

Ontario 2014

1. GOVERNANCE

Table 1.1 Ontario Governance Structure for Early Childhood Education

Lead Ministry/Department	Ministry of Education
Related Ministry/Department	
Policy Framework	Ontario Early Years Policy Framework (2013) ¹
Legislation	<i>Day Nurseries Act</i> ² (Subject to legislative approval. See below) <i>Education Act</i> (amended 2014) ³ O.Reg 137 Geographic Areas and Delivery Agents (I), O.Reg 262 (General), O.Reg 502 (Policy Statement) <i>Education Act</i> ; O.Reg. 224/10 – Full Day Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten ^{4, 5} <i>Education Act</i> ; O.Reg. 221/11 – Extended Day and Third Party Programs; O. Reg. 399/00 ⁶ <i>Early Childhood Educators Act</i> , 2007 ⁷ O.Reg 322/10 (letters of permission – ECE)
Related Legislation	
Common ECE Supervisory Unit	Early Years Division
Local Authority	47 Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) or District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs) manage child care and related early years services 72 school boards: 31 English Public; 29 English Catholic; 4 French Public; 8 French Catholic; 10 School Authorities oversee kindergarten and after school programs
Public Advisory	

New Developments

As of September 2014, full-day kindergarten was made available to all of Ontario's four- and five-year olds attending publicly funded schools. Bill 10, the *Child Care Modernization Act* (2014)⁸ before the legislature at time of writing, would repeal and replace the existing *Day Nurseries Act* with the *Child Care and Early Years Act*, 2014. The new act is intended to enhance the oversight of unregulated care. New prohibitions and duties are included for child care providers, as well as a range of enforcement tools. Features of the proposed bill also include incentives for home-based providers to join the licensed sector; clarity around what falls within the scope of child care and what programs are exempt from licensing; support for quality in child care and early years settings; and more responsibilities to municipal/regional service managers for the funding and planning of early years services, including setting out the provincial interest in the child care and early years system. Other amendments would require school boards to ensure extended-hour programs are available for children from grades 1 to 6, in addition to those offered to children attending kindergarten.

Department Organization

The Early Years Division in the Ministry of Education is responsible for kindergarten, child care and family support programs, including the development of legislation, regulations and policy, program implementation, child care quality assurance, licensing and program assessment. It also investigates and responds to complaints regarding unlicensed child care.⁹

Policy Framework

The Ontario Early Years Policy Framework provides strategic direction for services for children from birth to 6 years of age. Priority areas include full-day kindergarten; creating an effective approach to creating Best Start Child and Family Centres (BSCFCs); improving the delivery of children's speech and language services; and stabilizing the child care sector.

Service Design

- **Kindergarten:** Kindergarten is a two-year full-day, non-mandatory program offered by district school boards to all children in Ontario who turn 4 years old by December 31. Educator teams of certified teachers and registered early childhood educators teach kindergarten.
- **Extended-day:** School boards are required to provide before- and after-school programming for children enrolled in kindergarten when there is sufficient parent demand. Bill 10 would amend the *Education Act* to expand this requirement to ensure that boards also offer before-and after-school programs for children aged 6–12 years. The school board may directly offer these programs, or may contract with a licensed child care or a service provider prescribed by regulation.
- **Regulated child care:** The ministry licenses child care programs serving infants to children aged 12 years. Care may be provided in full day child care centres, part-day nursery schools, and before- and after-school programs and family child care. Licences may be held by an individual, band/councils, or by for-profit or non-profit corporations, including Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) and District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs) school boards, post-secondary institutions and parent cooperatives. Programs are licensed for a period of up to one year.

- **Family child care:** Licences are held by private-home day care (PHDC) agencies who contract with individual home-based child care providers. A private-home day care provider may care for up to five children under the age of 10 including their own children under the age of 6 years, up to two children under the age of 2 years and up to three children under the age of 3 years. Pending legislation would permit home providers to care for six children.
- **Unregulated child care:** Currently, an individual without a licence may provide child care in their home for up to five children under the age of 10 years, in addition to his/her own children. Under the proposed legislation, unlicensed child care providers could care for a total of five children, but no more than two children under the age of 2 and including their own children under the age of 6. Under the Day Nurseries Act, a licence is not required for all children's programs, such as programs operated when the children's parents are on-site at all times, and programs operated by school boards.
- **Family Support Programs:** There are currently four different family support programs funded by the province: Ontario Early Years Centres (OEYCs), Parent and Family Literacy Centres (PFLCs), Child Care Resource Centres (CCRCs) and Better Beginnings Better Futures (BBBFs). These programs provide support and various services to parents and children. Moving forward, the creation of Best Start Child and Family Centres will include the establishment of a common mandate, identity and core set of expectations.
 - ♦ OEYCs: There are more than 100 OEYCs located across the province. They are community-based and provide parent and child drop-in, family resource and referral services.
 - ♦ PFLCs: There are 172 school-based parent and child drop-in programs across the province. The program focuses on school readiness.
 - ♦ CCRCs: There are currently 61 Child Care Resource Centres located across the province. They provide parents and caregivers with information to make informed choices about child care arrangements and provide supports to caregivers.
 - ♦ BBFCs: There are currently eight Better Beginnings Better Future sites across the province. They are community-based and provide support for children and their families in high-needs communities.

Community Involvement/Oversight

The Early Years Division convenes stakeholder tables, but there is no legislated or policy requirement for public oversight/advisory bodies. Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) and District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs) may sponsor local stakeholder tables as part of their management and planning functions.

The Education Act requires a Parent Council in every school. School boards with large Aboriginal student populations generally have Aboriginal advisory committees.¹⁰

Local Service Delivery

School boards deliver kindergarten, oversee extended day programming and administer/oversee Parent and Family Literacy Programs and special needs interventions.

A total of 47 CMSMs and DSSABs administer parent fee subsidies and operational funding for child care programs, child care special needs services and family resource programs. Some regional authorities directly deliver child care and related early years programs. Some have developed their own quality assurance systems and child care registries.

The province provides funding to 74 First Nations and three transfer payment agencies to support child care and family support programs on-reserve. This includes funding to support child care costs for First Nations with licensed child care on reserve and Ontario Works child care fee subsidies (formal and informal) for First Nations that are delivering the full Ontario Works program.

2. FUNDING

Table 2.1 Ontario: Provincial Allocations for Regulated Child Care (2014–15)

Child care fee subsidies ^a	N/A
Operating funds (includes wage and training grants)	\$1,071,353,300
Operating funds for family support programs	\$99,401,300
Municipal contribution ^b	\$147,240,385
Total operating funds for regulated child care	\$ 1,295,691,820

^a With the introduction of the new funding formula and framework the Ministry no longer allocates funds specifically to fee subsidies.¹¹ ^b Municipal governments are required to cost-share a portion of administration and operating funding for child care. Amount reflects both 80/20 for operations and 50/50 cost share for administration required under the DNA. When the new child care funding formula and framework were introduced in 2013, municipal cost sharing contributions were calculated so that no CMSM/DSSAB would experience an increase in their minimum cost share from 2012. If a CMSM/DSSAB experienced a decrease to their child care allocation compared to 2012, their cost sharing requirements were reduced by the same proportion as their child care funding.¹²

Overall Funding

Table 2.2 Ontario: Operating Funding Early Childhood Education/Child Care¹³

Kindergarten, junior kindergarten ^a	\$3,002,663,929
Licensed child care and family support programs (including municipal contributions)	\$1,295,691,820
Total ECE spending	\$4,298,355,749
Total budget spending estimate 2014–2015	\$130,400,000,000
ECE as a percentage of provincial budget	3.3%

^aEstimate based on 2013 enrolment of 259,499 children @ \$11,571¹⁴

3. ACCESS

Population

Table 3.1 Ontario: Child Population 0–5 years¹⁵

Child population 0–5 years	864,301
0–1 years	283,497
2–4 years	432,316
5 years	148,488
Total population of Ontario	13,537,994
Children 0–5 years as percentage of total population	6.4%

Statistics Canada, Table 051-0001. Estimates of population, by age group and sex for July 1, 2013, Canada, provinces and territories (accessed: August 20, 2014)

Table 3.2 Ontario: Workforce Participation of Mothers by Age of Youngest Child (2013)

	Number mothers in workforce (000s) by age of youngest child	LF participation rate of mothers in workforce by age of youngest child
0–1 years	186.8	71.2%
2–4 years	200.1	73.7%
5 years	54.6	78.3%
Total mothers in workforce with child 0–5 years	441.5	
Average workforce participation of mothers with youngest child 0–5 years		74.4%

Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, custom tabulation S0814_04_Tab1.ivt.

Table 3.3 Ontario: ECE School Programs

Children attending publicly funded kindergarten	133,152
% of 5 year olds attending kindergarten	90%

Elementary school enrolment 2012/13. Retrieved from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/educationFacts.htm>; Does not include private school enrolment or children attending licensed child care. Not all First Nations schools report their enrolment numbers to provincial authorities.

Table 3.4 Ontario: Licensed Child Care Programs^{16, 17}

Spaces by age group in centre-based programs	
Infant	9,634
Toddler	32,578
Preschool	102,731
JK/SK	35,195
SK	5,601
School age	108,795
Total spaces centre-based programs	294,490
Enrolment in licensed family child care	16,807
Estimated total capacity in licensed child care*	311,297
Facilities by type	
Centre-based programs	5,050
Family child care agencies	127

*The estimated capacity comes from adding together the capacity of child care centres and licensed home child care enrolment (in lieu of licensed home child care capacity).

Table 3.5 Ontario: Percentage of Children Attending ECE Programs by Age Group

Child Ages	Number of children ^a	Child care spaces	Prekindergarten ^b	Other ECE programs	% children with access to ECE programming
0–1 years	283,497	42,212 (9,634, 0–18 months; 32,578, 18–30 months)			15
2–4 years	432,316	137,926 (102,731 31 months– 5 yrs; 35,195, 4 yrs)	126,347 (Junior Kindergarten)	4,300	62
5 years	148,488		133,152		90

^aStatistics Canada. Table 051-0001. Estimates of population, by age group and sex for July 1, Canada, provinces and territories (accessed: August 20, 2014); ^bFor 2012-13. Source: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/educationFacts.html>; ^cEstimated attendance by 2-3 year olds regularly attending parent/child drop-in programs.

Affordability

The Ontario government does not collect data on parent fees. Regionally fees vary widely. For example, in large urban centres such as Toronto and Ottawa, fees can exceed \$1500/month for infants and toddlers and \$900/month for preschool children. Subsidies are determined by an income test. Full subsidies are available. In 2012, the Ontario government conducted a one-time online survey on licensed child care. The full report can be found here: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/ChildCareQuestion.pdf>

Inclusion

Special needs support in kindergarten: Special education programming aligns support as children transition from preschool programs to kindergarten.¹⁸

Special needs support in child care: CMSMs/DSSABs are required to spend a minimum of 4.1 percent of their total child care allocation on Special Needs Resourcing (SNR). SNR funding is to be used primarily to support the inclusion of children with special needs in regulated child care settings and approved recreation programs at no additional cost to parents/guardians.

4. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Table 4.1 Ontario: Curriculum Frameworks

Program	Framework Documents
Kindergarten ¹⁹	<i>The Full-Day Early Learning – Kindergarten Program (draft)</i> is mandated for use in 4- and 5-year-old kindergarten
Extended day for kindergarten	<i>The Full-Day Early Learning – Kindergarten Program: The Extended-Day Program²⁰</i>
Early years programs	<i>How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years</i> (2014)

Work Environment

Kindergarten class size: The Ministry of Education has established a board-wide average of 26 students in full-day kindergarten classes with an educator team consisting of a teacher and an early childhood educator. The resulting ratio of one adult to approximately 13 children allows for more individual attention than the previous ratio in kindergarten programs of one educator with up to 23 children. School boards work hard to ensure class size averages are as close to 26 as possible, but some classes may be larger, while others may be smaller. Schools may have only one kindergarten class with a teacher and no RECE (dual track French Immersion Schools may have one such class per language track) if there are fewer than 16 pupils enrolled.

Child care: A child care provider may operate an unlimited number of licensed child care programs, but must have a licence for each location where care is provided to more than five children under 10 years of age. There is no limit on the licensed capacity of a child care program.

Table 4.2 Ontario: Group Size and Staff Child Ratio in Licensed Child Care Centres

Age of Child	Staff: Child Ratio	Maximum Class Size
Infants (birth–17 months)	1:3.3	10
Toddlers (18–30 months)	1:5	15
Preschool (31 months–5 years)	1:8	16/24 ^a
44–67 months	1:10	20
56–67 months	1:12	24
68 months and up to and including 12 years	1:15	30

^aContingent upon room size.

Educators

Table 4.3 Ontario: Educator Qualifications

Kindergarten Teachers	Early Childhood Educators
A Bachelor of Education degree or undergraduate degree and two years teacher education is required. French boards require language proficiency. Catholic boards often require proof of religious practice. Individuals must also be in good standing with the Ontario College of Teachers.	Diploma in Early Childhood Education from an Ontario College of Applied Arts and Technology (OCAAT) or a diploma/degree from a program listed on the College of Early Childhood Educators' Approved Post-Secondary Programs List, is required. Individuals must also be registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators.

Professional Standards

Table 4.4 Ontario: Professional Recognition and Development

	Certified Teachers	Registered ECEs
Professional Requirement	Ontario Teachers Certificate from the Ontario College of Teachers	Certificate of Registration with the College of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario
Professional Development Required		

Table 4.5 Ontario: Density of Qualified Staff in Child Care Centres

The number of children allowed in a room at any one time is equivalent to the group size except in the case of children 31 months of age up to, and including, 5 years of age where the maximum number of children per room is 24. In this situation two qualified staff are required.

Table 4.6 Ontario: Teacher and ECE Average Annual Salaries

Teachers ^a	Early Childhood Educators ^b	ECE salary as % of teachers salary
\$87,780	\$38,979	44%

^aBritish Columbia Teacher's Federation - 2013/2014 Canadian Teacher Salary Rankings: Province and Territories.²⁵; ^bStatistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, custom tabulation S0814_04_Tab2.ivt.

There are differences in pay scale depending on the settings in which the ECEs are employed. For example, an ECE in community child care earns an average of \$16.34 per hour. An ECE in a school board makes over \$22 per hour, which continues to increase as the ECE moves through a salary grid.

To help stabilize child care operators, close the wage gap and support program stability, Ontario will provide an additional \$269-million over three years to support an average \$1 per hour wage increase in 2015 and a further average \$1 per hour wage increase in 2016 for front-line child care staff working in licensed child care centres, child care centres managed by First Nations and licensed private-home daycare agencies.

5. ACCOUNTABILITY, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Annual reports: The latest report, *Progress Report 2014: Education*,²² includes an update on child care and kindergarten.

Program standards: Required for licensed child care.

Population monitoring: The Early Development Instrument (EDI) is collected in three-year cycles. All publicly-funded schools participate. EDI data was last collected in 2011–12.

Proposed legislation provides for the existing student registration number (Ontario Education Number) now attached to a child when he/she enrolls in school to be applied when the child enrolls in child care or an early years programs. This will permit better monitoring of outcomes throughout childhood.

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