate for educators, which in turn create a quality setting for young children and their families.

The early childhood workforce is divided along the same policy lines that influence access and funding, with the same uneven results. Certified teachers mainly work for school boards, while early childhood educators have a range of employers, including non-profit organizations, businesses and public agencies, the latter including local or provincial/territorial governments, post-secondary institutions and school boards. About 75 percent of staff working in child care and other preschool settings have a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree, in contrast to 57 percent of workers in all occupations.²³ Despite the level of formal education, child care staff, particularly those employed by community or commercial child care programs, often earn less than the average provincial wage and benefits are minimal. Only Quebec, Manitoba and Prince Edward Island provide pension plans for child care staff.

Full-time positions requiring post-secondary qualifications average \$36,900 per year, often without benefits, but there is considerable variation. In contrast, teachers in kindergarten programs, as public sector employees with working environments established by collective bargaining, often earn more than twice as much. The large wage gap among educators is emerging as a major workforce issue as early childhood positions become

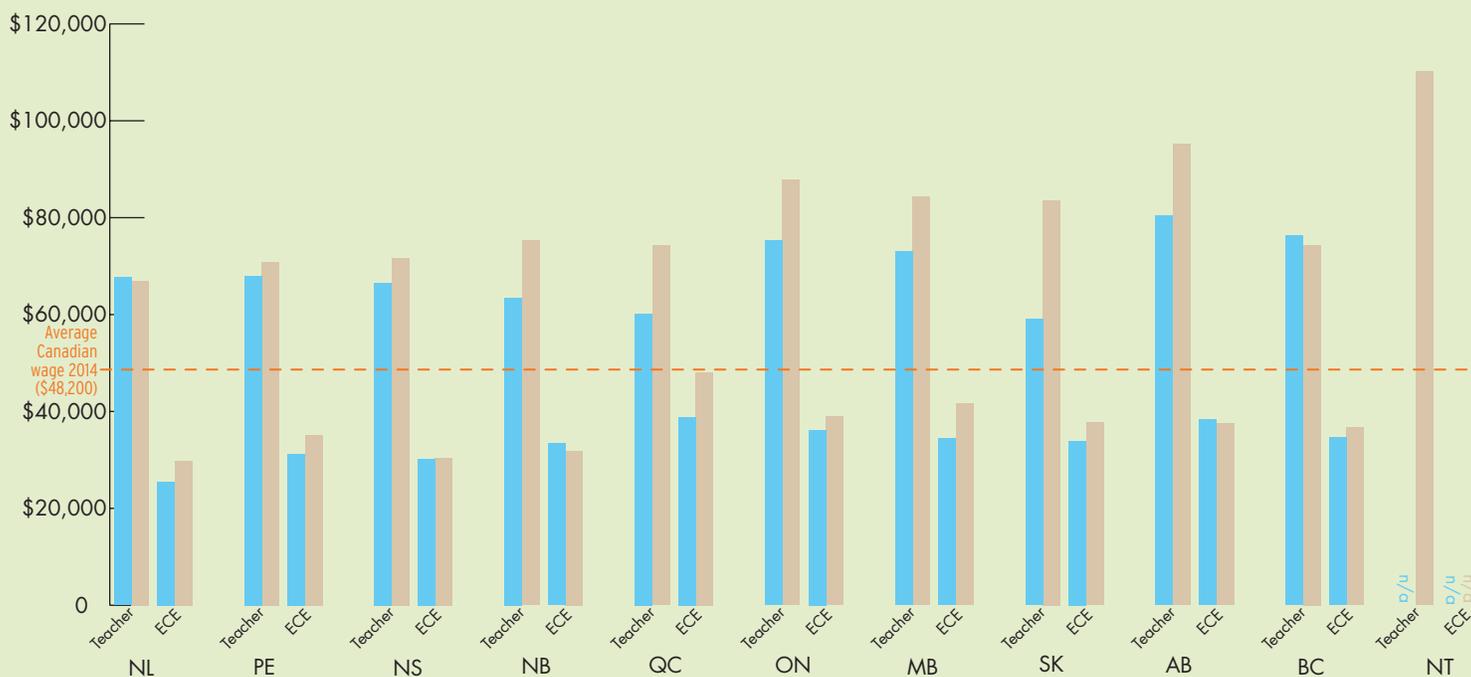
integrated into schools. Privately-operated care programs cannot compete with the wages and working conditions offered by school boards and are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain qualified educators.

Figure 4.2 Teacher-ECE Remuneration by Province/Territory

Province/ Territory	Teacher Salaries (\$ 2013/2014 ^a)	ECE FTE Salaries (\$ 2013 ^b)	ECE Salaries as % of Teacher Salaries
NL	\$67,001	\$29,786	45%
PE	\$70,878	\$35,110	50%
NS	\$71,654	\$30,389	42%
NB	\$75,241	\$33,446	44%
QC	\$74,244	\$48,027	65%
ON	\$87,780	\$38,979	44%
MB	\$84,325	\$41,644	49%
SK	\$83,584	\$37,731	45%
AB	\$95,117	\$37,544	39%
BC	\$74,353	\$36,691	49%
NT	\$110,204	N/A	n/a

^aBritish Columbia Teacher's Federation. 2013-2014 Canadian teacher salary rankings: Provinces and territories. Retrieved from www.bctf.ca/uploadedfiles/public/bargainingcontracts/teachersalaryrankings2013-14brief.pdf; ^b Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, custom tabulation S0814_04_Tab2.iv; ^cPublic Investments in Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2010. Retrieved from <http://www.dpe-agie-ecd-elcc.ca/eng/ecd/ececc/page06.shtml>; ^dThe Quality Improvement Funding Support Program (QIFS). Retrieved from <http://www.gnb.ca/0000/ECHDPE/pdf/QIFSHandbook.pdf>; ^eGuide administratif concernant la classification et la rémunération du personnel salarié des services de garde et des bureaux coordonnateurs de la garde en milieu familial. Retrieved from www.mfa.gouv.qc.ca/fr/publication/Documents/SG_guide_administratif_classification.pdf; ^fSalary grids from collective agreements provided by Northwest Territories Teacher's Association Otherwise Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, custom tabulation S0814_04_Tab2.ivt.

Figure 4.1 Change in Teacher / ECE Remuneration by Province/Territory in 2011/2014



Source: Early Years Study 3 (2011)/Provincial and Northwest Territories profiles (2014)/Statistics Canada (2014)

Other factors related to compensation affect the workforce. The poor infrastructure surrounding child care provides few resources for educators to support the increasingly complex needs of children and families. The lack of professional development opportunities and potential for advancement, the poor leadership in the sector and the overall lack of societal respect for the importance of what early childhood educators do eats away at one's sense of professional worth. Qualified educators leave child care, to be replaced with less-qualified staff, creating a downward spiral of reduced quality and less favourable environments to attract and keep professional educators.

Provincial/territorial policies have focused on encouraging graduates to enter and remain in the field. Newfoundland and British Columbia both provide bursaries for graduates. Almost every province/territory has enhanced wage grants aimed at stabilizing the workforce. Prince Edward Island expects early childhood educators working in kindergarten programs to upgrade to a teaching degree with an ECE specialty by 2016. It is the only jurisdiction to require enhanced qualifications since Quebec overhauled its educational expectations for the sector in 1999.

Each province and territory has legislation, regulations and standards that govern the operation of regulated child care programs. They identify requirements for staff, which may include the following:

- Post-secondary level training in early childhood development;
- Ongoing professional development;
- Certification or registration with a government or designated body; and/or
- Background checks and processes to recognize qualifications acquired in a different jurisdiction.

Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Newfoundland also expect enhanced qualifications for program directors.

No jurisdiction requires all staff in licensed child care or preschool centres to have a post-secondary credential in ECE, but all require some qualified staff. Several provinces/territories have minimum "entry level" training requirements for all staff,

Figure 4.3 Early Childhood Educators Required per Group of 3 Year Old Children in Licensed Child Care Centre

Province/Territory	ECEs per Group	Children in Each Group	Additional (non-ECE) Staff Required	Ratio ECE/3-year-olds
NL	1	16	1	1/16
PE	1	20	1	1/20
NS	2	24	1	1/12
NB	0.5	14	1.5	1/28
QC	2	24	1	1/12
ON	2	24	1	1/12
MB	1.3	16	1	1/12
SK	1	20	1	1/20
AB	1	16	1	1/32
BC	1	24	2	1/24
NT	1	16	1	1/16

Source: Provincial and Northwest Territories profiles (2014)

which vary from 40 to 120 hours of ECE course work. Where child/staff ratios are consistent across the country, the number of qualified early childhood educators required varies widely. Working in a field dominated by untrained staff becomes another burden for an already over-burdened profession.

In addition to the educational requirements, eight provinces/territories require all or some staff to be certified or registered. Registration (in Ontario), certification (in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador and Yukon), licensing (British Columbia) and classification (in Manitoba and Nova Scotia) are all processes that provide official recognition as an early childhood educator and enable the registrant to work in an early childhood program. The regulatory body has the authority to set entry requirements and standards of practice; to assess applicants' qualifications and academic credentials; to certify, register or license qualified applicants; and to discipline members for unprofessional conduct.

Curriculum

Most Canadian jurisdictions have now developed curriculum frameworks to support early childhood education.²⁴ Alberta and Newfoundland's are due for public release in late 2014, and the

Figure 4.4 Required Professional Standards for Early Childhood Educators by Province/Territory

Province/Territory	ECE Professional Requirement	Professional Development Required
NL	Certification: All graduates of ECE programs in post-secondary institutions recognized by the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education and Early Childhood Development are approved for certification. Post-secondary course approval from the department is guided by NLS Early Childhood Care and Education Program Standards	Minimum 30 hours over 3 years
PE	Certification: Child Care Facilities Board, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development	ECEs working in kindergarten must complete a teaching degree with ECE specialty by 2016. ECEs working in child care a minimum of 30 hours over 3 years
NS	Classification: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development	Minimum 30 hours over 3 years
NB		
QC		
ON	Registration: College of Early Childhood Educators	
MB	Classification: Early Learning and Child Care, Manitoba Family Services	
SK	Certification: Educator Services, Ministry of Education	
AB	Certification: Child Care Staff Certification, Alberta Human Services	
BC	License to Practice: ECE Registry in the Ministry of Children and Family Development	Minimum 40 hours every 5 years
NT		

Source: Provincial and Northwest Territories profiles (2014)

Northwest Territories full-day kindergarten curriculum is the base to expand its early learning approaches. Frameworks tend to be holistic and child-centred in their approach and constructed around learning and developmental goals. Where available, curriculum use is mandatory in school-operated settings, but it is not always a requirement in licensed child care.

Figure 4.5 ECE Curriculum Frameworks by Province/Territory

Province/Territory	Curriculum Framework
NL	Release scheduled 2014-15.
PE	<i>PEI Early Learning Framework: Relationships, Environments, Experiences: The Curriculum Framework of the Preschool Excellence Initiative</i> (2013).
NS	In discussion
NB	<i>New Brunswick Curriculum Framework for Early Learning and Child Care: English</i> (2008). <i>Le curriculum éducatif pour la petite enfance francophone du Nouveau-Brunswick: Français</i> (2008).
QC	<i>Meeting Early Childhood Needs: Québec's Educational Program for Childcare Services Update</i> (2007).
ON	<i>ELECT: Early Learning Framework. Online resource based on Early Learning for Every Child Today: A framework for Ontario's Early Childhood Settings</i> (2007). <i>How Does Learning Happen: Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years</i> (2014).
MB	<i>Early Returns: Manitoba's ELCC Curriculum Framework for Preschool Centres and Nursery Schools</i> (2011).
SK	<i>Play and Exploration: Early Learning Program Guide</i> (2008).
AB	Release schedule 2014-2015.
BC	<i>British Columbia Early Learning Framework. Victoria</i> (2008).
NT	

Source: Early Childhood Education Report 2014/Provincial and Northwest Territories profiles

School-operated kindergarten and prekindergarten programs follow a more defined, educator-guided curriculum that is organized by broad subject areas, or they may extend the provincial/territorial elementary curriculum down into the kindergarten years. The curriculum contains specific learning standards or expectations and is divided into subject areas. The learning standards or expectations have a propensity to drive planning, along with the assessment and evaluation of children's learning experiences.

Transition between any two phases of education poses challenges. The starting age for kindergarten ranges from 4.8 to 5.8 years (4.6 to 5.6 in Alberta), representing significant differences in child development. Yet the emergent curriculum frameworks designed for programs before children enter the public education system are not always aligned to kindergarten or primary school curriculum. Some jurisdictions have addressed this linking the goals of their early learning frameworks with kindergarten learning outcomes.

5. Accountability

Canada is signatory to a number of international agreements committing it to provide reasonable access to early education and care programs. The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women obliges governments to provide sufficient, affordable child care as a human rights issue. The Convention on the Rights of the Child is the first legally

binding international instrument to incorporate the full range of human rights to children, including the provision of programs promoting the young child's development, nutrition and health.

These processes play important roles in monitoring and reporting on the progress of governments in improving access to early childhood services in their countries. Outside of Quebec, Canada does not score well on compliance with UN documents. On UNICEF's 2008 Report Card, Canada achieved only one out of 10 targets on the Convention on the Rights of the Child.²⁵

Federal/provincial/territorial agreements propose that progress be monitored by jurisdictions providing annual reports to their respective publics. Monitoring is an integral part of democratic accountability to children, families and the public. It is essential for informed decision-making, ensuring that societal resources are deployed productively, resources distributed equitably and social goals reached. The challenge is to develop monitoring systems that capture how programs are operating, what children are learning and if system goals are being met. Monitoring on its own does not deliver results, although it is a crucial part of a larger system designed to achieve them.

Figure 5.1 Early Learning and Child Care Progress Reports by Province/Territory

Province/Territory	Progress Reports
NL	
PE	
NS	<i>Nova Scotia Early Childhood Development. Progress Report 2010-2012</i>
NB	<i>The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. 2012-2013 Annual Report.</i> <i>Child Day Care Services Annual Statistical Report 2011-2012.</i>
QC	<i>Rapport annuel de gestion 2012-2013 du ministère de la famille. Situation des centres de la petite enfance, des garderies et de la garde en milieu familial au Québec en 2012.</i>
ON	
MB	<i>Health Child Manitoba 2012</i> <i>Manitoba Education Annual Report 2012-2013</i> <i>Manitoba Services Annual Report 2013-2014</i>
SK	<i>Annual Report 2013-14</i>
AB	<i>Social Care Facilities Review Committee 2011-2012 Annual Report</i>
BC	<i>British Columbia's Early Years Annual Report 2011/2012</i>
NT	

Source: Provincial and Northwest Territories profiles (2014)

Monitoring Early Childhood Education Programs

Learning outcomes for children cannot be considered apart from the inputs they experience in terms of program quality, and the health and well-being of their families and neighbourhoods. Each jurisdiction has established health and safety regulations that child care operators must meet as a condition of licensing. Child care regulations are intended to protect children from harm but tell us little about the quality of the experience.

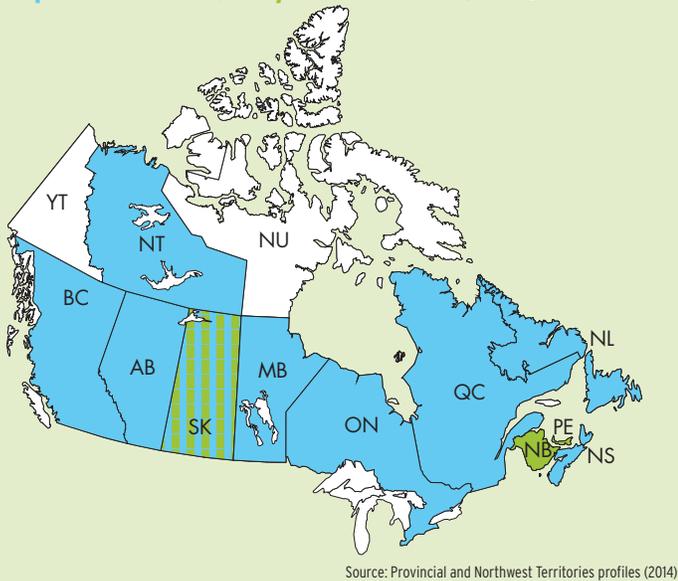
Some jurisdictions apply additional criteria beyond basic licensing. Quality assessment tools encourage reflective practice and provide some assurances to parents of the quality of the

environments where their children spend their days. Alberta has a voluntary accreditation system for child care programs that ties the maintenance of quality benchmarks to funding. Several jurisdictions use the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale to monitor quality, which looks at both the physical space children occupy and the quality of the interactions between adults and children. Some provinces/territories post their quality ratings online to allow parents to use the information when choosing their child's program.

Population Monitoring

In 1999, the *Early Years Study* recommended the development of a population measure of early child development before entry to grade 1. The Offord Centre for Child Studies in Hamilton, Ontario introduced the Early Development Instrument (EDI) that collects kindergarten teacher reports of individual children's development in five key domains: physical, social, emotional, language/cognitive and communication skills.

Figure 5.2 Child Population Monitoring Across Canada (Early Development Instrument; Early Years Evaluation; Both)



When EDI data are collected on all kindergarten children across a jurisdiction, they provide information about how children are doing at the neighbourhood, community and provincial/territorial level. Together with data about access to programs, neighbourhood status and family characteristics, researchers can describe children's well-being as they enter formal schooling.

EDI data are used extensively to inform communities about how their children are doing and what can be done to improve children's early learning environments. In addition, a Pan-Canadian initiative using the EDI tracks results across the country.²⁶ The Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and the Human Early Learning Partnership in British Columbia link administrative records from health care, education and other records to create population-based, longitudinal data. Reports show a strong link between EDI findings and later results on province-wide school testing.

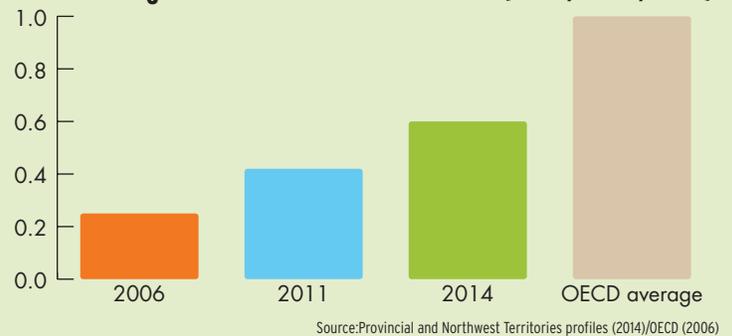
The *Early Years Evaluation* (EYE) is used across the province to help educators assess the skills of children ages 3–6 years as they transition to school. The EYE consists of two complementary

components: the EYE-Teacher Assessment (EYE-TA), a teacher rating scale, and the EYE-Direct Assessment (EYE-DA), which assesses four key areas of development: Awareness of Self and Environment, Cognitive Skills, Language and Communication, and Gross and Fine Motor Skills. A web-based tool calculates each child's scores, provides separate reports for each child and summarizes the results with graphical reports at the school, district and provincial levels.

6. Trends

Of all the trends identified in ECE Report 2014, the single most noteworthy is the decision of policy-makers to at least maintain, if not grow, funding to early learning and care. Another \$3 billion has been added to provincial/territorial early childhood budgets since 2011; this represents .6 percent of GDP. Still short of the 1.1 percent of GDP, representing the average for OECD spending on early education. This promising trend has not been the norm. Historically, governments have looked at funding for young children as expendable. It may be too early to say that early education has become an issue that is sticking with decision-makers, but to date the news is promising.

Figure 6.1 Change in Canada's Early Childhood Education Spending as a Percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (2006, 2011, 2014)



Policy-makers are also making better use of the existing infrastructure in public education to grow educational opportunities for young children. Whether it is through the direct provision of expanded kindergarten and prekindergarten, linking child care growth to schools or putting processes in place to smooth transitions for young children into the school system, the direction points to a deeper understanding of the needs of young children and their families.

Attention to quality is partnering with access, as jurisdictions enhance efforts to recruit and retain qualified early childhood educators and provide them with the tools they need for the important work they do.

Obviously much remains to be done. The split between education and care still frustrates children, families and service providers, and denies taxpayers that wonderful payback that comes from organizing early education so it also supports parents' labour force participation.

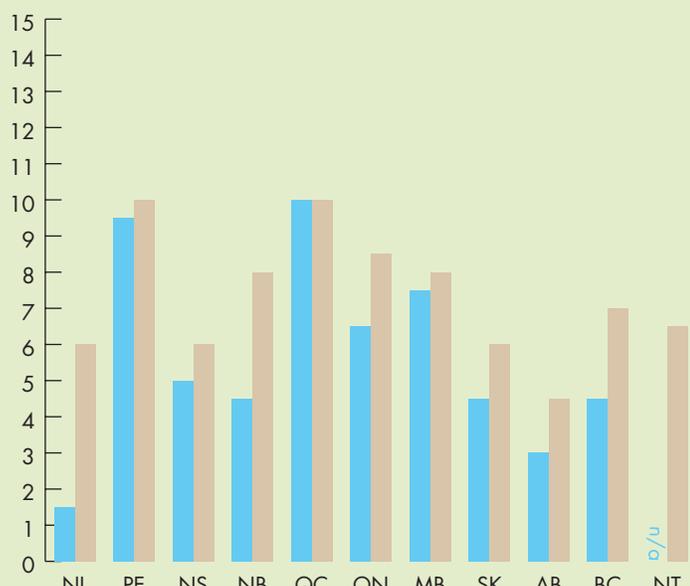
While it is too early to celebrate, these promising patterns may be viewed with cautious optimism. With staged prudent investments and an eye on systems management, all young children could take their place in an early childhood program in the decade to come.

Figure 6.2 Early Childhood Education (ECE) Report 2014

	Benchmarks	Value	NL	PE	NS	NB	QC	ON	MB	SK	AB	BC	NT
INTEGRATED GOVERNANCE	ECE under common department or ministry	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5		0.5		0.5			0.5
	Common ECE supervisory unit	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5		0.5		0.5			0.5
	Common ECE policy framework	1	1	1		1	1	1	1		1	1	1
	Common local authority for ECE administration and delivery	1				1							
FUNDING	At least 2/3 of child care funding goes to program operations ^a	1		1	1	1	1	n/a	1	1			1
	Mandated salary and fee scale	1		1			1		1				
	At least 3% of overall budget devoted to ECE	1					1	1					
ACCESS	Full day kindergarten offered	1		1	1	1	1	1				1	1
	50% of 2–4 year olds regularly attend an ECE program	1		1			1	1				1	1
	Funding conditional on including children with special needs	1		1 ^b					1				
LEARNING ENVIRONMENT	ECE curriculum framework	0.5	0.5	0.5		0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
	Alignment of ECE programs with kindergarten	0.5	0.5	0.5		0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
	At least 2/3 of staff in programs for 2–4 year olds are qualified	0.5	0.5		0.5		0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5			0.5
	Kindergarten educators require ECE qualifications	0.5		0.5				0.5 ^d					0.5
	Salaries of ECE at least 2/3 of teachers	0.5					0.5						n/a
	ECE professional certification/professional development required	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5			0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
ACCOUNTABILITY	Annual progress reports posted (2011 or later)	1			1	1	1 ^c		1	1	1	1	1
	Standards for ECE programs including kindergarten	1	1										
	Population measures for preschool collected and reported	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	TOTAL	15	6	10	6	8	10	8.5	8	6	4.5	7	6.5

Source: Early Childhood Education Report 2014/Provincial and Northwest Territories profiles; ^aAmount includes funding for special needs; ^bIn Early Years Centres only; ^cQuébec was not a signatory to the federal/provincial/territorial early childhood development agreements where the parties agreed to regular standardized reporting. Québec has its own mechanisms for public reporting; ^dECEs are part of an educator team

Figure 6.3 Change in Early Childhood Education Report Results 2011/2014



Source: Early Childhood Education Report 2014/Provincial and Northwest Territories profiles



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