

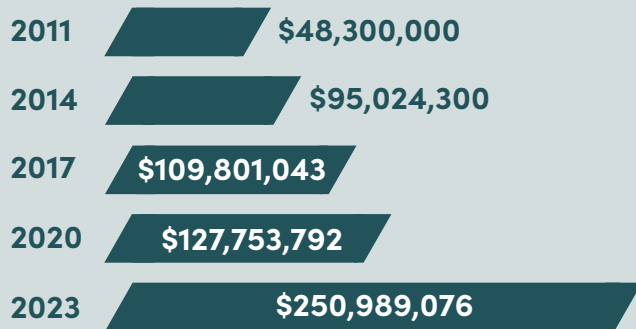
# Early Childhood Education Report



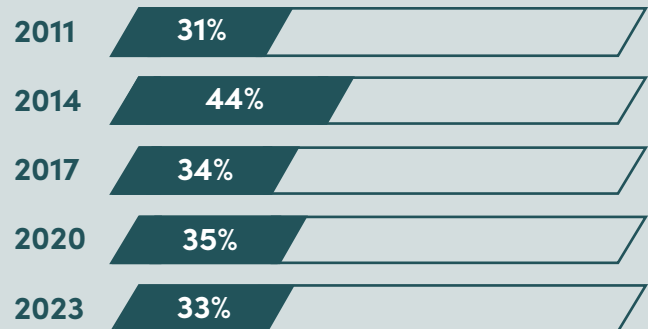
# NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

## Profile 2023

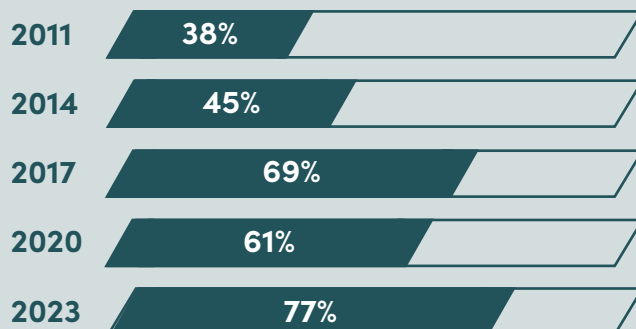
### CHANGE IN ECEC SPENDING



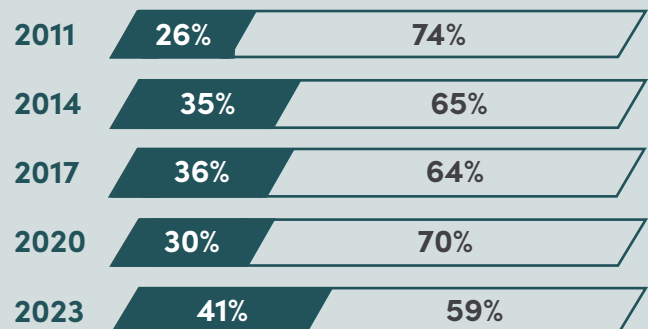
### ECEC CAPACITY TO PERCENTAGE OF 2- TO 4-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN



### ECE WAGES AS A PERCENTAGE OF TEACHER WAGES



### PERCENTAGE OF ECE FACILITIES (NON-PROFIT/PROFIT)



Early Childhood  
Education Report



## ABOUT THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION REPORT BENCHMARKS

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

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## NEW DEVELOPMENTS

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

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador introduced the Early Childhood Educator Wage Grid on April 1, 2023, with wage grid delay payments issued for the January 1– March 31, 2023, time period. The commitment of \$64 million covers early childhood educators certified with the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Newfoundland and Labrador (AECENL) and working in regulated child care centres participating in the Operating Grant Program.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

The Operating Grant Program underwent an external review to explore potential improvements to programming. The review was completed in November 2023<sup>4</sup> and a report was released in January 2024. Twenty-four improvements were identified across six priority areas: funding and rates, processes and program requirements, accountability, workforce, system enablers, and governance.<sup>5</sup>

On September 29, 2023, the province announced an increase in funding availability and supports for the sector offered through the Child Care Capacity Initiative Program. It included \$7.5 million to increase child care capacity by 750 spaces with a focus on toddler spaces in non-profit child care centres and rural areas; the hiring of a project manager to oversee and support non-profit child care capacity projects; and an increase to the personnel budget category of projects operating under the Child Care Capacity Initiative Program, which included an hourly wage increase from \$17 per hour to \$25 per hour for developmental workers.<sup>6</sup>

A new Child Care Demand Portal was launched on October 17, 2023. This was the first phase of

implementation for a new Early Learning Gateway. The portal assesses the demand for child care services in Newfoundland and Labrador. Families and caregivers input information about their child care needs, such as the age range of the child care required and the community in which the care is needed. This information is aiding in the planning of space creation to ensure resources can be distributed accordingly. The portal can also be used to report concerns identified at regulated child care services. Consultations with service providers, early childhood educators, and the Minister's Advisory Committee will continue into the next phase so that the portal can include child care services information management, applications for grants, and internal staff management.<sup>7</sup>

In June 2023, the provincial government issued a call for members to expand the Minister of Education's Early Learning and Child Care Advisory Committee to contribute to the development and implementation of the provincial early learning and action plan. Committee members include practitioners, service providers, and experts in early learning and child care across the province, such as academics, social leaders, social groups, and parents and guardians.<sup>8</sup>

The government announced a new initiative in November 2023 to improve access to early learning and child care throughout the province for health professionals. Over the next six months, three sites—St. John's, Bonavista, and Corner Brook—will develop an additional 160 child care spaces operated by the YMCA. In months to come, further initiatives will enhance access to early learning and child care for health professionals in urban, rural, and remote communities.<sup>9</sup> Development work is underway to expand these sites to include Family Child Care services in key areas across the province.<sup>10</sup>



## **CANADA–NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR CANADA-WIDE EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE AGREEMENTS (CWELCC)<sup>11,12</sup>**

On July 28, 2021, Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador signed two agreements, the new Canada–Newfoundland and Labrador Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (CWELCC) and an extension to the Canada–Newfoundland and Labrador Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework Agreement, first signed in 2017.

The CWELCC Agreement provides approximately \$347 million in federal funding over five years (2021–26) to accomplish the following:

- Establish a \$10 a day fee in all eligible programs by 2026. The province met this target in January 2023.<sup>13</sup>
- Add approximately 5,800 new regulated spaces for children age 6 years and younger in underserved areas by 2025–26.
- Fully implement a Pre-Kindergarten program for 4-year-olds by 2025–26.
- Provide a one-time investment of \$6.5 million for the early childhood workforce.
- Provide more than \$6 million toward ECE credential upgrading (70 eligible ECEs will receive \$250 for completion of upgrading certification from Trainee level to Level 1 certification); bursaries (up to \$7,500 for 25 graduates of an ECE diploma with a three year return to service); continuous professional learning (professional development training on culturally responsive practice, equity, inclusion in early learning and child care, and outdoor play) for 1,800 ECEs.
- Provide an ECE–Campus Field Placement Bursary Program. Ten eligible ECEs will receive \$835 per week, up to \$2,500 in total, to attend an on-campus field placement.
- Establish and implement the Early Learning and Child Care Quality Enhancement Program.



# GOVERNANCE

**TABLE 1.1 NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

Lead Ministry/Department	Department of Education <sup>a</sup>
Related Ministry/Department	n/a
ECE Supervisory Unit	K-12 Education Branch Early Learning and Child Development Division <sup>b</sup>
Policy Framework	<i>Early Learning Framework</i> <sup>c</sup> <i>Early Learning and Child Care Action Plan</i> (in development) <sup>d</sup> <i>Education Action Plan 2018</i> <sup>e</sup> <i>Education Plan Update June 2021</i> <sup>f</sup>
Legislation	<i>Child Care Act</i> (May 2017) <sup>g</sup> ; last amended cO-5.1 s45 41/22 <sup>h</sup> <i>Schools Act</i> , 1997; last amended 2022 c23 <sup>i</sup>
Related Legislation	n/a
Local Service Delivery	2 school districts: 1 English with 4 regional offices <sup>j</sup> that will be integrated into the Department of Education by January 1, 2024, and 1 French – Conseil scolaire francophone <sup>k</sup> There are 4 regions with several regional Early Learning and Child Development offices, each containing staff that oversee the regulated child care sector <sup>l</sup>
Community/Sector Oversight	Early Learning and Child Care Advisory Committee <sup>m</sup> Federation of School Councils <sup>n</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Department of Education. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/>

<sup>b</sup> Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Department of Education. *K-12 Education and Early Childhood Development*. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/department/branches/pes/>

<sup>c</sup> Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. *Navigating the Early Years: An Early Childhood Early Learning Framework*. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/files/Early-Learning-Framework.pdf>

<sup>d</sup> Consultations are underway for a new action plan as part of the Canada–Newfoundland and Labrador CWELCC July 2021 agreement. Office of the Child and Youth Advocate. *Submission to the Department of Education Regarding the Early Learning Action Plan*. Retrieved from: [https://www.childandyouthadvocate.nl.ca/files/Submission\\_EarlyLearningActionPlan-July2023.pdf](https://www.childandyouthadvocate.nl.ca/files/Submission_EarlyLearningActionPlan-July2023.pdf)

<sup>e</sup> Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Department of Education. *Education Action Plan June 2018: The Way Forward*. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/files/eap-report.pdf>

<sup>f</sup> Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. *Education Action Plan Update June 2021*. Retrieved from: [https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/files/Education\\_Action\\_Plan\\_Update.pdf](https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/files/Education_Action_Plan_Update.pdf)

<sup>g</sup> Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. *Child Care Act*. Retrieved from: <https://www.assembly.nl.ca/Legislation/sr/statutes/c11-01.htm>

<sup>h</sup> Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. *Child Care Regulations under the Child Care Act*. Retrieved from: <https://www.assembly.nl.ca/Legislation/sr/regulations/rc170039.htm>

<sup>i</sup> Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. *Schools Act*. Retrieved from: <https://www.assembly.nl.ca/legislation/sr/statutes/s12-2.htm>

<sup>j</sup> Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. *School Directory*. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/k12/schoolsdistricts/directory/>

<sup>k</sup> The English school district is being integrated into EDU as of January 1, 2024. Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. *Conseil scolaire francophone provincial*. Retrieved from: <http://www.csfp.nl.ca/>

<sup>l</sup> Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Department of Education. *Child Care Regional Offices*. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/department/contact/#section>

<sup>m</sup> Government of Canada. *Canada–Newfoundland and Labrador Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement*. (CWELCC) – 2021 to 2026. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/early-learning-child-care-agreement/agreements-provinces-territories/newfoundland-labrador-canada-wide-2021.html#h-b>

<sup>n</sup> Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Department of Education. *Building Learning Communities: A Handbook for School Councils 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed*. Retrieved from: [https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/files/publications\\_k12\\_handbook2ndedition.pdf](https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/files/publications_k12_handbook2ndedition.pdf)

## LEGISLATION

Guidelines for the operation of regulated child care services in Newfoundland and Labrador fall under the *Child Care Act (2017)*<sup>14</sup> and associated regulations. The legislation stipulates staffing qualifications, and health, safety and facility standards. The *Child Care Act* undergoes a mandatory legislative review with public consultation every five years.<sup>15</sup> This legislation complements the 2021–23 Canada–Newfoundland and Labrador Canada–Wide Early Learning and Child Care Action Plan.<sup>16</sup>

## DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION

The Department of Education is responsible for policy, legislation, and regulations for public education and early learning and child care services.<sup>17,18</sup> The department administers the Child Care Subsidy Program to assist families with child care costs at regulated child care services and maintains a province-wide online directory of regulated child care services as well as Family Resource Centres and their associated satellite offices.<sup>19,20</sup>

The K-12 Education Branch is responsible for educational policy, legislation, and regulations, and for funding, monitoring, and evaluating programs. The division also develops curriculum and policy and guidelines to support children with various learning profiles, and funds and supports public libraries.<sup>21</sup>

The Early Learning and Child Development Division of the Department supports early learning through funding and supporting preschool transition to the K–12 education system, implementing the early learning framework, *Navigating the Early Years: An Early Childhood Learning Framework*,<sup>22</sup> and resource allocation. The division is also responsible for child care licensing, monitoring, compliance, and funding, family resource centres, and programs to support the recruitment and retention of early childhood educators.<sup>23</sup> The division includes the Child Care Inclusion Supports Program, which is responsible for providing assistance to regulated child care

services to ensure children with exceptionalities (diagnosed and undiagnosed) can participate to their full potential in a regulated child care program.<sup>24</sup>

## POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Department of Education is in the development phase of a new provincial *Early Learning Action Plan*. Public consultations began in June 2023, as part of the mandatory review of the *Child Care Act* and Regulations that takes place every five years.<sup>25</sup>

## SERVICE DESIGN

### EDUCATION PROGRAMS

**KINDERGARTEN:** Full-day Kindergarten is available in both English and French schools for children who turn 5 years of age by December 31. Attendance is not mandatory.<sup>26</sup> The English School District offers early French Immersion for non-francophone children, where French is the primary language of instruction across 100 per cent of courses from Kindergarten to Grade 2, or through common core French courses in schools starting in grade 4.<sup>27,28</sup>

**KINDERSTART:**<sup>29,30</sup> This school transition program is offered to young children and their families the year before Kindergarten entry. The program consists of four 2.5-hour orientation sessions delivered by Kindergarten teachers for both children and their parents/caregivers. The sessions support children's adjustment to the school environment and provide parents/caregivers with information on how to support their children's learning at home. Every family is provided with a KinderStart bag containing resources and materials to promote literacy and numeracy at home.

**PRE-KINDERGARTEN PILOT:**<sup>31,32,33</sup> As part of the Canada–Newfoundland and Labrador Early Learning and Child Care Agreements, 3,100 new regulated child care spaces for 4-year-olds will be created in schools by 2025–26. Sites are operated by the YMCA. Twenty-four sites are developed and an additional 22 are under development.



## REGULATED CHILD CARE<sup>34,35</sup>

A licence is required for child care centres and family child care homes that meet the definition of a child care service and child care service provider as per sections 2(f) and 2(g) of the *Child Care Act* and do not meet the exemption requirements of Regulation 3 under the *Child Care Regulations*.

**CHILD CARE CENTRES:** These facilities offer full-time care (for more than four hours per day) or part-time care (four or fewer hours per day).

**FAMILY CHILD CARE:** Care is offered in the child care service provider's own home. Family child care providers have the option to become approved under the licensed family child care agency, Family and Child Care Connections, or directly through the regional offices of the Early Learning and Child Development Division.<sup>36,37</sup>

**FAMILY CHILD CARE AGENCY:** The Early Learning and Child Development Division licenses Family and Child Care Connections to approve, screen, recruit, monitor, and support family home child care providers.<sup>38</sup>

## UNREGULATED CHILD CARE<sup>39,40</sup>

A person can provide child care in their own home without a provincial licence or approval from a licensing agency. The service must operate for fewer than 10 hours a week and the child care provider must have a maximum of four children under the age of 13 years and no more than two of these children can be 2 years of age or younger, or have a maximum of three children where all of the children are 2 years old or younger. Maximum counts must include the provider's own children.

## CHILD/FAMILY SERVICES<sup>41</sup>

**FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRES (FRC):** Family Resource (FRCs) are community-based organizations that deliver programs to promote positive parent-child interactions that support healthy child development. They offer a variety of resources, programs, and services to families with children from birth to 6 years of age. They provide a play-based, developmentally appropriate environment for children and a safe and supportive setting for parents. There are 32 FRCs and more than 120 satellites across the province. The Family Resource Program is currently under external review.

## LOCAL SERVICE DELIVERY

Two school districts (English and French) are responsible for Kindergarten. The Newfoundland and Labrador English School District oversees 253 schools through four regional offices. The Conseil scolaire francophone oversees six schools. The English School District was integrated into the Department of Education in January 2024.<sup>42,43,44</sup>

Four regional offices of the Early Learning and Child Development Division support child care and family resource centres: Metro, Labrador, Western, and Central East, which has two offices.<sup>45</sup>

## COMMUNITY SECTOR/OVERSIGHT<sup>46,47,48,49</sup>

The Association of Early Childhood Educators of Newfoundland and Labrador (AECENL) and the Human Resource Council of Newfoundland and Labrador meet regularly with the Department of Education. AECENL encourages ECEs and other professionals working in the early learning and child care sector to attend consultation sessions when offered and to complete the EngageNL Early Learning Action Plan survey.



**THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION'S EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE:** This committee was created on February 10, 2022, as part of the Canada–Newfoundland and Labrador CWELCC Agreement. Its goal is to contribute to the development and implementation of the provincial *Early Learning Action Plan*, identify sector needs for future action plans, and provide advice to the minister of education. Members include practitioners, service providers, and experts in early learning and child care across the province, such as academics, leaders and social groups, interdepartmental representatives, and parents and guardians. The Department of Education

held public consultations sessions throughout the province starting in June 2023 to gain input and recommendations regarding the development of the *Early Learning Action Plan* and to review the *Child Care Act* and Regulations. Sessions included feedback from those in the early learning and child care sector such as stakeholders, ECEs, and families.<sup>50</sup>

The government introduced amendments to the *Schools Act* in October 2022 to include the Provincial Advisory Council on Education that reports to the minister of education regarding K–12 education and ensures school councils have input into educational matters.<sup>51,52</sup>





# FUNDING

**TABLE 2.1 NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR EXPENDITURES FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE TO MARCH 31, 2023**

Child care subsidy program <sup>a</sup>	\$14,731,800
Operating accounts	\$10,997,800
Allowances and assistance: ECE bursaries, ELCC (income) supplement	\$12,699,000
Grants and subsidies	\$122,871,400
<b>Total regulated child care</b>	<b>\$161,300,000</b>
Federal funding <sup>b</sup>	\$85,891,700

<sup>a</sup> Personal Communication. Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Early Learning and Child Development Division. February 16, 2024.

<sup>b</sup> Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Department of Finance. *Estimates of the Program Expenditure and Revenue of the Consolidated Revenue Fund 2022-23*. Retrieved from: <https://www.assembly.nl.ca/business/electronicdocuments/Budget2022Estimates.pdf>. Federal funding of \$85,891,700 is included in the budget lines above.

**TABLE 2.2 NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR EXPENDITURES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION/CHILD CARE TO MARCH 31, 2023**

Kindergarten <sup>a</sup>	\$54,649,796
Total expenditures for regulated child care <sup>b</sup>	\$161,300,000
Early intervention	\$35,039,280
<b>Total ECEC spending</b>	<b>\$250,989,076</b>
Total provincial spending estimate <sup>c</sup>	\$8,352,130,000
<b>ECEC as a % of provincial budget</b>	<b>3.0%</b>

<sup>a</sup> Personal communication. Department of Education. Per pupil funding based on total operating education budget \$965,599,520-161,300,000/63,805 latest total student enrolment = \$12,606 x Kindergarten enrolment of 4,187. Education spending retrieved from: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/publications/k12/stats/#y2023>. Student enrolment retrieved from: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Department of Education. *Enrolment Information 2022-23*. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/publications/k12/stats/#y2023>.

<sup>b</sup> Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Department of Finance. *Estimates of the Program Expenditure and Revenue of the Consolidated Revenue Fund 2022-23*, P. 192. Retrieved from: <https://www.assembly.nl.ca/business/electronicdocuments/Budget2022Estimates.pdf>

<sup>c</sup> Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Department of Finance. *Estimates of the Program Expenditure and Revenue of the Consolidated Revenue Fund 2022-23*, page XIV. Retrieved from: <https://www.assembly.nl.ca/business/electronicdocuments/Budget2022Estimates.pdf>

The Canada–Newfoundland and Labrador CWELCC Agreement provides over \$347 million in federal funding over five years (2021–26) to reduce child care costs, increase child care spaces and capacity, increase workforce funding, implement the new Pre-Kindergarten pilot program (\$3.5 million to expand the Pre-Kindergarten pilot and an additional \$1.8 million for new spaces), increase child care subsidies, establish a Child Care Advisory committee, and ensure quality enhancement.<sup>53</sup>

**OPERATING GRANT PROGRAM (OGP):** This voluntary program provides operational funding to all interested licensed family child care and centre-based child care services. The program has undergone an external review. Operational funding is issued up to three months in advance in exchange for capping parent fees at \$10 per day. Grants vary depending on number and age range of children, concurrent and consecutive programming, days of operation, expenses, location, and meal provision.<sup>54,55</sup>

**CHILD CARE CAPACITY GRANT:** This grant assists with costs tied to start-up, renovation, program materials and equipment, and materials to adhere to legislative requirements under the *Child Care Act* and Regulations. In 2022, the Family Child Care Capacity Grant was increased and ranges from \$7,500 to \$15,000. In addition, there was an increase to the Child Care Capacity Grant from \$5,000 to \$8,000 per space created. In September 2023, an increase to the personnel budget category of projects operating under the Child Care Initiative Program included an hourly wage increase from \$17 per hour to \$25 per hour for developmental workers. Funding assists with costs tied to start-up, renovation, program materials and equipment, and materials to adhere to health and safety standards.<sup>56,57,58</sup>



# ACCESS

**TABLE 3.1 NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR CHILD POPULATION 0 TO <6 YEARS (2022)**

Child population 0 to <6 years	23,996
0 to <24 months	7,640
24 months to <5 years	11,862
5 years	4,494
Total population of Newfoundland and Labrador	525,972
Children 0 to <6 years as % of total population	4.6%

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

**TABLE 3.2 NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION OF MOTHERS BY AGE OF YOUNGEST CHILD (2022)**

	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	4,700	79.7%
24 months to <5 years	6,700	85.9%
5 years	2,100	80.8%
Total mothers in labour force with child 0 to <6 years	13,500	
Average labour force participation of mothers with youngest child 0 to <6 years		82.8%

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey. 0620\_13 Table 3—Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates of mothers by age of youngest child, Canada, provinces, territories, annual average, 2016 to 2022 (persons × 1,000).

**TABLE 3.3 NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR ECE SCHOOL PROGRAMS (2022–23)**

Children attending 5-year-old Kindergarten <sup>a</sup>	4,419
5-year-old child population <sup>b</sup>	4,494
% of children attending Kindergarten	98%

<sup>a</sup> Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Department of Education. *Enrolment Information 2021–2022*. Retrieved from: [https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/files/ENR\\_21\\_3.pdf](https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/files/ENR_21_3.pdf)

<sup>b</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 17-10-0005-01 Population estimates on July 1, 2022, by age and sex (accessed on January 10, 2023).



**TABLE 3.4 NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR REGULATED CHILD CARE TO MARCH 31, 2023**

**Spaces by age group in centre-based programs<sup>a</sup>**

Infants	138
Toddlers	1,331
Preschool-age	3,774
Pre-Kindergarten	129
School-age	2,530

**Total spaces centre-based child care** **7,902**

Spaces in family child care/home 620

**Total capacity regulated child care** **8,522**

**Facilities by type<sup>a</sup>**

Centre-based programs <sup>b</sup>	193
Family child care providers	107

**Facilities by auspice**

Non-profit	123
For-profit	177

<sup>a</sup> Personal Communication. Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Early Learning and Child Development Division. December 7, 2023.

<sup>b</sup> There are four centres licensed by the Nunatsiavut Government, one centre in central Newfoundland, and one centre in eastern Newfoundland that operate programs for Indigenous families. They are licensed under the Newfoundland and Labrador provincial legislation and are eligible for all provincial funding programs.

**TABLE 3.5 NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR ECE CAPACITY TO PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN BY AGE GROUP TO MARCH 31, 2023**

Child Ages	Number of Children <sup>a</sup>	Child Care/Preschool <sup>b</sup>	School-based Kindergarten Enrolment <sup>c</sup>	Other ECE Programs	Capacity to % of Children
0 to <24 months	7,640	1,134			15%
24 months to <5 years	11,862	4,790			<b>40%</b>
5 years	4,494		4,419		98%

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

<sup>b</sup> From Table 3.4. < 5 years includes preschool spaces, and enrolment in Prekindergarten and Aboriginal Head Start.

<sup>c</sup> Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Department of Education. *Enrolment Information 2021-2022*. Retrieved from: [https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/files/ENR\\_21\\_3.pdf](https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/files/ENR_21_3.pdf)

## AFFORDABILITY

Newfoundland and Labrador reduced child care fees in January 2021 to \$25 per day, and in January 2022 to \$15 per day. Fees were to be reduced to an average of \$10 per day by January 2026, however this was implemented ahead of schedule on January 1, 2023, for all regulated child care services participating in the Operating Grant Program (OGP). Part-time rates for services participating in the OGP are \$4 per day for after school care, and \$5 per day for all other part-time programs. Fees include meals and snacks, but in exceptional circumstances adjustments may be made if additional meals and snacks are required, or if no meals and snacks are provided. Child care centres and family child care providers not under the OGP may set their own fees.<sup>59,60,61,62,63</sup>

The Child Care Subsidy is an income-tested program designed to assist families with the cost of child care fees at regulated child care services. Eligibility is based on family monthly net income thresholds and the number of children attending regulated child care services. Approved families attending services participating in the Operating Grant Program receive free child care. Families must meet the need for services requirements, such as employment, education/training, child development, injury/ illness/ disability/ rehabilitation, or a referral from Department of Child, Seniors, and Social Development.

Children who are at risk for developmental delay or who have developmental needs can access the program. The program was updated in January 2022 to align with the universal fee reduction. Parental contributions were eliminated, and the net income threshold increased from \$35,000 for full subsidy to a range of \$41,000 to \$77,000, based on the number of children attending a regulated child care service.<sup>64,65</sup>

## INCLUSION

The Inclusion Program provides assistance to regulated child care services to include children with identified support needs (diagnosed or undiagnosed). The program provides supports such as consultation, training, and grants for staffing and professional learning and funding to keep spaces empty to reduce caregiver to child ratios. Support from the Inclusion Program is voluntary and is provided at the request of the child care service. Funding can be used to hire replacement staff, for wages and benefits for additional caregivers, and for professional learning.<sup>66,67</sup>

The *Education Action Plan* includes recommendations regarding inclusion and inclusive teaching in schools. The Action Plan was updated in June 2021 to account for setbacks from the COVID-19 pandemic. The final phase (phase 5) of recommendations was completed in September 2022.<sup>68,69</sup>





# LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

TABLE 4.1 NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS

Program	Framework Document
Child Care	<i>Navigating the Early Years</i> (2019) <sup>a</sup>
Pre-Kindergarten	<i>YMCA Playing to Learn</i> <sup>TM b</sup> <i>Completely Kindergarten: Kindergarten Curriculum Guide— Interim Edition</i> (2010) <sup>c</sup>
Kindergarten	<i>Full-Day Kindergarten Play-Based Learning Promoting a Common Understanding</i> (2016) provides further insight into how to incorporate play-based learning in Kindergarten <sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup>. Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Department of Education. *Navigating the Early Years: An Early Childhood Learning Framework*. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/files/Early-Learning-Framework.pdf>

<sup>b</sup>. YMCA Canada. *YMCA Playing to Learn*<sup>TM</sup>. Retrieved from: <https://www.ymca.ca/what-we-offer/child-care/early-learning-and-care>. The development of Pre-Kindergarten has been contracted with the YMCA. Pre-Kindergarten uses the YMCA curriculum while a new guide is under development.

<sup>c</sup>. Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Department of Education. *Completely Kindergarten Curriculum Guide— Interim Edition*. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/k12/curriculum/guides/completely-kindergarten/>

<sup>d</sup>. Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Department of Education. *Full-Day Kindergarten Play-Based Learning Promoting a Common Understanding*. Retrieved from: [https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/files/pdf\\_fdk\\_common\\_understandings\\_-\\_document\\_eng\\_2016.pdf](https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/files/pdf_fdk_common_understandings_-_document_eng_2016.pdf)

*Navigating the Early Years: An Early Childhood Learning Framework* was legislated in August 2022. This mandatory curriculum framework is intended to guide and reinforce educator daily practice and interactions with children from birth to 8 years of age.<sup>70,71</sup>

## WORK ENVIRONMENT

**TABLE 4.2 NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR STAFF/CHILD RATIO, GROUP SIZE AND CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS IN REGULATED CHILD CARE CENTRES<sup>a,b</sup>**

Age	Staff:Child Ratio	Maximum Group Size	Minimum Staff Certification Required
Infant (0 to <24 months)	1:3	6	<b>Level I – Infant Classification</b> Trainee Level Certification is not permitted for caregivers working with this age range.
Infant and toddler	1:3	6 No children are 1 year old or younger <sup>d</sup> Not more than 3 children are 2 years old or younger <sup>d</sup>	<b>Level I – Infant and Preschool Classification</b> Where 1 or more children in the homeroom are 2 years old or younger, 1 caregiver must hold Level I – Infant Classification in addition to Level I – Preschool Classification. Where the group size exceeds 3, the second caregiver may hold Trainee Level Certification.
Toddler 18 months to <3 years	1:5	10	<b>Level I – Preschool Classification</b> Where 1 or more children in the homeroom are 2 years old or younger, 1 caregiver must hold Level I – Infant Classification in addition to Level I – Preschool Classification. Where more than 3 children are 2 years old or younger, the second caregiver must hold a Level I certification. The second caregiver may hold Trainee Level – Preschool where the group size exceeds 5 and no more than 3 children are 2 years old or younger.
Toddler and preschool	1:7	14 No children are 2 years old or younger <sup>d</sup> Not more than 5 children are 3 years old or younger <sup>d</sup>	<b>Level I – Preschool Classification</b> Where the group size exceeds 7, the second caregiver may hold Trainee Level – Preschool Classification.
Preschool 2 years and 9 months to 5 years and 9 months, and not attending school	1:8	16	<b>Level I – Preschool Classification</b> Where the group size exceeds 8, the second caregiver may hold Trainee Level – Preschool Classification.
Preschool and school-age	1:8	16 No children are 3 years old or younger <sup>d</sup> No children are 7 years old or older <sup>d</sup>	<b>Level I – Preschool and School-Age Classification</b> Where the group size exceeds 8, the second caregiver may hold Trainee Level – Preschool and School-Age Classification.
Pre-Kindergarten 3 years and 8 months to 5 years and 9 months, and attending a Pre-Kindergarten program	1:10	20	<b>Level III – Pre-Kindergarten Classification</b> Where the group size exceeds 10, the second caregiver may hold Trainee Level – Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten Classification. All caregivers calculated in Pre-Kindergarten ratios must complete an orientation course regarding the provincial early learning framework.
School-age 4 years and 8 months up to >13 years and attending school	1:15	30	<b>Level I – School-Age Classification</b> Where the group size exceeds 15, the second caregiver may hold Trainee Level – School-Age Classification.

**TABLE 4.2A NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR GROUP SIZE AND CONDITIONS IN REGULATED FAMILY CHILD CARE<sup>a</sup>**

Age	Maximum Group Size	Conditions	Requirements
Infant	3	All children are infants	<b>Level I – Infant for a Family Home Service</b> The provider’s own children in the infant, toddler, and preschool-age range count toward the number of children participating. Up to 2 of the provider’s own school-age children are not counted toward the number of children participating.
Infant to older school-age	5	No more than 2 infants and no more than 3 toddlers	<b>Any level – For a Family Home Service</b> The provider’s own children in the infant, toddler, and preschool-age range count toward the number of children participating. Up to 2 of the provider’s own school-age children are not counted toward the number of children participating.
	6	No more than 2 infants and no more than 2 toddlers	
	7	No infants and no more than 2 toddlers	

<sup>a</sup> Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Department of Education. *Child Care Policy and Standards Manual*. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/files/Child-Care-Policy-and-Standards-Manual-Full-Documnt3.1.pdf>

<sup>b</sup> Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. *Child Care Act*. Retrieved from: <https://www.assembly.nl.ca/Legislation/sr/statutes/c11-01.htm>

<sup>c</sup> Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. *Newfoundland and Labrador Regulations*. Retrieved from: <https://www.assembly.nl.ca/Legislation/sr/regulations/rc170039.htm>

<sup>d</sup> Does not apply where the child care service is operated in a school under the *Schools Act*, 1997, for the children of students who are enrolled in and attend the school – Regulation 53(9).

**CHILD CARE PROGRAM SIZE:** There are no size limits for regulated child care centres. However, limits on group sizes by age range and space requirements for inside and outdoor space per child must be met. An additional staff member who meets administrator qualifications must be in place where there are more than five homerooms.

**KINDERGARTEN CLASS SIZE:** The class size limit for Kindergarten is 20 students.<sup>72</sup>



## EDUCATORS

**TABLE 4.3 NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR EDUCATOR QUALIFICATIONS**

Kindergarten Teachers <sup>a</sup>	A Bachelor of Education or a Bachelor's degree plus a one-year or two-year post-degree study in education or a four- or five-year education degree.
Early Childhood Educators <sup>b,c,d</sup>	<p>A 2-year post-secondary diploma in early childhood education. Primary staff must hold a 1-year certificate in early childhood education.</p> <p>The five levels of certification based on level of early childhood education specific education are as follows:</p> <p><b>Trainee Level</b>— An orientation course or equivalent; must upgrade to Level 1 within 3 years</p> <p><b>Level I</b>— A provincially-approved certificate, normally 1 year duration in early childhood education or equivalent</p> <p><b>Level II</b>— A provincially-approved diploma, normally 2–3 years in duration in early childhood education or equivalent</p> <p><b>Level III</b><sup>e</sup>— An ECE diploma plus a post-diploma specialization or an ECE certificate plus a provincially recognized university degree</p> <p><b>Level IV</b>— A university degree in early childhood education or a university degree plus a provincially-recognized diploma in early childhood education</p>

<sup>a</sup> Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. *Teacher Certification*. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/k12/teaching/certification/#min>

<sup>b</sup> Child Care human Resources Sector Council. *Requirements to Work in Regulated Group Child Care— Newfoundland and Labrador*. Retrieved from: <https://ccsc-cssge.ca/node/134>

<sup>c</sup> Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. *Child Care Act*. Retrieved from: [https://www.assembly.nl.ca/Legislation/sr/regulations/rc170039.htm#9\\_](https://www.assembly.nl.ca/Legislation/sr/regulations/rc170039.htm#9_)

<sup>d</sup> Association of Early Childhood Educators NL. *Newfoundland and Labrador Education Pathway*. Retrieved from: [https://www.aecenl.ca/application/files/6216/6021/7583/Educational\\_and\\_Certification\\_Pathway\\_to\\_becoming\\_an\\_ECE\\_in\\_NL.pdf](https://www.aecenl.ca/application/files/6216/6021/7583/Educational_and_Certification_Pathway_to_becoming_an_ECE_in_NL.pdf)

<sup>e</sup> Lead teacher in Pre-Kindergarten programs must hold a Level III qualification.

**TABLE 4.4 NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION AND DEVELOPMENT**

	Teachers	Early Childhood Educators
Professional Recognition	Teachers must hold a valid Teaching Certificate awarded by the Registrar of Teacher Certification, Department of Education. Certificates are awarded based on professional study completed and grades taught: primary/elementary, secondary, or primary/elementary/secondary. <sup>a</sup>	Certification services are provided through the Association of Early Childhood Educators Newfoundland and Labrador (AECENL). There are five levels of certification (see Table 4.3). The Child Care Services (CCS) certification process determines the certification level and the age groups or settings for which the ECE is certified. <sup>c,d</sup>
Professional Development	Professional development is not mandated. The Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers Association provides ongoing learning opportunities for its members. <sup>b</sup> The Department of Education offers professional learning opportunities.	A minimum of 30 hours over 3 years is required for certification renewal for Level I or higher. Trainee certification is for 1 year at a time and unless legacied, completion of a minimum of two ECE courses from a post-secondary institution is required for renewal. Trainees have 3 years to advance to Level 1. <sup>d,e</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Department of Education. *Teacher Certification*. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/k12/teaching/certification/>

<sup>b</sup> Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association. *Professional Development*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nlta.nl.ca/professional-development/>

<sup>c</sup> Association of Early Childhood Educators NL. Retrieved from: <https://www.aecenl.ca/>

<sup>d</sup> Association of Early Childhood Educators NL. *Child Care Services Certification Information Booklet*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ecehrc.ca/resource/child-care-services-certification>

<sup>e</sup> Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. *Child Care Act*. Retrieved from: <https://www.assembly.nl.ca/Legislation/sr/regulations/rc170039.htm#9>

The province is committed to increasing the percentage of fully-certified ECEs in the sector to at least 80 per cent by 2025. Grants and bursaries (approximately \$2.7 million) are available for early childhood education students and graduates. A new Early Childhood Education Needs-Based Incentive Grant provides a range of \$100 up to \$10,000 in non-repayable grants to eligible Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Student Financial Assistance Program applicants pursuing either a full-time ECE Certificate or Diploma. Funding provided to colleges to expand enrolment in early learning programs (College of North Atlantic, Keyin College, and Academy Canada) increased the number of seats to 700 by the end of 2023.<sup>73,74,75,76</sup>

The Association of Early Childhood Educators NL (AECENL) offers professional learning opportunities for ECEs through online workshops, self-study series, a lending library, and an annual conference. An Administrator’s Community of Practice pilot program provides a safe and confidential place for administrators, owners, and licensees of regulated child care services to reflect on important topics with peers.<sup>77</sup>

**TABLE 4.5 NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR DENSITY OF QUALIFIED STAFF IN CHILD CARE CENTRES**

One Level 1 staff or higher per group.<sup>a,b</sup>

- <sup>a</sup> Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Department of Education. *Child Care Policy and Standards Manual*. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/files/Child-Care-Policy-and-Standards-Manual-Full-Documents3.1.pdf>
- <sup>b</sup> Personal Communication. Department of Education. January 18, 2024. The percentage of ECEs working in child care centres with a Level 1 qualification or higher is 68.9.

**TABLE 4.6 NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR ECE ANNUAL WAGES AS A PERCENTAGE OF TEACHER WAGES (2023)**

Teachers <sup>a</sup>	Early Childhood Educators <sup>b</sup>	ECE Wage as a Percentage of Teacher Wage
\$68,484	\$50,915	<b>77%</b>

- <sup>a</sup> Based on year 5, level 5. Schedule C. *Provincial Contract 2022–2026 Tentative Agreement*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nlta.nl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Provincial-Contract-Tentative-Agreement-2022-2026.pdf>
- <sup>b</sup> Based on Step 2, Level II (6–10 years of experience) of the ECE Wage Grid 2023 to 2026. Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Department of Education. *Early Childhood Educator Wage Grid*. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/files/ECE-Wage-Grid-Policy-and-Standards-Manual.pdf>

**PRIMARY TEACHER PILOT PROGRAM:** Provides child care centres with the ability to hire provincially certified teachers (active or retired) to fill short-term vacancies and absences.<sup>78,79</sup>

Newfoundland and Labrador’s Early Childhood Educator Wage Grid, effective April 1, 2023, provides approximately \$64 million in funding and included retroactive payments issued for the January 1–March 31, 2023, time period. The base rate for a new graduate (ECE Level II) with a two-year diploma is \$25 per hour. ECE wages are based on education, certification, seniority, and position. The new wage grid for 2023–26 outlines hourly wages and salaries through a step system. The grid provides a 10 per cent bonus for administrators, and enhanced rates for educators working in Francophone programs, and a remote allowance for educators working in Labrador.<sup>80,81</sup>

### ECE WAGE GRID 2023 TO 2026

	Hourly Rate				Annual Salary			
	Base	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Base	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Years of Service	<1 year	1 to 5 years	6 to 10 years	+11 years	<1 year	1 to 5 years	6 to 10 years	+11 years
Level I ECE	\$21.25	\$21.68	\$22.11	\$22.55	\$41,597	\$42,429	\$43,277	\$44,143
Level II ECE	\$25.00	\$25.50	\$26.01	\$26.53	\$48,938	\$49,916	\$50,915	\$51,933
Level III ECE	\$28.75	\$29.33	\$29.91	\$30.51	\$56,278	\$57,404	\$58,552	\$59,723
Level IV ECE	\$33.06	\$33.72	\$34.40	\$35.09	\$64,720	\$66,014	\$67,335	\$68,681
Trainee	\$18.06	\$18.42	\$18.79		\$35,357	\$36,064	\$36,786	
Labrador allowance					\$5,178	\$5,178	\$5,178	\$5,178
Administrator bonus					\$4,894	\$4,992	\$5,091	\$5,193

Source: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. *Early Childhood Educator Wage Grid*.





## ACCOUNTABILITY

**PROGRESS REPORT:** *The Canada–Newfoundland and Labrador Early Learning and Child Care Agreement 2021 to 2025* requires the province to report each year on the progress made in reaching the goals of the Action Plans.<sup>82</sup> Newfoundland’s latest available Annual Report is for 2021–22.<sup>83</sup>

**PROGRAM STANDARDS:** Regulated child care services are governed by the *Child Care Act (2017)*, *Child Care Regulations (2017)*, and the *Child Care Policy and Standards Manual*.<sup>84,85,86</sup> Guidelines and standards for Kindergarten classroom design and construction are part of the Kindergarten curriculum guide.<sup>87,88</sup>

The Early Learning and Child Care Quality Enhancement Program (ELCC–QEP) was launched in July 2021. The program is available to all regulated child care services and is designed to enhance quality. Support is provided by dedicated child care consultants who mentor staff on program accessibility, design; interactions with children, families, and communities. The ELCC–QEP also offers Quality Enhancement Grants to reimburse costs related to quality initiatives.<sup>89</sup>

**POPULATION MONITORING:** The province uses the Early Development Instrument (EDI). The most recent data available were released in 2018–19.<sup>90</sup> EDI data was collected again in 2023.



## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>2</sup> Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. *Early Childhood Educator Wage Grid*. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/childcare/childcareresources/early-childhood-educator-wage-grid/>
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