



# The Methodology 2017

The reach of early childhood education (ECE) is broad, including the education, care and well-being of young children. Early education is also central to family policy and is associated with economic development and productivity. It is linked to a range of equity issues, including women's employment, work and family balance, anti-poverty strategies, the promotion of social cohesion and the settlement of new Canadians.

Reviews of early childhood education in Canada have traditionally focused on counting child care spaces and funding levels. Research has either evaluated child outcomes or the quality of programs offered. Until the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) 2004 review of early childhood education and care (ECEC) in Canada, there had not been an extensive evaluation of the policy frameworks that shape the environments in which service providers operate and small children learn and are nurtured. The ECE Report was designed to fill this gap.

Reflecting on the main recommendation of the *Early Years Study 3*—that all children should have access to high quality early childhood education—the ECE Report focuses on indicators promoting this goal. Early Childhood Education Report 2017 is the third status update on the policy frameworks

that support quality and access in early education services. The report defines ECE as 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 parent/child centres, childcare 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. When organized to support parents' labour force participation, ECE can also be a very cost-effective policy lever returning socio-economic benefits greater than the service costs.

## **DEVELOPING THE REPORT**

The benchmarks for the ECE Report were established following an extensive review of monitoring tools developed in Canada and internationally, and in consultation with experts involved in the development of these measures. Nineteen benchmarks were selected and populated using available data, an analysis of government publications and reports, Statistics Canada data (including population estimates) and custom runs from the Labour Force Survey. A profile of each province and territory was developed using the above data, supplemented by key informant

interviews with provincial and territorial officials. Quebec's 2017 profile was developed by the Association Québécoise des centres de la petite enfance (AQCPE), under the supervision of the Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development (CEECD), and in collaboration with the Ministère de la Famille, the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur, the Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale, and the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion. Draft profiles were provided to officials for comment and modifications were incorporated. Profile results were then used to populate the 19 benchmarks of the report in consultation with provincial/territorial officials. A complete review of provincial/territorial ECE policies and programming are available on the [ECEReport.ca](http://ECEReport.ca) website under Provincial/Territorial Profiles.

## **THE INFLUENCE OF THE OECD AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL MEASURES**

The Starting Strong (OECD, 2006) analysis identified key elements of successful policy that were common to 20 member countries who took part in the OECD's review of their early education and care systems. The ECE Report is rooted in the recommendations of the OECD review. Not all of the 17 major policy areas addressed by the OECD in its Canada note are included in the ECE Report. In some important areas, such as the affordability of ECE services, consistent data are not available across Canada. In past editions, insufficient data prevented the inclusion of Yukon, Nunavut and First Nations. Following a cross-Canadian roundtable in June 2016, with commitment from all provinces and territories, this present iteration was able to include all Canadian jurisdictions; however, insufficient data continue to prevent the inclusion of programs in First Nations communities. The authors need to address this ongoing challenge.

While being guided by the OECD directions, the selection of benchmarks was limited by the availability of consistent data across Canadian jurisdictions and the likelihood that similar information would be available in the future to allow for ongoing monitoring. Benchmark thresholds

were influenced by those established by UNICEF in 2008 to promote the potential for continued international comparisons, and those included in the UNESCO 2010 cross-national study on the integration of early childhood education and care (Kaga, Bennett & Moss, 2010).

In adapting the ECE Report to Canadian reality, all benchmark thresholds in the report have been achieved in at least one jurisdiction. The authors recognize there is always sensitivity to monitoring and reluctance to make comparisons. Canada is a very large and highly diverse country; however, in the development of other levels of education from elementary through to postsecondary, a remarkable similarity has emerged based on shared values and research. Arm's length assessments are part of democratic oversight; they allow the sharing of best practices and push for better systems to improve outcomes for children. A parallel rationale exists for early childhood education. Indeed, all provinces and territories already agree on a number of comparable inputs to promote program quality, including the need for staff qualifications, child/staff ratios, group size and facility safety.

## **THE ECE REPORT CATEGORIES**

The 19 benchmarks selected for the ECE Report are organized into five categories:

### **GOVERNANCE**

Four benchmarks look at policy and operational oversight—is governance split between multiple departments, or does it have coherent direction, a common policy framework with goals, timelines and consistent support for service providers?

### **FUNDING**

Three benchmarks examine the adequacy of funding and its influence on supporting program quality and equitable access.

### **ACCESS**

Three benchmarks assess the number of children attending ECE programs and if barriers to participation are addressed.

## LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Six benchmarks examine whether curriculum, program standards and trained and adequately resourced staff support the quality of programming.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

Three benchmarks assess whether jurisdictions are meeting their reporting commitments, have standards for program quality and are monitoring and reporting child outcomes.

Each category is assigned 3 points for a total of 15. Full and half points are assigned with the intention of providing equal weight to each category.

## ECER 2017

All data for the present report are current up to and including March 31, 2017.

## ATTAINING THE BENCHMARKS

Benchmarks are not aspirational goals; instead, they express the basic requirements that jurisdictions should meet to establish and maintain acceptable quality and access in their early childhood systems. For this reason, partial marks are not assigned. A benchmark was reached if policies were in place or if the province/territory has embarked on a particular initiative with a commitment to take it system-wide by March 31, 2017. Many jurisdictions have ambitious plans for their ECE systems, however the benchmark was not attained if these policies were still in development. For the 2017 report, all provinces and territories were invited to provide a summary (250 words) or less outlining any policies, commitments or initiatives in progress after March 31, 2017.

### I. Benchmarks focused on governance for integrated early childhood education

The OECD recommended that Canadian jurisdictions take steps to “build bridges between child care and kindergarten education, with the aim of integrating ECEC both at ground level and at policy and management levels”<sup>1</sup>. Evaluations demonstrate the importance of assigning responsibility for young children to one ministry that combines policymaking, funding and regulatory powers.

A single ministry/department facilitates the development of a common vision of early education, with agreed-upon objectives. Split administration tends to entrench child care as a welfare service with all its inherent weaknesses – poor public perception, poor funding and underpaid and undertrained staff.

Canadian research reveals the cost returns from combining education and care at the service delivery level to support both child development and parents’ workforce participation. Common oversight also avoids the duplication of administration and budgets. From a pedagogical perspective, integrating education and care allows administrators and educators to better address the continuum of learning that begins at birth and continues throughout life.

Four benchmarks are allocated to the governance of ECE systems:

**Benchmark 1: ECE under common department/ ministry** The minimum for the benchmark is a single ministry/department with oversight for child care as well as kindergarten and other education-funded preschool programming (Table M1).

**Benchmark 2: Common ECE supervisory unit** This benchmark examines if integration has gone beyond co-locating child care and kindergarten programs under the same roof while they still operate as distinct entities. It assesses whether all ECE services are under a common supervisory unit, where specialized staff members have shared responsibilities for both public (school-offered) and private (child care/preschool) ECE programs (Table M1).

**Benchmark 3: Common ECE policy framework** Administrators, systems managers and educators require a clearly communicated policy direction, with vision, objectives, timelines and benchmarks to guide their work. Some provinces have developed policy directions for child care and/or school-offered ECE programs. The minimum for this benchmark determines if policy directions encompass both education and child care/preschool, aligning them to support the learning continuum (Table M1).

1. OECD, 2004. Page 6.

#### Benchmark 4: Common local authority for ECE

**management and administration** The integration of policy frameworks at the provincial level should be reflected in service management and delivery on the ground, thereby removing the necessity of parents and children to navigate between service silos. All ECE services, both public and private, should link to a common local authority responsible for supporting standards reflected in provincial policies. Local authorities would be responsible for organizing ECE service delivery to facilitate smooth transitions from preschool into kindergarten and the primary grades.

Some progress has been made by having school boards offer both education and child care for kindergarten and school-aged children, but few jurisdictions direct a local authority to manage the continuum of ECE programming. It is acknowledged that there are many collaborative tables that include education and children's service providers. These bodies are not mandated to enforce systems delivery or quality standards. The benchmark requires local governance with this level of authority. (Table M1)

**Table M1 Governance of Early Childhood Education Services by Province/Territory**

Province/ Territory	Single ECE Department	Common ECE Supervisory Unit	Integrated ECE Policy Framework	Local Service Delivery	Community/ Sector Oversight
NL	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development	Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education and Early Childhood Development Branch	Learning from the Start.  Caring for Our Future: Provincial Strategy for Quality, Sufficient and Affordable Child Care in Newfoundland and Labrador (2012-2022)	<b>Kindergarten:</b> 2 school districts; 1 English with 4 regions, 1 French  <b>Early Years Programs:</b> 4 regional offices	
PE	Department of Education, Early Learning and Culture	Learning and Early Childhood Development Branch	<i>Securing The Future For Our Children: Preschool Excellence Initiative</i> (May 2010)	<b>Kindergarten:</b> 1 public school branch and 1 French language school board  <b>Early Years Programs:</b> Early Learning and Child Care Board	Early Years Advisory Committee
NS	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development	The Early Years Branch	Affordable, Quality Child Care: A Great Place to Grow!	<b>Kindergarten:</b> 8 school boards; 7 English, 1 French  <b>Early Years Programs:</b> 5 regional Early Years Branches at Department of Education and Early Childhood Development	All schools and licenced child care programs are required to have advisory councils.  Council on Mi'kmaq Education.  The Council on African Canadian Education

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Table M1 Governance of Early Childhood Education Services by Province/Territory

(continued)

Province/ Territory	Single ECE Department	Common ECE Supervisory Unit	Integrated ECE Policy Framework	Local Service Delivery	Community/ Sector Oversight
NB	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development	Early Childhood Development Division	Everyone at their best (2016)  Donnons a nos enfants une longueur d'avance	<b>Kindergarten:</b> 7 district education councils; 4 Anglophone, 3 francophone  <b>Early Years Programs:</b> Each district has a director of early childhood services who is part of the management team for the school districts.	Francophone and Anglophone early childhood service networks
QC			Strategic Plan (2012-2017). The Ministère's 2017-2022 Strategic Plan is under development.	<b>Kindergarten and after-school programs:</b> 72 school boards, 60 Francophone, 9 Anglophone, 3 special status  <b>Early Years Programs:</b> Politique d'inspection des prestataires de services de garde régis et des bureaux coordonnateurs de la garde en milieu familial.  Home child care coordinating offices.	Space Allocation Advisory Committees
ON	Ministry of Education	Early Years and Child Care Division	Ontario's Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework (2017)	<b>Kindergarten and after-school programs:</b> 31 English Public School Boards; 29 English Catholic; 4 French Public; 8 French Catholic; 10 School Authorities, consisting of 4 geographically isolated boards; 6 hospital-based school authorities and 1 Provincial Schools Authority.  <b>Early Years Programs:</b> 47 regional service managers.  First Nations may establish, administer, operate, and fund child care and early years programs.	

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Table M1 Governance of Early Childhood Education Services by Province/Territory

(continued)

Province/ Territory	Single ECE Department	Common ECE Supervisory Unit	Integrated ECE Policy Framework	Local Service Delivery	Community/ Sector Oversight
MB			Starting Early, Starting Strong: Manitoba's Early Child Development Framework (November 2013)  Mandate Letter to the Minister of Families	<b>Kindergarten:</b> 37 school divisions including 1 Division Scolaire Franco-Manitobaine  <b>Early Years Programs:</b> The Early Learning and Child Care Program, Ministry of Families	Provincial Healthy Child Advisory Committee  Roundtables of experts and stakeholders for specific system reviews
SK	Ministry of Education	Early Years Branch	Saskatchewan's Early Years Plan 2016-2020	<b>Kindergarten:</b> 28 school divisions including Conseil des écoles fransaskoises  <b>Early Years Programs:</b> 3 regional offices of the Early Learning and Child Care Program  <b>Kids First:</b> 8 targeted communities plus the north  <b>Kids First Regional:</b> 10 southern regional health authorities  <b>Early Childhood Intervention Program:</b> 12 volunteer boards and 2 school divisions	Early Years Networks in communities
AB			Guide to Education: ECS to Grade 12 2016-2017  First Nations Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework (2002)  Funding Manual for School Authorities 2016-2017	<b>Early Childhood Services:</b> 374 school authorities, including 42 public, 17 separate, 4 francophone, 13 charter, 19 provincial, 149 private, 95 private ECS operators, 35 First Nations, 1 Federal authority  <b>Early Years Programs:</b> 7 Child and Family Services Delivery regions and Métis Settlements	Alberta Association for the Accreditation of Early Learning and Care Services
BC			BC Families Early Years Strategy	<b>Kindergarten:</b> 60 school districts including the Conseil scolaire francophone, plus Independent School Authorities  <b>Early Years Programs:</b> 5 regional health authorities	The Provincial Child Care Council

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Table M1 Governance of Early Childhood Education Services by Province/Territory

(continued)

Province/ Territory	Single ECE Department	Common ECE Supervisory Unit	Integrated ECE Policy Framework	Local Service Delivery	Community/ Sector Oversight
NU	Department of Education	Early Learning and Child Care		Kindergarten: Regional School Operations  Early Years Programs: 3 regional Early Childhood Officers	District Education Authority for K-12
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 (2013)</i>  A Framework for Early Childhood Development: Action Plan: 2017-2020	Kindergarten: 8 educational jurisdictions  Early Years Programs: 5 regions	
YK				Kindergarten: 22 Elementary Schools  Early Years Programs: Child Care Services	School Councils  Yukon Child Care Board

## II. Benchmarks focused on funding to promote quality, access and equity

The OECD noted Canada's market-determined fee structure for child care results in high parent fees and an inefficient subsidy system with widely varying and complex eligibility criteria. It encouraged Canadian jurisdictions to "devise an efficient means of funding a universal early childhood service".<sup>2</sup> There is a general consensus across the OECD countries that substantial government investment is necessary to support a sustainable system of high quality, affordable services (OECD, 2006).

Without strong government investment and involvement, it is difficult to achieve broad system aims, such as child health and well-being, equitable access, social inclusion and quality learning goals.

Funding levels are important, but how services are funded also makes a difference. A universal approach appears to be more effective at including children from low-income

families. Mixed enrolment in ECE is also associated with better-quality outcomes than programs targeted to children from low-income families. Direct funding to programs appears to have a positive impact on staff wages and program stability, whereas funding through fee subsidies or tax transfers has less positive effects. Since fee subsidies to parents seldom reflect the actual cost of child care, they tend to hold down staff wages and leave a gap between what parents receive and the fees programs must charge. This can exclude low-income families from using ECE centres.

Three benchmarks look at funding levels and how funds are directed:

**Benchmark 5: At least two-thirds of child care funding goes to program operations** Percentage allocations to program operations, special needs integration and parent fee subsidies are determined through public reporting and are based on the last year a funding breakdown was

2, Ibid., p. 72.

available. Provinces may have announced global increases for child care in their most recent budgets, but unless specified, it was assumed that new funding would follow the established breakdown. Unless otherwise specified, funding for children with special needs is included as part of operations, since most jurisdictions deliver this funding to child care programs rather than through parent fee subsidies. The two-thirds benchmark for program funding was chosen because it is associated with greater system stability (Figure M1).

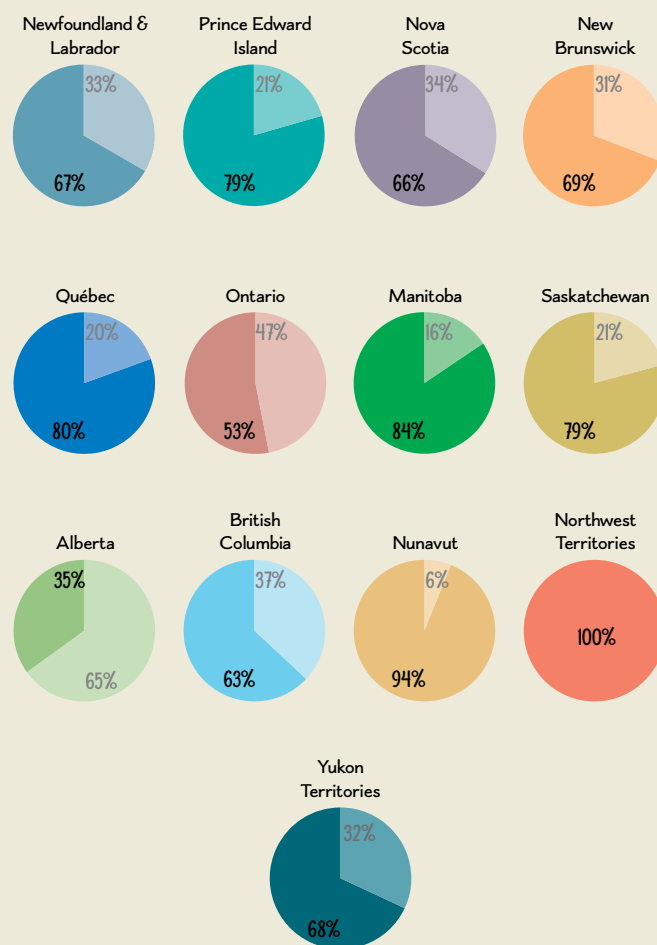
**Benchmark 6: Mandated salary and fee scale** This benchmark reflects provincial policies establishing a maximum parent fee scale and a minimum wage scale for educators. Such policies contain the market nature of child care funding and delivery.

**Benchmark 7: At least 3 percent of provincial budget devoted to early childhood education** Percentages were calculated using total 2016/2017 operational spending estimates to March 31, 2017 as stated in government budget documents. ECE spending includes total 2016/2017 estimates for the operation of licensed child care and child care support programs for infants to school aged children, kindergarten, pre-kindergarten and other early education services, including school-based parent/caregiver/child programs. Major capital funding is not included.

In Ontario, 47 service managers (Consolidated Municipal Service Managers [CMSMs] and District Social Services Administration Boards [DSSABs]) are designated under the *Child Care and Early Years Act* to manage and contribute financially to child care services. The CSMSs/DSSABs portion of Ontario early years funding was calculated by reviewing their budgets.

The 2017 estimates for kindergarten and education-offered programs were obtained from government documents or informant interviews. Where kindergarten funding was not specified, estimates were made based on kindergarten and pre-kindergarten enrolment times per pupil spending in elementary school as provided by Statistics Canada and, if applicable, pro-rated for half-time programs.

**FIGURE M1: LICENSED CHILD CARE PROGRAM FUNDING VERSUS FEE SUBSIDY SPENDING**



Spending on ECE programs at 3 percent of provincial budget was chosen as a benchmark because it approaches the 1 percent of GDP that is considered a minimum investment in the care and education of young children (UNICEF, 2008). It represents a modest and fair share for children in their preschool years (Figure M2).

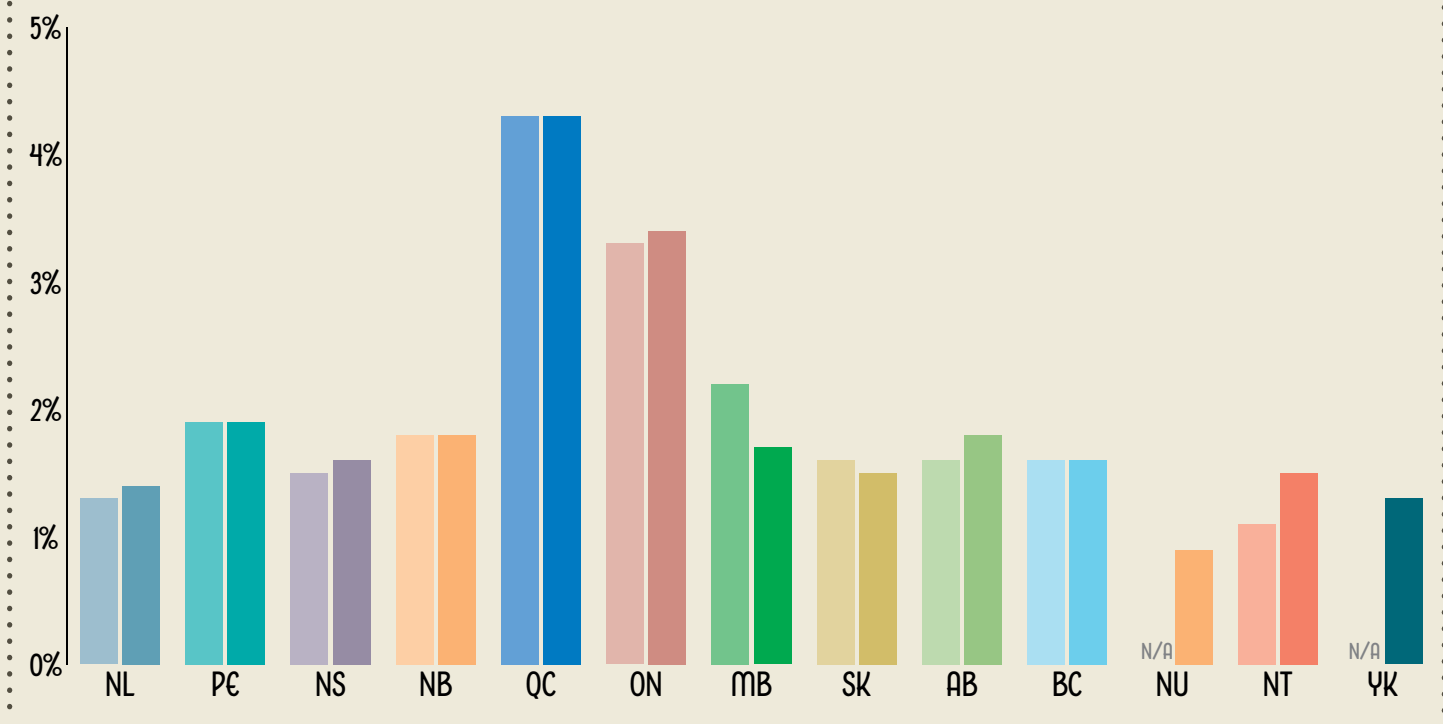
### III. Benchmarks focused on equitable access

The OECD recommended Canada “continue efforts to expand access while promoting greater equity”<sup>3</sup>. Equitable access is associated more with entitlement programs such as kindergarten. However, kindergarten does not address parents’ need for child care. Equity is but one more of the benefits of organizing ECE to meet the educational needs of children, while at the same time facilitating parents’ workforce participation. Barriers to ECE participation are

3. Ibid., p. 8.



FIGURE M2: ECE BUDGET AS A PERCENTAGE OF PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL BUDGET 2014/2017



many: economic, geographical, cultural, language, hours of service and special needs. One area where all jurisdictions have made an effort is by targeting resources to enable programs to include children with special needs.

#### Benchmark 8: Full-day kindergarten offered

Kindergarten is the sole early education program that is universally available across Canada. Full-day kindergarten for 5-year-olds has become the norm and is now offered in 9 out of 13 jurisdictions. Full-day kindergarten also reflects the duration threshold, which research indicates is more likely to improve academic and social outcomes for children (Reynolds, 2011).

#### Benchmark 9: Fifty percent of 2 to 4 year olds regularly attend an ECE program

This benchmark focuses on 2 to 4 year olds, the group for which there is high unmet demand for ECE. Five year olds were excluded since the majority already attend kindergarten. Infants are a less likely group to participate in ECE programs because of parental leave. Determining the accurate enrolment of children in ECE programs is challenging. Schools tend to report enrolment numbers. Child care maintains a record of spaces, which may be vacant or used by more than one child, while other programs report capacity. The number of 2 to 4 year olds

attending ECE programs was estimated using government reports of school-offered pre-kindergarten programs including parent/child programs in British Columbia and Ontario, child care, nursery school and Aboriginal Head Start availability. Care was taken not to double count children attending pre-kindergarten who may also attend child care. UNICEF's benchmark is set at 80 percent of 4 year olds regularly attending an ECE program and 25 percent of children under 3 years of age. Fifty percent of 2 to 4 year olds represents a reasonable and achievable interim benchmark for Canada (Figure M3).

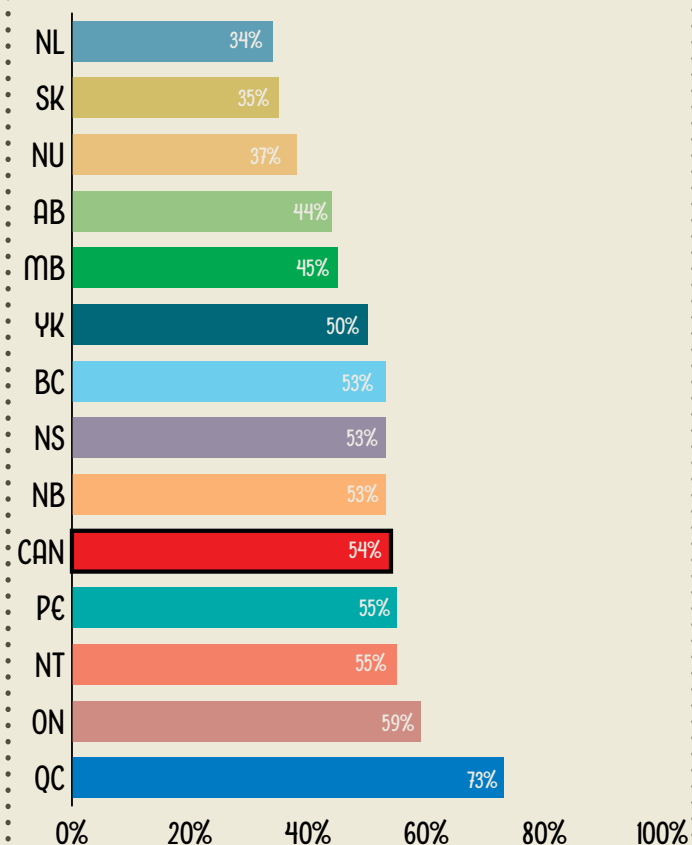
#### Benchmark 10: Funding is conditional on including children with special needs

The threshold for this benchmark is provincial/territorial policy that requires programs to give equal consideration to the enrolment of children with special needs as a condition of funding. Funding as an incentive without policy directions does not provide parents with recourse if their child is excluded from participation.

#### IV. Benchmarks focusing on quality in the early learning environment

Well-established research confirms that quality in early education programs depends on responsive staff trained in child development who are resourced and valued for

**FIGURE M3: PERCENTAGE OF 2-4 YEAR OLDS REGULARLY ATTENDING AN ECE PROGRAM BY PROVINCE/TERRITORY**



• Licensed child care spaces as of March 31, 2017 except for QC (2015). Number of 2-4 years olds in child care estimated, since age groupings overlap in some provinces/territories. • Includes pre-primary in NS, Junior kindergarten in YK, NT, QC and ON, public nursery schools in MB, Early Childhood Services for 2.5 to 5 years in AB, Prek in SK. • Includes unlicensed Aboriginal Head Start (AHS is not licensed in all jurisdictions), unlicensed nursery school in SK, Parenting and Family Literacy Centres in ON and Strong Start in BC.

the work they do. This part of the ECE Report looks at progress in this area. Is there an evidence-based curriculum to guide the work of educators? Is it aligned with the school system to support children's transition into school? Are educators in all ECE settings trained in early childhood development? Are salaries and recognition reflective of the important work educators do?

Six benchmarks are included in this category:

#### **Benchmark 11: An early childhood curriculum/framework**

ECE curriculum frameworks are organic documents resulting from the best available research and broad consultation. They are holistic and child-centred, with clear goals across a range of developmental areas to

which educators and children can aspire. The primary role of parents is recognized and parents are welcomed as partners in their children's learning. A curriculum review populated in Table M2 determined if provinces have developed a curriculum framework for early education settings. The threshold does not require the use of the curriculum in all ECE settings.

#### **Benchmark 12: Alignment of early childhood framework with kindergarten**

Children move from preschool into kindergarten at different ages and stages of development. The kindergarten and early childhood curriculum frameworks should align to reflect this. A curriculum review populated in Table M2 determined if ECE policy addresses this issue.

#### **Benchmark 13: Programs for 2 to 4 year olds require at least two-thirds of staff to have ECE qualifications**

Child/staff ratios across jurisdictions are quite similar, but the number of *qualified* staff required by policy or regulation varies widely. For this benchmark, qualified represents the period of post-secondary training that provincial regulation considers necessary to be recognized as a qualified staff member in an ECE setting. It is acknowledged that ECE qualifications are not standard across jurisdictions. UNICEF recommends at least 50 percent of staff have three or more years of post-secondary training, and 80 percent of staff working directly with children have post-secondary training in child development. No Canadian jurisdiction meets this standard. For this benchmark, two-thirds of staff must have a minimum of one year of post-secondary level training in early childhood development (Figure M4).

#### **Benchmark 14: Kindergarten educators require ECE qualifications**

Public kindergarten is the dominant form of ECE provision. For many children it will be their only preschool experience. Quality in ECE settings depends on educators trained to understand the developmental needs of young children. A review of provincial policies determined if ECE training is required for educators in kindergarten classrooms. For example, Prince Edward Island requires kindergarten educators to obtain a teaching certificate with an ECE specialty. Ontario was recognized

**Table M2 ECE Curriculum Frameworks by Province/Territory**

Province/Territory	Curriculum Framework
NL	Early Childhood Learning Framework (2017)
PE	PEI Early Learning Framework: Relationships, Environments, Experiences: The Curriculum Framework of the Preschool Excellence Initiative (2013)
NS	Nova Scotia Early Learning Curriculum Framework (2017)
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); <i>Framework for Environments Conducive to a Healthy Diet, Active Play and the Development of Motor Skills</i> (Gazelle and Potiron, 2014); <i>Reference framework for children's social and emotional development</i> (In development).
ON	<i>How Does Learning Happen: Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years</i> (2014)
MB	<i>Early Returns: Manitoba's Early Learning and Child Care Curriculum Framework for Preschool Centres and Nursery Schools</i> (2011) <i>Early Returns: Manitoba's Early Learning and Child Care Curriculum Framework for Infant Programs</i> (2011) <i>Des résultats précoces: Cadre d'élaboration d'un curriculum des programmes d'apprentissage et de garde des jeunes enfants du Manitoba pour les services de garde préscolaires et les prématernelles</i>
SK	<i>Play and Exploration: Early Learning Program Guide</i> (2008)
AB	<i>Play, Participation and Possibilities: An Early Learning and Child Care Curriculum Framework for Alberta</i> (2014)
BC	<i>British Columbia Early Learning Framework</i> (2008)
NU	
NT	
YK	

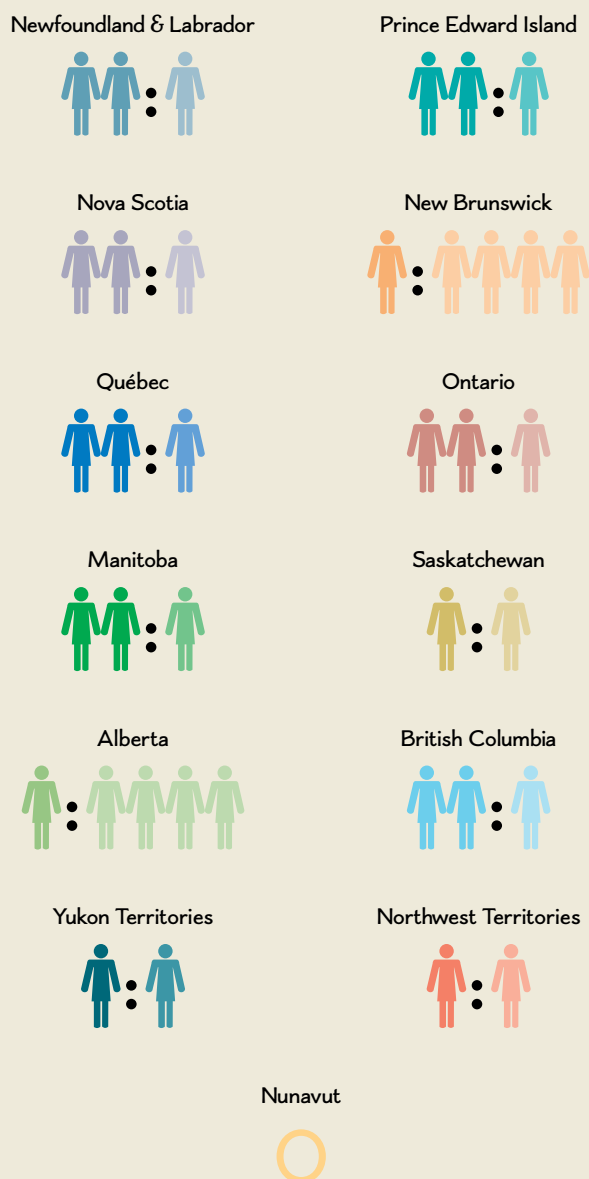
because its legislated staffing model for full-day junior and senior kindergarten requires at least one staff member to be a registered ECE. ECE certification is an acceptable qualification to teach junior and senior kindergarten in the Northwest Territories.

**Benchmark 15: Salaries of early childhood educators at least two-thirds of teacher salaries** Low compensation levels for early childhood educators are recognized in the literature as contributing to recruitment and retention challenges, which in turn impact the quality of ECE programming. The compensation gap between elementary school teachers and early childhood educators reflects the challenge. These issues become more evident as early

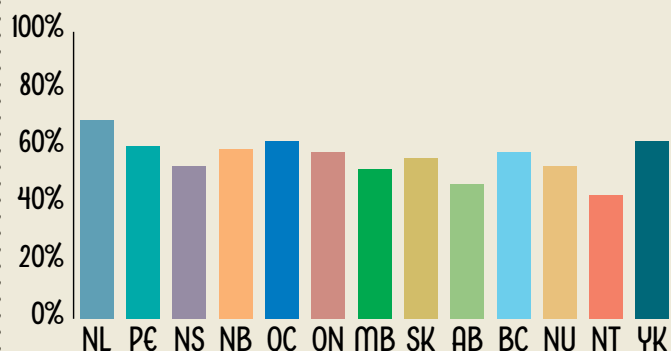
childhood educators move into school settings to work alongside teachers. This benchmark looks at the salary gap between teachers and early childhood educators by jurisdiction as an indicator of the relative value placed on the professions.

In previous editions of the ECER, the teacher salary was selected from the top of negotiated salary grids. However, this is not representative of most teachers. The rates for 2017 report were therefore obtained from current provincial/territorial collective agreements and compared to findings from the Statistics Canada Job Bank (2016) and median salaries supplied by a custom run from Statistics Canada (2016) for full-time teachers with university

**FIGURE M4: RATIO OF QUALIFIED TO UNQUALIFIED STAFF IN PRESCHOOL GROUPS IN LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTRES BY PROVINCE/TERRITORY**



**FIGURE M5: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR SALARIES AS A PERCENTAGE OF TEACHER SALARIES BY PROVINCE /TERRITORY**



degrees. Early childhood educator salaries were obtained from government sources. Manitoba's ECE hourly wage was obtained from the Manitoba Child Care Association. Where information was not available, a custom run of the Labour Force Survey provided 2016 hourly wages for self-identified early childhood educators with post-secondary qualifications who are employed in the sector. This was used to estimate full-time annual salaries (40 hours x 52 weeks). The two-thirds benchmark reflects a salary gap between the two professions based on differences in educational and professional requirements (Figure M5).

**Benchmark 16: ECE professional certification and/or professional development** Registration, certification and classification are all processes that provide official recognition for an early childhood educator and enable the registrant to work in an ECE program. These processes are proxies for the value placed on the profession. Ongoing professional development is critical to maintaining a workforce that is knowledgeable about current child development and educational practice and is closely associated with high-quality early childhood settings. The benchmark reflects provincial policies requiring professional certification as a condition of practice and/or regular professional development as a condition of maintaining good standing in the ECE profession (Table M3).

## V. Benchmarks focused on accountability

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, how children are developing 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.

**Benchmark 17: Annual progress reports are current and posted (2014 or later)** Federal/provincial/territorial early childhood agreements include annual reporting by each jurisdiction on progress made in meeting the terms of the agreements. As part of the March 2003 Multilateral

**Table M3 Required Professional Standards for Early Childhood Educators by Province/Territory**

Province/Territory	ECE Professional Requirement	Professional Development Required
NL	Certification: Association of Early Childhood Educators Newfoundland and Labrador	30 hours over 3 years
PE	Certification: Early Learning and Child Care Board, family child care providers must have a Family Home Child Care Provider Certificate	45 hours over 3 years
NS	Classification: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development	30 hours over 3 years
NB		All directors and primary staff members working in centre-based facilities with infants to children 5 years of age must complete 30 hours of online training in the designated early learning curriculum.
QC		6 hours of annually for home child care providers
ON	Registration: College of Early Childhood Educators	Registered Early Childhood Educators must annually fulfill the requirements of the Continuous Professional Learning Program through the College of Early Childhood Educators.
MB	Certification in two classifications by the ELCC Program: Early Childhood Educator II (ECE II) and Early Childhood Educator III (ECE III)	
SK	Certification: Educator Services, Ministry of Education	
AB	Certification: Alberta Child Care Staff Certification Office	
BC	Registration: Early Childhood Educator Registry under Community Care and Assisted Living Act	40 hours every 5 years
NU		Child care operators are required to provide ongoing training for staff.
NT		Licensed early childhood operators are required to document staff participation in training.  Family home day care providers are required to participate in training on an annual basis.
YK	Certification: Yukon Health and Social Services.	

Framework Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care, governments committed to providing annual reports on early child programming, including the following information:

- Descriptive and expenditure information on all early learning and child care programs and services;
- Indicators of affordability, such as number of children receiving subsidies, income and social eligibility for fee subsidies and maximum subsidy by age of child; and

- Indicators of quality, such as training requirements, child/caregiver ratios and group size, where available.

The minimum benchmark proposed is that the responsible ministry/department/agency has published a comprehensive report on ECE services within the last three years (Table M4). Quebec was not a signatory to the agreements and has its own reporting process.

**Benchmark 18: Standards for ECE programs (including kindergarten)** Learning outcomes for children cannot be considered apart from the inputs they experience in ECE settings. Standards governing health and safety, facilities and class size are important minimums for all ECE programs. Also important are standards outlining pedagogical practices, implementation of curriculum goals and the set-up of the learning environment. The benchmark proposes these minimum program standards for all ECE settings, including kindergarten.

**Benchmark 19: Population measures for preschool children collected and reported** Public reporting informs communities about how their children are doing and what can be done to improve children's early learning environments. The minimum benchmark is that a province

or territory has used the Early Development Instrument or an equivalent tool and reported on the findings at least once in the past three years.

### Next Steps for the Early Childhood Education Report

The five equally-weighted categories in the Report and their benchmarks reflect current research and international reports. System-level indices comparing jurisdictions must balance the desire for appropriate, comparable data and the reality of what is available. The content validity of the ECE Report appears to be good. It is a tool for facilitating conversations about next steps and revealing policy gaps.

The ECE Report is housed at the Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development, Ontario Institute of

**Table M4 ECE Progress Reports by Province/Territory**

Province/Territory	Progress Reports
NL	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development <i>Annual Report 2016-2017</i>
PE	Department of Education, Early Learning and Culture <i>Annual Report 2014-2015</i>
NS	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, <i>Accountability Report 2015-2016</i>
NB	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, <i>2015-2016 Annual Report</i> <i>Child Day Care Services Annual Statistical Report 2015-2016</i> <i>Summary Statistics 2015-2016</i>
QC	Ministry of the Family, <i>Situation des centres de la petite enfance, des garderies et de la garde en milieu familial au Québec en 2014</i>
ON	Ministry of Education, <i>Early Years and Child Care Annual Report (2017)</i>
MB	Healthy Child Manitoba Office Annual Report 2015-2016 Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning Annual Report 2015-2016 Family Services Annual Report 2015-2016
SK	Ministry of Education, <i>Annual Report for 2016-2017</i>
AB	Children's Services Annual Report 2016-2017
BC	Early Year Annual Report 2014 to 2015: Activities and Expenditures on Early Childhood Development and Early Learning and Child Care
NU	Department of Education, <i>Annual Report 2014-2015</i>
NT	Early Childhood Development Action Plan 2017-2020 Review of Early Childhood Program Administrative and Funding Processes (Action 15-Early Childhood Development Action Plan Report 1 of 2)
YK	Health and Social Services report



Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. The Centre regularly brings together academic expertise to further review the ECE Report and improve aspects of its validity. It hosts a number of conferences, roundtables and reviews to delve more deeply into the individual benchmarks. To date, the Centre has reviewed integrated governance, population monitoring, early learning curriculum frameworks, quality monitoring, access and the status of the early childhood workforce. Reports and presentations are on the Atkinson Centre website.

Awareness of the importance of development in early childhood has caught the attention of policy makers and they have responded. While this is an important start, we can not overlook the limited number of benchmarks the report is able to populate and the constraints that exclude First Nations communities. The modesty of the thresholds reflects the persistence of low standards and investments. Yet there are reasons for optimism. Much progress has been made since the OECD's international review exposed Canada as an ECE laggard, not all of which can be captured in a single report.

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