

Alberta 2014

Note: Due to a period of department transition, Alberta officials did not provide commentary on this profile.

1. GOVERNANCE

Table 1.1 Alberta Governance Structure for Early Childhood Education

Lead Ministry/Department	Human Services Alberta Education
Related Ministry/Department	
Policy Framework	<i>Guide to Education: ECS to Grade 12 2014–2015</i> ¹ <i>The First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework (2002)</i> ² <i>Together We Raise Tomorrow, An Alberta Approach to Early Childhood Development (2013)</i> ³
Legislation	<i>School Act (2000, amended 2013)</i> ⁴ <i>Early Childhood Services Regulation (2002, amended 2012)</i> ⁵ <i>Private Schools Regulation (2000)</i> ⁶ <i>Child Care Licensing Act (2007, amended 2013)</i> ⁷ <i>Child Care Licensing Regulations Alberta Regulation 143/2008 (2013)</i> ⁸
Related Legislation	<i>Building Families and Communities Act (2013)</i> ⁹ <i>Children First Act (2013, 2014)</i> ¹⁰
Common ECE Supervisory Unit	
Local Authority	Early Childhood Services: 41 public, 16 separate and 4 francophone school districts/board, in addition 13 charter school authorities, 142 private school authorities, 96 private ECS operators school authorities and 35 First Nations school authorities ^{11, 12} Early Years Programs: 10 regional Child & Family Services Authorities
Public Advisory	Family and Community Engagement Councils (in development)

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Led by Alberta Human Services, Alberta's Social Policy Framework¹³ provides broad, overall direction to inform decision-making for priority actions, including poverty reduction, early childhood development, addictions and family violence. The *Building Families and Communities Act* puts Alberta's Social Policy Framework into action. Proclaimed on December 11, 2013, it creates Family and Community Engagement Councils that focus on identifying social issues and creating collaborative local solutions. *Together We Raise Tomorrow, An Alberta Approach to Early Childhood Development (2013)* is a cross-ministry collaboration with Health, Human Services and Education and outlines the desired outcomes for Alberta's children.

Human Services and Education funded an Early Learning and Care Demonstration project in 2013–14. Six demonstration sites were identified and supported in implementing innovative approaches to service integration in licensed preschool and related early childhood services.

Department Organization (In transition)

Alberta Education, Early Learning Branch is responsible for Early Childhood Services (ECS), including kindergarten, prekindergarten and early intervention programs.

Alberta Human Services, Early Childhood and Community Supports is responsible for child care and related family support services.

Policy Framework

The *Social Policy Framework* and *Together We Raise Tomorrow, An Alberta Approach to Early Childhood Development* documents provide an overarching approach to the provision and organization of a range of early development services, including early learning and child care.

Service Design

Early Childhood Services oversees a continuum of early learning programs for children prior to school entry:¹⁴

- **Kindergarten:** Provincial funding is provided for children to attend kindergarten for 475 hours per year. The decision to offer full-day or junior kindergarten programs within a community is made by the local school authority. Children who are 4.6 years of age at the beginning of the school year are eligible. This program is not mandated, but most school authorities offer at least a half-time program (half days, every day or full days, every other day).

- **Early Childhood Services (ECS):** The School Act allows school authorities to provide up to three years of programming to children identified with disabilities or delays, who are learning English as a new language or who have been identified as gifted. School districts may contract with non-profit agencies to provide the programs.
- Program Unit Funding (PUF), in addition to Base Instruction Funding, is available to school boards and approved ECS operators for young children from 2 years to 6 years of age who have been assessed with a severe disability/delay.
- Funding for children with mild to moderate disabilities/delays and for those who are gifted and talented is provided in addition to the Base Instruction funding. Children must be at least 3 years and less than 6 years of age on September 1 to qualify.

Programs regulated under the Child Care Licensing Act and Regulations include:

- **Child Care:** Group programs are provided for infants to kindergarten-age children. Programs operate more than four hours per day.
- **Preschools:** Group programs are available for children 19 months to 5 years of age, operating up to four hours per day.
- **Family Child Care:** In approved family day homes, providers may care for a maximum of six children, including their own. Homes are approved by a contracted family daycare home agency that recruits, trains and monitors providers. Approved homes may display the logo of the Alberta Association for the Accreditation of Early Learning and Care Services.
- **Group Family Child Care:** Individually licensed caregivers provide care for a maximum of 10 children, including the licensee holder's own children. In the group, no more than three children may be under 3 years of age, and no more than two may be infants.
- **Out of School Care:** Licensed group programs are available for kindergarten-aged children and children attending Grades 1–6.
- **Unregulated care:** Individuals may care for up to six children, excluding their own.¹⁵

Community Involvement/Oversight

Care Services Family and Community Engagement Councils (FCEC) are in development, with appointments expected to be finalized in late 2014. The councils will replace Child and Family Service Authorities (CFSA) and the Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) boards. The FCEC differs from these as it combines all community social interests under one banner that will report directly to the Minister of Human Services.¹⁶

Local Service Delivery

School authorities offer Early Childhood Services (ECS) programs, including kindergarten and, under special circumstances, programs for children as young as 2.5 years. Ninety-six private operators offer ECS services through annual contracts with Alberta Education.

Regulated child care is supported by 10 Child and Family Service Authorities (CFSA) that license, monitor and issue enforcement actions.¹⁷

2. FUNDING

Table 2.1 Alberta: Provincial Allocations for Regulated Child Care (2014–15)¹⁸

Child care planning	\$5,926,000
Child care fee subsidies	\$185,964,000
Operating funds (includes wage and training grants)	\$95,863,000
Total regulated child care	\$287,753,000

Alberta Budget 2014 includes an increase of \$18 million or 6.7 percent to provide full child care subsidies for families with household incomes less than \$50,000, to grow the number of accredited child care programs and to recruit qualified staff.¹⁹

Overall Funding

Table 2.2 Alberta: Funding Early Childhood Education/Child Care

Kindergarten and Early Childhood Services ^a	\$349,991,344
Licensed Child Care	\$287,753,000
Total ECE spending	\$637,744,344
Total budget estimate 2014–2015²⁰	\$40,432,000,000
ECE as a percentage of provincial budget	1.6%

^a Estimate based on 2013 Early Childhood Services enrolment of 65,676 children³ times .5 per pupil expenditures of \$12,201²²; Alberta's 2014 budget included \$220 million, a 3 percent increase, to private schools and private Early Childhood Services (ECS) operators to support projected enrolment increases.²³

3. ACCESS

Table 3.1 Alberta: Child population 0–5 years (2013)

Child population 0–5 years	315,607
0–1 years	106,158
2–4 years	157,439
5 years	52,010
Total population of Alberta	4,025,074
Children 0–5 years as percentage of total population	7.8%

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

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

	Number mothers in workforce (000s) by age of youngest child	LF participation rate of mothers in workforce by age of youngest child
0–1 years	49.2	57%
2–4 years	63.1	70%
5 years	17.7	76%
Total mothers in workforce with child 0–5 years	130.1	
Average workforce participation of mothers with youngest child 0–5 years		68%

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, custom tabulation S0814_04_Tabl.ivt.

Table 3.3 Alberta: ECE School Programs²⁴

Early Childhood Services provided by school authorities excluding ECS private operators	60,614
Provided by private operators	5,062

*Alberta Education does not break down ECS enrolment by age.

Table 3.4 Alberta: Licensed Child Care Programs

Spaces by age group in centre-based programs	
Infants	5,141
Preschool (full- and part-time)	41,157
Kindergarten (attending ECS program part time)	15,317
School-aged	23,745
Total spaces in centre-based programs	85,360
Family child care/homes and group/special programs	12,570
Total capacity regulated child care	97,930

^aBased on 2012 public reporting adjusted to reflect space expansion referenced in Budget 2014.²⁵

Table 3.5 Alberta: Percentage of children attending ECE programs by age group

Child Ages	Number of children ^a	Child care/ preschool ^b	Kindergarten enrolment ^c	Other ECE programs ^d	% children with access to ECE programming
0–1 years	106,158	4,895			4.6%
2–4 years	157,439	56,474	1,150	37%	
5 years	52,010	50,450		97%	

^aStatistics Canada. Table 051-0001, Estimates of population, by age group and sex for July 1, 2013 Canada, provinces and territories; ^bEstimate based on custom tabulation Statistics Canada, Survey of Young Canadians, child care spaces and 5,062 funded ECS spaces outside of schools. March 31, 2014; ^cEnrolment 2013-14; ^dIncludes Aboriginal Head Start.²⁶

Affordability

Alberta's 2014–2015 budget raised the earnings threshold for full subsidies to families earning up to \$50,000. The gap between the maximum subsidy rate and the actual cost of care still presents an access barrier.

Figure 3.6 Maximum child care subsidy rates for eligible families living in all Alberta regions, except the Northeast Alberta CFSA region²⁷

	Infant (1–18 months)	Toddler (19 months) to kindergarten	Grades 1–6
Day Care/Out of School Care	\$628	\$546	\$310
Family Day Home and Group Family Child Care	\$520	\$437	\$310

Alberta also provides subsidies for stay at home parents and relative care.

Inclusion

Standards for the Provision of Early Childhood Special Education outlines the standards for ECS and education programming and services for eligible children with special education needs.

Children with disabilities may receive support from the Inclusive Child Care Program in approved child care centres, family day homes and preschools. Support may include training for child care staff, consultation on programming or inclusion, resource and referral information and/or funding for additional staff.²⁸

4. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Table 4.1 Alberta: Curriculum Frameworks

Program	Framework Document
Kindergarten	Kindergarten Program Statement (2008) ²⁹ Programme d'éducation de maternelle – français langue première ³⁰ Programme d'éducation de maternelle – immersion ³¹
PreKindergarten (ECS)	Kindergarten Program Statement adapted for younger children
Early Years Programs	In development due for release in 2014 ³²

Work Environment

Kindergarten class sizes: There are no restrictions on kindergarten class sizes.

Table 4.2 Alberta: Group Size and Staff Ratio in Licenced Child Care Centres

Age of child	Staff: Child Ratio*	Class Size
Daycare centres		
Infants to 12 months	1:3	6
12–19 months	1:4	8
3–4.5 years	1:8	16
4.5 years and older	1:10	20
Out-of-School centres		
Kindergarten	1:10	20
6–12 years	1:15	30
Preschool		
19 months to 3 years	1:6	
3–5 years	1:12	

*Adjusted ratios are permitted for mixed age groupings; Source: Child Care Licensing Regulation. http://www.gp.alberta.ca/documents/Regs/2008_143.pdf

Table 4.3 Alberta: Educator Qualifications

Kindergarten Teachers	Early Childhood Educators
A Bachelor of Education degree or equivalent is required, including 48 semester hours of professional education and a practicum. ³³	Child development supervisors hold a 2-year college-level diploma in child development or equivalency. Child development workers hold a 1-year college level certificate in child development or equivalency. Child development assistants have completed an orientation course in child development or equivalency. ³⁴

Table 4.4 Alberta: Professional recognition and development

Qualified Teachers	Qualified ECEs
Teacher Certification Branch evaluates all applicants in the Anglophone and Francophone sectors. ³⁵	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. ³⁶
Ongoing professional development is expected as a standard of practice. ³⁷	Ongoing professional development is not a requirement to maintaining certification.

Table 4.5 Alberta: Density of Qualified Staff in Child Care Centres³⁸

1 in every 4 staff working with children must be certified as a child development worker (ECE).

Table 4.6 Alberta: Teacher and ECE Average Annual Salaries

Teachers ^a	Early Childhood Educators ^b	ECE salary as % of teacher salary
\$95,117	\$37,544	39%

^a www.bctf.ca/uploadedfiles/public/bargainingcontracts/teachersalaryrankings2013-14brief.pdf; ^b Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, custom tabulation S0814_04_Tab2.ivt.

5. ACCOUNTABILITY, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Progress Reports: Alberta’s Human Services Annual Report 2013-14³⁹ and Social Care Facilities Review Committee 2011-2012 Annual Report.⁴⁰

Program Standards: The Alberta Association for the Accreditation of Early Learning and Care Services supports program quality as part of a voluntary accreditation process. In 2013–14, 96 percent of licensed daycare centres and contracted family day home agencies were either accredited or participating in accreditation.⁴¹ Accredited child care programs receive additional funding to support staff wages.⁴²

Alberta Human Services, Early Childhood Development, supports a Child Care Look-Up Tool that provides information about program location, ages of children served, number of children that can be served in the program, the program’s accreditation status and recent inspection results.

Licensed child care programs are required to post their inspection reports in a prominent and visible place on the program premises. Contracted family day home agencies are required to provide information to parents on the compliance history of individual providers.

Population monitoring: The Early Child Development Mapping Project (ECMap) works with communities to gather information about local programs and services that support healthy child development. Profiles of 100 early childhood development communities have been prepared. The profiles include baseline EDI results (collected between 2009 and 2013), socio-economic and demographic information and lists and maps of community resources.⁴³

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