

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION REPORT 2020

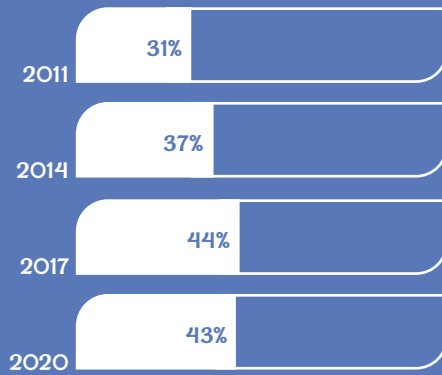
ALBERTA



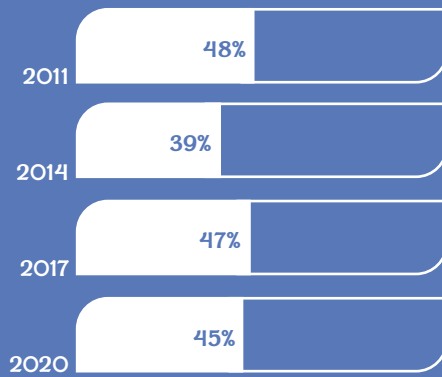
CHANGE IN ECEC SPENDING



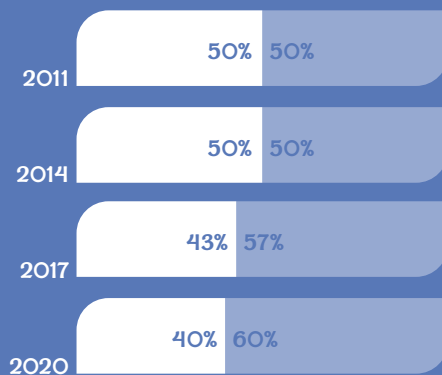
PERCENTAGE OF 2- TO 4-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN ATTENDING ECEC



ECE SALARIES AS A PERCENTAGE OF TEACHER SALARIES



PERCENTAGE OF ECE SPACES (NON-PROFIT/PROFIT)



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION REPORT 2020



ABOUT THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION REPORT BENCHMARKS

The Early Childhood Education Report (ECER) is produced by the Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto. Twenty-one benchmarks organized into five equally weighted categories, totalling a score of 15. The benchmarks evaluate governance structures, funding levels, access, quality in early learning environments, and the rigour of accountability mechanisms. Results are populated from detailed provincial and territorial profiles developed by the researchers and reviewed by provincial and territorial officials.

For the Canada-wide overview, a detailed look at the benchmarks, the full methodology, and all federal, provincial, and territorial profiles please visit [ECEReport.ca](https://ecereport.ca).

Please cite this publication as:

Akbari, E., McCuaig, K., & Foster, D. (2021). *The Early Childhood Education Report 2020*. Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/ University of Toronto.

This Alberta profile captures early learning and child care initiatives to March 31, 2020. The New Developments section highlights activities occurring after this date.

In July 2020, the Governments of Canada and Alberta agreed to a one year extension of the Canada–Alberta Early Learning and Child Care Agreement. This agreement allocated just over \$45 million to stabilize child care programs and provide care for essential workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, enhance affordability for parents by expanding eligibility to child care fee subsidies, implement a new Early Learning and Child Care curriculum, and increase child care spaces and accessibility for children with special needs.¹

The new model for child care subsidies took effect August 1, 2020, raising the income eligibility ceiling to include families with annual incomes of up to \$75,000.²

In 2020, the province finished rolling out the *Flight Curriculum Framework*³ for early childhood programs, which replaced *Play, Participation, and Possibilities: An Early Learning and Child Care Curriculum Framework for Alberta*.⁴ Implementation of the new curriculum framework began in 2017. The new framework serves as an online resource for licensed and approved programs and offers courses, coaching, and supports for early childhood educators.

The province revised the *Child Care Licensing Act* to include, within legislation, some of the principles from the rescinded Alberta Child Care Accreditation program. The revised Act was published in December 2020.⁵

In 2020, the province announced its plans to replace the Supported Child Care Program with the new Inclusive Child Care Program (ICC). Changes under the new program include management by Alberta’s Children Services; previously, the Supported Child Care Program was managed regionally. The ICC provides licensed child care programs and family day homes with access to provincially-aligned

training, resources, and supports that enable the inclusion of children with extra support needs. The ICC will be phased in beginning spring 2021.⁶

COVID-19 ACTION PLAN

On March 15, 2020, Alberta’s Chief Medical Officer of Health ordered all licensed child care centres, out-of-school care, and preschool programs to close to help slow the transmission of COVID-19. Approved family day homes, private day homes, and licensed group family child care programs were exempt from the order. A temporary exception allowed approved family day homes to care for additional children. The order was amended to allow select child care centres throughout the province to reopen, facilitating access to child care services for essential employees.⁷

On May 6, the ministry committed \$17.8 million through the Child Care Relief Program to help unopened licensed child care and approved family day homes safely restart. Support included financial compensation for reduced enrolment, overhead, staff recruitment and training, and enhanced cleaning costs.⁸

On September 22, 2020, an additional \$87 million was made available to licensed and approved operators. Funds supported the purchase of cleaning supplies, safety equipment, and other upgrades necessary to comply with health guidelines without increasing parent fees. Funding also compensated open centres for vacant spaces at \$200 per licensed/approved space, plus \$2,500 per licensed program or approved agency, per month. Of the \$87 million in pandemic funding, \$72 million came from the federal government’s Safe Restart Funding Agreement, \$8.2 million from the bilateral agreement, and the remaining \$6.9 million from Phase 3 of the Child Care Relief Program.⁹

TABLE 1.1 ALBERTA GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Lead Ministry/Department	Alberta Children's Services ^a
Related Ministry/Department	Alberta Education ^b
ECE Supervisory Unit	n/a
Policy Framework	<i>Guide to Education: ECS to Grade 12 2019-2020</i> ^c <i>The Guiding Framework for the Design and Development of Kindergarten to Grade 12 Provincial Curriculum (2017)</i> ^d <i>Funding Manual for School Authorities 2020-2021</i> ^e
Legislation	<i>The Education Act (2012, current as of 2020)</i> ^f <i>Early Childhood Services Regulation (current as of 2020)</i> ^g <i>Private Schools Regulation (2000, amended 2019)</i> ^h <i>Child Care Licensing (Early Learning and Child Care) Amendment Act (current as of 2021)</i> ⁱ <i>Child Care Licensing Regulations Alberta Regulation 143/2008 (current as of 2019)</i> ^j
Related Legislation	<i>Children First Act (2013, current as of 2019)</i> ^k
Local Service Delivery	378 school authorities including: 42 public, 17 separate, 4 Francophone, 13 charter, 19 provincial, 155 private, 93 private ECS operators, and 34 First Nations, Inuit, and Métis; in addition, there is 1 federal authority ^l Early Learning and Child Care: 7 Child and Family Services delivery regions and Métis Settlements ^m
Community/Sector Oversight	n/a

a Government of Alberta. *Ministry of Children's Services*. Retrieved from: <https://www.alberta.ca/childrens-services.aspx>

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

c The 2020-2021 Guide to Education is made available in advance of the school year. Government of Alberta. Alberta Education. *Guide to Education: ECS to Grade 12 2019-2020*. Retrieved from: <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/d119dba4-36cd-4e41-927b-b436fb2e75b1/resource/d49b4753-f531-4c35-bd06-f87d40bf715/download/guide-to-education-2019-2020.pdf>

d Government of Alberta. Alberta Education. *The Guiding Framework for the Design and Development of Kindergarten to Grade 12 Provincial Curriculum*. Retrieved from: <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/f331ac90-d0aa-4fc4-b5cb-4bb46c77b1b0/resource/b8df19a3-99c5-4486-b196-471af0e7ea59/download/curriculum-development-guiding-framework.pdf>

e Government of Alberta. Alberta Education. *Funding Manual for School Authorities 2020/21 School Year*. Retrieved from: <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/8f3b4972-4c47-4009-a090-5b470e68d633/resource/341e10f6-7c5d-4a9e-922f-0f1f75a8a0f4/download/edc-funding-manual-2020-2021-school-year-june-2020.pdf>

f Government of Alberta. *Education Act, Statutes of Alberta, 2012 Chapter E-0.3*. Retrieved from: <https://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/e00p3.pdf>

g Government of Alberta. *Education Act, Early Childhood Services Regulation, Alberta Regulation 87/2019*. Retrieved from: https://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Regs/2019_087.pdf

h Government of Alberta. *Education Act, Private Schools Regulation, Alberta Regulation 93/2019*. Retrieved from: https://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Regs/2019_093.pdf

i Government of Alberta. *Child Care Licensing (Early Learning and Child Care) Amendment Act, 2020, Statutes of Alberta, 2020 Chapter 31*. Retrieved from: https://www.qp.alberta.ca/Documents/AnnualVolumes/2020/ch31_2020.pdf

j Government of Alberta. *Child Care Licensing Act, Child Care Licensing Regulations, Alberta Regulation 143/2008*. Retrieved from: https://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Regs/2008_143.pdf

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

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

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

DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION

The Ministry of Children's Services oversees child care, early childhood development, child intervention, and foster and adoption programs, including the regional delivery staff for these program areas, along with Indigenous and Community Connections. The ministry is responsible for child care licensing and monitoring, the certification of staff, and the distribution of child care grant funding, child care subsidy funding, and parenting resources and supports.

Alberta Education is responsible for Early Childhood Services (ECS). ECS are educational programs for children aged 2.8 years up to and including 5 years.¹⁰

POLICY FRAMEWORK

Alberta Education's *Business Plan 2020-2023*¹¹ describes the outcomes, strategies, and performance measures for K-12 education; however, it does not include a detailed plan for ECS.

The Canada-Alberta Early Learning and Child Care Agreement - 2017-2020, signed in 2017, allocated just over \$136 million over three years for early learning and child care. Investments focused on increasing access to child care through the expansion of Early Learning and Child Care Centres.¹² Financial support for the centres ended March 31, 2021.¹³

SERVICE DESIGN

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The *Education Act* allows for the funding of public school authorities (i.e., charter, public, separate, and Francophone school boards) and private authorities (i.e., private schools and private ECS operators) to provide ECS programming. Private schools and private ECS operators must register as not-for-profit under the *Societies Act*, or as a non-profit company under Part 9 of the *Companies Act*.¹⁴

EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES (ECS): ECS programming takes place in a variety of settings including schools, ECS sites, and licensed child

care. Children who turn 3 years of age on or before December 31 and have been identified as having a severe disability/delay are eligible. Children who turn 4 years of age on or before December 31 and have been identified as having a mild/moderate disability/delay, who are gifted and talented, or who are learning English as an additional language are eligible.

KINDERGARTEN: Children who are 5 years old on or before December 31 are eligible to attend Kindergarten.¹⁵ ECS programming, including Kindergarten, is not compulsory. However, most schools offer half-day programs, and a select few offer full-day kindergarten to children living in socially vulnerable neighbourhoods.¹⁶ All school authorities that offer an ECS program must provide children with a minimum of 475 hours of instruction during a school year.¹⁷

REGULATED CHILD CARE

Alberta's Child Care Licensing Act requires that anyone caring for seven or more children be licensed. There are six types of regulated early childhood programs. Five program types are licensed, and one is approved.

LICENSED PROGRAMS¹⁸

DAYCARE PROGRAM: Licensed centre-based programs provide care to seven or more infants, preschool, and Kindergarten children for four or more consecutive hours each day.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAM: Licensed programs are available for preschool children from 19 months up to and including 5 years of age, operating for less than four hours per child each day.

INNOVATIVE PROGRAM: Licensed programs with director approval are designed to meet the unique child care needs of the community in which they are provided.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL CARE PROGRAM: Licensed group programs are available for Kindergarten-aged children and children age 6 years of age up to and including 12 years.

GROUP FAMILY CHILD CARE PROGRAM:

Individually licensed caregivers provide care in the private residence of the licence holder for a maximum of 10 children, including infants, preschool, Kindergarten, and school-aged children. These programs must have two providers on record, and both must be on the premises when seven or more children are in attendance. In the group, no more than three children may be under 3 years of age, and no more than two may be infants.

APPROVED PROGRAM

FAMILY DAY HOME: Alberta's Family Day Home Program is delivered under a contracted agency model; these programs are referred to as approved family day homes. Child and Family Services regions contract with family day home agencies that recruit, train, and monitor providers. Providers may care for a maximum of six children including their own and display Alberta's official family day home trademark—the smiling red door.¹⁹

UNREGULATED CHILD CARE

Unlicensed caregivers are not monitored or funded by the ministry. A caregiver may care for up to six children, not including their own.²⁰

EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE CENTRES

Under the Canada-Alberta bilateral agreement signed in 2017, Alberta piloted 22 provincially funded Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Centres. ELCC Centres provide child care for children from 0 to Kindergarten with a maximum fee

of \$25 per day. In 2018, the ELCC Centre pilot was expanded with the addition of 100 federally funded centres. Funding for the 22 provincially funded pilot centres concluded on July 31, 2020. Funding for the 100 federally funded pilot centres concluded on March 31, 2021.²¹ An evaluation of ELCC Centres year one report is available.²²

LOCAL SERVICE DELIVERY

Alberta has 378 school authorities that include school jurisdictions, accredited funded private schools, and private ECS operators. School jurisdictions refer to Alberta school divisions, Francophone regional authorities, charter schools, the Lloydminster Public School Division, and the Lloydminster Roman Catholic Separate School Division.²³

School authorities offer Early Childhood Services (ECS) programs, including Kindergarten and programs for children as young as 2.8 years.²⁴ Alberta Education has accredited 93 private operators that offer 123 ECS programs.²⁵

Regional Children's Services offices are responsible for licensing, monitoring, and issuing enforcement actions for licensed child care programs.²⁶ Staff work with communities to plan and deliver a range of services to children, youth, and families.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT/ OVERSIGHT

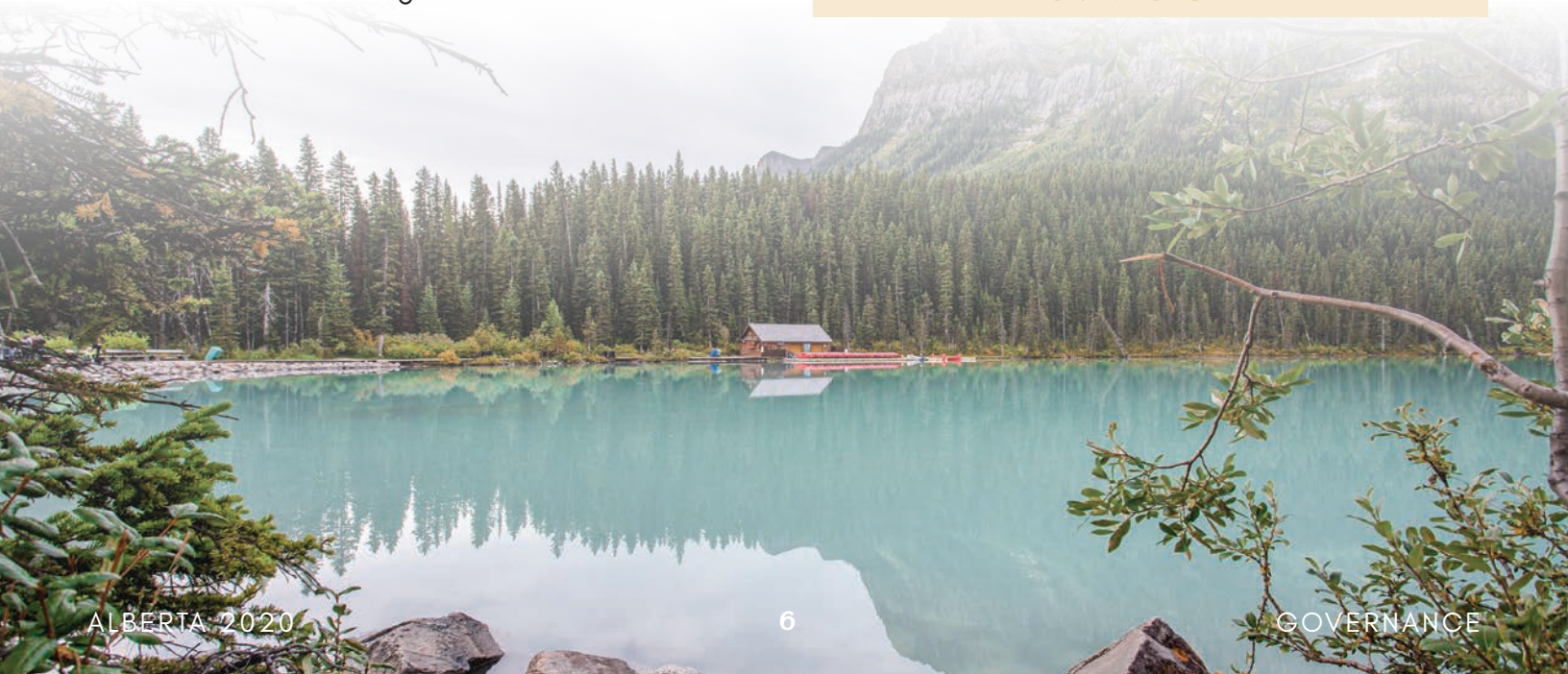


TABLE 2.1 ALBERTA ALLOCATION FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE TO MARCH 31, 2020^a

Child care subsidies and supports	\$282,058,000
Child care accreditation	\$126,718,000
Inclusive child care	\$12,100,000
Early Intervention in First Nations Communities Grant Program	\$1,600,000
Federal funding through bilateral agreement ^b	\$45,593,076
Total regulated child care	\$468,069,076

a Actual expenditures for regulated child care. Government of Alberta. Children's Services. *Annual Report Children's Services 2019-2020*. Retrieved from: <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/476d1e4b-bdfa-4330-a88a-79bdacee1a9a/resource/4ade2575-75c0-4977-bf9c-5b6824c131b7/download/cs-annual-report-2019-2020.pdf>

b The Canada-Alberta Early Learning and Child Care Agreement - 2017-2020 allowed Alberta retain and carry forward unspent funding to the next fiscal year. The province was required to spend its surplus on eligible areas of interest, as outlined in the bilateral agreement, prior to March 31 of the following year. Government of Canada. *Canada-Alberta Early Learning and Child Care Agreement-2017-2020*. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/early-learning-child-care-agreement/agreements-provinces-territories/alberta-2017.html>

n/a

TABLE 2.2 ALBERTA ALLOCATION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION/CHILD CARE TO MARCH 31, 2020

Early Childhood Services^a	\$652,400,000
Public, separate, Francophone, and charter schools	\$484,000,000
Private schools	\$34,500,000
Private early childhood services operators	\$133,900,000
Regulated child care (licensed and approved)^b	\$468,069,076
Total ECEC funding^c	\$1,120,469,076
Total provincial budget spending estimate ^d	\$58,720,000,000
ECEC as a % of provincial budget	1.9%

a Funding for Early Childhood Services is the sum of expenditures for private early childhood services operators, private schools, and public, separate, Francophone, and charter schools. Allocation for public school and private authorities consist of program unit, base instruction, and other operational funding. Information compiled by the Budget and Fiscal Analysis Branch of Alberta Education, November 15, 2020. The *Funding Manual for School Authorities* stipulates that funding for ECS operators is conditional on including children with special needs. Government of Alberta. Alberta Education. *Funding Manual for School Authorities 2020/21 School Year*. Retrieved from: <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/8f3b4972-4c47-4009-a090-5b470e68d633/resource/341e10f6-7c5d-4a9e-922f-0f1f75a8a0f4/download/edc-funding-manual-2020-2021-school-year-june-2020.pdf>

b Actual expenditures for regulated child care. Government of Alberta. Children's Services. *Annual Report Children's Services 2019-2020*. Retrieved from: <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/476d1e4b-bdfa-4330-a88a-79bdacee1a9a/resource/4ade2575-75c0-4977-bf9c-5b6824c131b7/download/cs-annual-report-2019-2020.pdf>

c Does not include federal funding to Aboriginal programs through First Nations, Inuit, and Métis agreements.

d Government of Alberta. *Fiscal Plan A Plan for Jobs and the Economy 2020-23*. Retrieved from: <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/05bd4008-c8e3-4c84-949e-cc18170bc7f7/resource/79caa22e-e417-44bd-8cac-64d7bb045509/download/budget-2020-fiscal-plan-2020-23.pdf>

TABLE 3.1 ALBERTA CHILD POPULATION 0 TO 5 YEARS (2019)^a

Child population 0 to 5 years	329,354
0 to <24 months	107,621
24 months to <5 years	166,734
5 years	54,999
Total population of Alberta ^b	4,417,006
Children 0 to 5 years as % of total population	7.5%

a Statistics Canada. Table 17100005; Formerly Table 051-0001 – Estimates of population, by age group and sex for July 1, 2019, Canada, provinces and territories (Accessed: February 24, 2020).

b Government of Alberta. *Quarterly Alberta Total Population Estimates: 1951-2020 (updated September 29, 2020)*. Retrieved from: <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/c45f2f78-0d6c-4a7e-98bc-313fbb232040/resource/1b346528-5188-47ee-8fef-b3d41e3db7c0/download/population-estimates-ab-quarterly-1951-to-current.xlsx>

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

	Number of mothers in labour force by age of youngest child	Labour force participation rate of mothers by age of youngest child
0 to <24 months	61,600	62.1%
24 months to <5 years	68,300	67.8%
5 years	18,600	72.9%
Total mothers in labour force with child 0 to 5 years	148,500	
Average labour force participation of mothers with youngest child 0 to 5 years		65.9%

Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey. 0620_13 Table 3 - Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates of mothers by age of youngest child, Canada, provinces, territories, annual average, 2019.

TABLE 3.3 ALBERTA ECE SCHOOL PROGRAMS (2019-2020)

Number of schools that provide Early Childhood Services in Francophone, public, and separate school jurisdictions, and private and charter school authorities (excluding ECS private operators) ^a	2,252
Number of ECS programs provided by private operators ^a	123
Children attending 5-year-old ECS Kindergarten ^b	35,723
5-year-old population ^c	54,999
% of children attending ECS Kindergarten	65%

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

b Personal Communication. Government of Alberta. Alberta Children's Services. February 14, 2021.

c Statistics Canada. Table 17100005; Formerly Table 051-0001 – Estimates of population, by age group and sex for July 1, 2019, Canada, provinces and territories (Accessed: February 24, 2020).

TABLE 3.4 ALBERTA REGULATED CHILD CARE TO MARCH 31, 2020

Spaces by age group	
Infants (0 to <19 months)	9,581
Preschool (19 months to <6 years; full- and part-time; includes Kindergarten)	54,155
School-aged (6 to <13 years)	49,799
Total capacity centre-based programs	113,535
Family child care/homes and group/special programs	11,964
Total capacity regulated child care	125,499
Facilities by type	
Daycare (0 to < 6 years)	1,043
Preschool (19 months to <6 years)	648
Out-of-school care program (Kindergarten to <13 years)	1,127
Family day home (0 to <13 years)	63
Group family child care program (0 to <13 years)	12
Innovative child care programs	23
Facilities by auspice	
non-profit	40%
for-profit	60%

Personal Communication. Government of Alberta. Alberta Children's Services. October 16, 2020. The Alberta government licenses First Nations child care programs. Funding for First Nations child care programs is cost shared between the federal government and the provincial government through fiscal agreements with First Nations. Health Canada. *First Nations Head Start Standards Guide*. Retrieved from: https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-ISC-SAC/DAM-HLTH/STAGING/texte-text/family-health-head-start-ahsor_fn-standards-guide_1582214848065_eng.pdf

TABLE 3.5 ALBERTA PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN ATTENDING ECE PROGRAMS BY AGE GROUP

Child Ages	Number of Children^a	Child Care^b	Early Childhood Services/ Kindergarten	Other ECE Programs^c	% Children Attending ECEC Programs
0 to <24 months	107,621	14,700			14%
24 months to <5 years	166,734	49,046	37,804 ^e	535	43%
5 years	54,999	^d	35,723 ^f		65%

a Statistics Canada. Table 17100005; Formerly Table 051-0001 - Estimates of population, by age group and sex for July 1, 2019, Canada, provinces and territories (Accessed: February 24, 2020).

b Represents spaces and not enrolment. Participation is estimated. Child care age groupings do not match the age groupings in the report. To avoid double counting, the percentage of 4-year-olds attending ECS is deducted from the child care count. Please see Methodology for calculation details. Personal Communication. Government of Alberta. Alberta Children's Services. October 2, 2020.

c Reflects children ages 3 to <6 years enrolled in Head Start programs for Urban and Northern communities in 2017/2018. Data for On-reserve head start programs has not been collated due to re-purposing staff for COVID related issues. Personal Communication. Government of Alberta. Alberta Children's Services. October 2, 2020.

d Child care figures are not reported to avoid double counting. It is assumed children attending child care also attend Kindergarten.

e Reflects children 2.8 to <6 years enrolled in Early Childhood Services (73,527) subtracted by the total number of 5-year-old children enrolled in ECS Kindergarten (35, 723). Government of Alberta. *Student Population Statistics*. Retrieved from: <https://www.alberta.ca/student-population-statistics.aspx>

f ECS Kindergarten enrolment. Personal Communication. Government of Alberta. Alberta Children's Services. February 14, 2021.

AFFORDABILITY

TABLE 3.6 ALBERTA MAXIMUM CHILD CARE SUBSIDY RATES FOR ELIGIBLE FAMILIES EARNING BELOW \$75,000

Child Care and Out-of-School Care				
Income	Infant (<18 months)	Preschooler (19 months to <6 years)	School Age (6 to <13 years)	Subsidy Rate
\$0-\$49,999	\$741	\$644	\$366	100%
\$50,000-\$54,999	\$704	\$612	\$348	95%
\$55,000-\$59,999	\$630	\$547	\$311	85%
\$60,000-\$64,999	\$556	\$483	\$275	75%
\$65,000-\$69,999	\$482	\$419	\$238	65%
\$70,000-\$74,999	\$408	\$354	\$201	55%
Family Day Home and Group Family Child Care				
Income	Infant (<18 months)	Preschooler (19 months to <6 years)	School Age (6 to <13 years)	Subsidy Rate
\$0-\$49,999	\$614	\$516	\$366	100%
\$50,000-\$54,999	\$583	\$490	\$348	95%
\$55,000-\$59,999	\$522	\$439	\$311	85%
\$60,000-\$64,999	\$461	\$387	\$275	75%
\$65,000-\$69,999	\$399	\$335	\$238	65%
\$70,000-\$74,999	\$338	\$284	\$201	55%

Reflects Alberta's new child care subsidy formula, effective August 1, 2020. Government of Alberta. *Child Care Subsidy Rates, August, 2020*. Retrieved from: <https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/cs-child-care-subsidy-rates.pdf>

The amount of child care fee subsidy depends on the number of individuals in the household, the family's gross income, the age of the child attending child care, and the type of care and special costs. Eligible families earning less than \$50,000 annually have access to a full subsidy. Effective August 1, 2020, Alberta's revised child care subsidy formula increased the subsidy amounts and eligible family income thresholds to \$75,000.²⁷ There is no maximum parent fee scale for families earning more than \$75,000.

The province's online estimator tool²⁸ considers income and deductions (e.g., tuition and medical expenses).

The Stay-at-Home Parents Support and Kin Child Care Funding subsidy options were discontinued on January 1, 2020. An Extended-Hours Subsidy provides an additional \$100 per month per child for eligible parents who work or attend classes during evenings or weekends.²⁹

Through the Infant Care Incentive Program, the ministry subsidizes infant care costs, paying a universal grant of \$150 per month to licensed child care and approved family day homes to offset the higher cost associated with caring for infants up to and including 17 months of age.³⁰

INCLUSION

Alberta Education's inclusive education policy, *Standards for the Provision of Early Childhood Special Education*,³¹ outlines the standards for ECS and education programming and services for eligible children with special education needs. The Funding Manual states that approved ECS operators must be prepared to accept and organize programming for all funded children for whom programming is requested, including children with special needs.³²

Alberta's Supported Child Care Program provides supports to children with unique needs to attend and participate in licensed child care, approved family home, and out-of-school care programs. Support through this program includes

funding, additional child care staff, and program consultation.³³ In spring 2021, the Inclusive Child Care program will replace the Supported Child Care Program. Services under the new program will remain the same.³⁴

Getting Ready for Inclusion Today (GRIT) provides family-centred and inclusive learning experiences to support the participation of children with disabilities in their homes, communities, and schools through the ASaP (Access, Support and Participation) program. Child care programs have the option to participate in the ASaP program. Child care programs that choose to participate can have their facilities and curriculum assessed to determine areas for enhancement. Child care teams also receive access to training and on-site coaching to increase inclusion practices.³⁵



TABLE 4.1 ALBERTA CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS

Program	Framework Document
Kindergarten	<p><i>Kindergarten Program Statement – 2008</i>: Kindergarten activities are organized around seven learning areas^a</p> <p><i>Programme d’éducation pour la maternelle – français langue première</i>^b</p> <p><i>Programme d’éducation de maternelle – immersion</i>^c</p>
Child Care	<i>Flight: Alberta’s Early Learning and Care Framework (2014)</i>

a Government of Alberta. Alberta Education. *Kindergarten Program Statement 2008*. Retrieved from: <https://education.alberta.ca/media/563583/kindprogstate2008.pdf>

b Government of Alberta. Alberta Education (2008). *Programme d’éducation pour la maternelle Français langue première*. Retrieved from: https://education.alberta.ca/media/1088996/fr_mat.pdf

c Government of Alberta. Alberta Education. (2008). *Programme d’éducation de maternelle – immersion*. Retrieved from: <https://education.alberta.ca/media/160332/programme-d%C3%A9ducation-pour-la-maternelle-immersion.pdf>

d In 2017, *Play, Participation, and Possibilities: An Early Learning and Child Care Curriculum Framework for Alberta (2014)* was replaced by *The Flight Curriculum Framework*. This new framework is aligned with the principles of the Kindergarten Program Statement (2008); however, there is no mandate requiring its use in regulated child care. Makovichuk, L., Hewes, J., Lirette, P., & Thomas, N. (2014). *Flight: Alberta’s Early Learning and Care Framework*. Retrieved from: <https://flightframework.ca>

WORK ENVIRONMENT

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

FULL-DAY, CENTRE-BASED CARE		
Age	Staff:Child Ratios*	Max. Group Size
0 to <12 months	1:3	6
12 months to <19 months	1:4	8
19 months to <3 years	1:6	12
3 years to <4.5 years	1:8	16
>4.5 years	1:10	20
OUT-OF-SCHOOL CARE: PART-DAY PROGRAMS		
Kindergarten-aged children	1:15	30
6 to <13 years (school-aged)	1:15	30
Preschool		
19 months to <3 years	1:6	
3 year to <6 years	1:12	

* Adjusted ratios are permitted for mixed age groupings.
 Government of Alberta. *Child Care Licensing Regulation, Alberta Regulation 143/2008*. Retrieved from: https://www.gp.alberta.ca/documents/Regs/2008_143.pdf

KINDERGARTEN CLASS SIZE: There are no restrictions on Kindergarten class sizes. The provincial average class size for K-grade three in 2018–2019 was 20.4 children.³⁶

CHILD CARE PROGRAM SIZE: There are no legislated restrictions on the size of child care centres.

TABLE 4.3 ALBERTA EDUCATOR QUALIFICATIONS

Kindergarten^a	<p>All ECS teachers must have a valid certificate^b from the Minister of Education, obtained through the Office of the Registrar. To obtain a Permanent Professional Certificate, teachers must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a Bachelor of Education, including a minimum of 10 weeks of supervised student teaching • Complete two years of successful teaching • Receive two formal evaluations based on the knowledge, skills, and attributes for permanent certification outlined in the Teaching Quality Standard • Receive a recommendation to the Registrar for permanent certification from a Designated Signing Authority
Early Childhood Educators^c	<p>Level 1 Early Childhood Educator – completion of the Child Care Orientation Course (Alberta government sponsored course) or a 45-hour (three credit) post-secondary course related to child development) or completed the Step Ahead Family Day Home Training or Family Child Care Training Program through an approved Alberta Family Day Home Agency registered with the Alberta Family Child Care association</p> <p>Level 2 Early Childhood Educator – completion of a one-year Early Learning and Child Care certificate program offered by an Alberta public college or university, or an equivalent level of training</p> <p>Level 3 Early Childhood Educator – completion of a two-year early learning and child care diploma program offered by an Alberta public college or an equivalent level of training^d</p>
<p>a Government of Alberta. <i>Teacher Certification</i>. Retrieved from: https://www.alberta.ca/teacher-certification.aspx</p> <p>b An online optional Early Childhood Education Certificate is offer by faculties of education to professionals who already have a degree in a variety of related fields.</p> <p>c Government of Alberta. <i>Child Care Staff Certification</i>. Retrieved from: https://www.alberta.ca/child-care-staff-certification.aspx</p> <p>d Government of Alberta. Children’s Services. <i>Child Care Staff Certification Guide</i>. Retrieved from: https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/5837df5e-0abd-4a77-ae21-466b38a786ec/resource/f7dbcd2-0755-4aa1-bbf0-13fabbfd4d51/download/child-care-staff-certification-guide-2018.pdf</p>	

TABLE 4.4 ALBERTA PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION AND DEVELOPMENT

	Teachers	ECEs
Professional Recognition	The Office of the Registrar is responsible for the certification of teachers as legislated in the Certification of Teachers Regulation. ^a	The Alberta Child Care Staff Certification Office certifies staff working in licensed child care, preschool, out-of-school care, and approved family day home and group family child care programs. ^c
Professional Development	Teachers are required to develop a Professional Growth Plan on an annual basis. ^b	Not required.
<p>a Kindergarten teachers are not required to have ECE qualifications. Government of Alberta. <i>Education Act, Certification of Teachers and Teacher Leaders Regulation, Alberta Regulation 84/2019</i>. Retrieved from: https://qp.alberta.ca/documents/Regs/2019_084.pdf</p> <p>b Government of Alberta. Alberta Education. <i>Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy</i>. Retrieved from: https://education.alberta.ca/media/1626684/tgse.pdf</p> <p>c Government of Alberta. Children’s Services. <i>Child Care Staff Certification Guide</i>. Retrieved from: https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/5837df5e-0abd-4a77-ae21-466b38a786ec/resource/f7dbcd2-0755-4aa1-bbf0-13fabbfd4d51/download/child-care-staff-certification-guide-2018.pdf</p>		

TABLE 4.5 ALBERTA DENSITY OF QUALIFIED STAFF IN CHILD CARE CENTRES

One in three staff working with children in daycare centres must be certified as a Level 2 Early Childhood Educator (one-year child development certificate). Part day preschool programs and out of school care require 1 in 4 staff to be certified as a Level 2 Early Childhood Educator.

Government of Alberta. *Child Care Licensing Act, Child Care Licensing Regulation, Alberta Regulation 143/2008*. Retrieved from: https://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Regs/2008_143.pdf

TABLE 4.6 ALBERTA TEACHERS AND ECES ANNUAL SALARIES (2019)

Teachers^a	Early Childhood Educators^b	ECE Salary as % of Teacher Salary
\$77,611	\$34,691	45%

- a There is no minimum wage scale for early childhood educators. Government of Alberta. *Occupations in Alberta: Elementary School Teacher*. Retrieved from: <https://alis.alberta.ca/occinfo/occupations-in-alberta/occupation-profiles/elementary-school-teacher/>
 b Government of Alberta. *Wages and Salaries in Alberta: Early Childhood Educators and Assistants*. Retrieved from: <https://alis.alberta.ca/occinfo/wages-and-salaries-in-alberta/early-childhood-educators-and-assistants/4214/>

Wage top-ups for child care workers will no longer be tied to accreditation through the Child Care

Accreditation Program, but will instead be rolled into the ministry’s licensing funding.³⁷



PROGRESS REPORTS: The Canada–Alberta Early Learning and Child Care Agreement – 2017–2020 requires Alberta to publicly report no later than October 1 of each year of the agreement on results and expenditures for the previous fiscal year. The report should include the number of children benefiting from subsidies, and the number of licensed early learning and child care spaces broken down by age of child and type of setting. The report should show separately the results attributable to the funding provided by Canada under the Agreement.³⁸ The most recent report was tabled in August 2020 for the 2019–2020 fiscal year.³⁹

PROGRAM STANDARDS:

- Licensed child care programs are subject to regulations under the *Child Care Licensing Act* and *Regulation* and generally receive a minimum of two licensing inspections during a 12-month period. Licensed child care programs are required to post their inspection reports in a prominent and visible place on the program premises.⁴⁰ Parents in Alberta also have access to an online tool that provides information about child care

programs and services, including recent inspection results.⁴¹

- As of March 2020, the Government of Alberta no longer administers the child care accreditation system parallel to licensing.⁴²
- The Program and System Support Division of Alberta Education conducts reviews and monitors school authorities, including private ECS operators. *The Early Childhood Services Regulation* specifies requirements for the operation of ECS programs, including safety standards, programs, and policies. The *Guide to Education* specifies program planning requirements and key information for the operation and delivery of ECS programs, including Kindergarten. The guide does not specify a maximum group size for Kindergarten classes.

POPULATION MONITORING: Teachers complete the Early Development Instrument (EDI) for individual children. The data from the questionnaires are analyzed and reported at a population level. The last province-wide collection of EDI data in Alberta occurred in 2016. Parents may choose whether or not their child is included in the EDI data collection.



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