



Senate

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CANADA

Early Childhood Education and Care: Next Steps

**Report of
The Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs,
Science and Technology**

The Honourable Art Eggleton P.C., Chair

**The Honourable Wilbert Joseph Keon O.C., Deputy
Chair**

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40th Parliament – 2nd Session

Pursuant to Rule 131(2) the Senate requests a complete and detailed response from the Government to this report, with the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development being identified as the Minister responsible for responding to the report.

Rule 131(2) states that once the Senate has adopted a report, the Senate may request the Government to provide a response. Rule 131(3) asks for this response within 150 calendar days after adoption of a report.

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ORDER OF REFERENCE

Extract from the *Journals of the Senate* of Tuesday, February 24, 2009:

The Honourable Senator Eggleton, P.C., moved, seconded by the Honourable Senator Jaffer:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology be authorized to examine the state of early learning and child care in Canada in view of the OECD report *Starting Strong II*, released on September 21-22, 2006 and rating Canada last among 14 countries on spending on early learning and child care programs, which stated "... national and provincial policy for the early education and care of young children in Canada is still in its initial stages... and coverage is low compared to other OECD countries";

That the committee study and report on the OECD challenge that "...significant energies and funding will need to be invested in the field to create a universal system in tune with the needs of a full employment economy, with gender equity and with new understandings of how young children develop and learn";

That the papers and evidence received and taken and work accomplished by the committee on this subject since the beginning of the First Session of the Thirty-Ninth Parliament be referred to the committee; and

That the committee submit its final report no later than June 30, 2009, and that the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings until 180 *days after the tabling of the final report*.

The question being put on the motion, it was adopted.

Paul C. Bélisle

Clerk of the Senate

MEMBERSHIP

The Honourable, Art Eggleton, P.C., Chair of the Committee
The Honourable, Wilbert Joseph Keon, Deputy Chair of the
Committee

Also

The following Honourable Senators participated in this study:

Catherine S. Callbeck
Andrée Champagne, P.C.
Joan Cook
Jane Cordy
Joyce Fairbairn, P.C.
Lucie Pépin
Hugh Segal

In addition, the Honourable Senators Bert Brown, Ethel M. Cochrane, Jim Munson and Marilyn Trenholme Counsell, also participated in the Committee's deliberations.

FOREWORD

The Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology found Canada's last-place ranking among 14 member countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in spending on early childhood education and care (ECEC) dismaying, for several reasons.

First, Canada's children are our future. Particularly in an aging society, we will need as many adults as possible who are willing and able to be in the workforce, and, at the same time, we need to be building self-esteem and learning readiness in our children. Only high-quality learning opportunities for our young, whether in the home or outside it, can ensure that future for Canada.

Second, Canada's federal structure can create challenges in assessing how much is being done and invested in ECEC and by which level of government. We saw the need to clarify how policy, program and spending work across jurisdictions and across Canada toward our joint responsibility to parents and their children.

Third, the Committee was aware that research, policy and programs with respect to ECEC are evolving, sometimes dramatically and rapidly, both across Canada and internationally. It was our wish to capture the information and initiatives that are occurring around us, partly in response to the OECD report.

Finally, we have witnessed many local, provincial, territorial and federal program changes affecting ECEC, children and parents, since the time of the OECD report. The Committee wished to understand and report these changes, and assess them against the OECD recommendations for Canada and for all OECD countries.

The Committee has recently studied and reported on autism in Canada's children, bringing it a higher level of public attention. We learned then the importance of both early intervention and appropriate care for children with diverse needs.

In its hearings for this study, the Committee heard from child care providers and advocates from every province and territory; officials from Human Resources and Social Development Canada; and visionaries and Canadian international experts with respect to human

development in the early years, Dr. Fraser Mustard and the Honourable Margaret Norrie McCain.

Further, the Committee has two subcommittees, one focussing on population health, and the second focussing on housing, homelessness and poverty in Canadian cities. Many witnesses before these subcommittees identified early childhood development and learning as key to addressing those issues as well, and are cited in this report. We thank them all for their contributions to this study.

In addition, we recognize the enormous effort being made by parents and grandparents, governments, child development organizations, early childhood learning programs, and others to realize the potential of our country's children. In Canada, we recognize that it takes families, educators, policy-makers and more to raise our children. This report is for them.

Finally, we recognize the dedication and passion of Senator Trenholme Counsell who sponsored the motion that initiated this study.

GLOSSARY

The following acronyms are used throughout this report:

ECD	Early childhood development
ECEC	Early childhood education and care
ECE	Early childhood education
ELCC	Early learning and child care

These all refer to the same early childhood development of children from birth to school-entry age (4, 5, or 6, depending on the province, territory or country). Early childhood education and care is the term used by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development in its report, and is used in this report, except where other sources are cited and have used one of the other terms noted above.

OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Senate of Canada, on 20 November 2006, authorized the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology to undertake two tasks. First, the Committee was to examine the state of early learning and child care in Canada in view of the OECD report *Starting Strong II*, released on September 21, 2006, which rated Canada last among 14 countries on spending on early learning and child care programs. Second, the Committee was to study and report on the OECD challenge that "...significant energies and funding will need to be invested in the field to create a universal system in tune with the needs of a full employment economy, with gender equity and with new understandings of how young children develop and learn."¹

With this mandate, the Committee heard from child care providers and advocates from across Canada; officials from Human Resources and Social Development Canada; and visionaries and Canadian international experts with respect to human development in the early years.

As well, the Social Affairs, Science and Technology Committee, through its current work on population health, and on poverty, housing, and homelessness in Canadian cities, learned much about the critical role of early childhood development and learning in addressing these broader societal issues.

An in-depth analysis was undertaken of the OECD reports relative to Canada as well as for several countries with higher rankings and more highly developed programs for early childhood learning and child care.

There can be no doubt that Canada's provinces and territories are already responding to the OECD challenge. In 2008, many excellent initiatives are in place with respect to inter-ministerial cooperation, curricula, community participation and parental involvement. There is a greater level of investment not only in child care spaces, but also in parental support, parenting programs, training for early childhood education staff with corresponding re-evaluation of salaries. The Government of Canada continues to provide budgetary support to the provincial and territorial governments for programming as well as to

¹ OECD Directorate for Education, *Early Childhood Education and Care Policy: Canada Country Note*, October 2004, p. 6. Accessed from <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/42/34/33850725.pdf> 3 August 2008.

families through tax measures. This report provides both historical and current details on these federal investments.

The OECD has complimented Canada on its research on early childhood development and learning. This Committee wishes especially to thank Dr. Fraser Mustard who brought his international expertise to our hearings. Yet, the Senate Committee recognizes that Canada's reputation in the future will depend on two things – our on-going support for research and our ongoing support for the families of this nation.

The Committee has recognized Canada's strengths but also its weaknesses. Too many Aboriginal children and too many children with special challenges are being left behind. Immigrant families look to Canada for special help for their children. Bilingualism brings a unique perspective to the provision of services for children especially those in minority settings. Even our most talented children need the best early childhood opportunities to reach their full potential. Too many of Canada's children arrive at school not ready to learn. We can and we must do better as a nation.

In the conclusion to this report, the Government of Canada is called upon to be a champion for families in the 21st century. Throughout the report, there are several ideas regarding the expansion and integration of more comprehensive services for parents and children, the re-evaluation of budgeting commitments to families and the need for incremental increases to assure the availability of quality child care spaces as well as all programs for parents and children focused on healthy childhood development and early learning.

The Committee's recommendations are:

- 1. that the Prime Minister appoint a Minister of State for Children and Youth, under the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development Canada, with responsibilities to include working with provincial and territorial government to advance quality early learning, parenting programs and child care, as well as research human development and early childhood development and learning;**
- 2. that the Minister for Human Resources and Social Development appoint a National Advisory Council on Children, to advise the Minister of State for Children and**

- Youth and through the Minister of State, other Ministers on how best to support parents and to advance quality early learning and child care. The Council membership is to include Parliamentarians, other stakeholders, community leaders and parents, with appropriate representation from Aboriginal communities;**
- 3. that the Government of Canada call a series of meetings of federal, provincial, and territorial Ministers with responsibility for children and youth, beginning within one year of this report to:**
- a. establish a pan-Canadian framework to provide policies and programs to support children and their families; and**
 - b. establish a federal/provincial/territorial Council of Ministers responsible for early learning and child care and parental supports, to meet annually, to review Canada's progress with respect to other OECD countries, and to share best practices within Canada. ; and**
- 4. that the Government of Canada, in collaboration with provincial and territorial counterparts and researchers, create an adequately funded, robust system of data collection, evaluation and research, promoting all aspects of quality human development and in early childhood programming including the development of curricula, program evaluation and child outcome measures.**

Finally, the Committee reaffirms its belief in Canada's parents and its hope for Canada's children. Parents' choices for their children are enhanced each community provides a solid network of parenting programs, early childhood learning and quality child care options. All of Canada's governments and all of Canada's citizens are called upon to make this a reality and to position Canada among the best countries in the world in which family life can flourish and prosper.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Government of Canada's investment to support children and families began almost 100 years to an income tax deduction for families with children that increased with taxable income.² This was followed by the introduction of the Family Allowance, paid to all families with dependent children in 1945; the value of the Family Allowance was tripled and indexed to the cost of living in 1973. Five years later it was supplemented by a refundable tax credit targeted to low-income families. These programs were combined, along with a Working Income Supplement, into monthly payments based on income and family size, phasing out to zero for upper-income families, in 1993. The new Child Tax Benefit continues, with several alterations, to this day. More information on this program is provided later in this paper.

The explicit support for child care was first evident in a modest Child Care Expense Deduction in 1971, and in the inclusion of child care subsidies as a permitted expense by provincial governments under the Canada Assistance Plan; this plan was introduced in 1966 to support those in need or at risk of being in need. Funding for these purposes continued, with fewer conditions, when the Canada Assistance Plan was replaced with the Canada Health and Social Transfer in 1996, and later with the Canada Social Transfer. Information about these and other programs are addressed in greater detail later in this report.

Thus, despite Constitutional jurisdictions that assign responsibility for families to provincial and territorial governments, Governments of Canada of every political stripe, in war and in peace-time, throughout the past century, have invested in supporting Canadian families with children. While science gives us new evidence of the importance of healthy child development and very early learning not only to children, but to the adults they will become, families and governments have acted – each in their own way – to protect children from being victims of their parents' poverty.

² Information with respect to historical developments in federal investments in children is taken from *The National Child Benefit Progress Report 2006*, Government of Canada, 2008, p. 3, unless otherwise indicated.

In more recent years, the percentage of families with two earners doubled from 1974 to 1994, from one-third to 70%.³ With the move by women into the workforce, and the need to have more than one income to raise a family, parents, employers and governments have recognized the need for high-quality non-parental care for young children whose parents are able and willing to work outside the home, as well as other supports and the building of parenting skills for parents of young children.

When the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) undertook a cross-national study on early childhood education and care (ECEC), Canada volunteered in the second wave of countries to be studied. Canada's rankings were a disappointment to many. As well, data showed that child poverty rates were largely unchanged in Canada, while the presence of vulnerable children among Canadian families of all incomes persisted. Families, advocates, early educators and policy-makers shared a renewed concern, and a commitment to improve these results in Canada.

Our Committee has conducted two other studies concurrent with this one. A population health study involved information from every province and territory, with witnesses from across disciplines, professions and areas of policy interest. The vital importance of early childhood development as a foundation for the health and well-being of the adults the children will become was emphasized repeatedly by witnesses before that subcommittee. Their testimony is cited in this study as well, and a final report is expected in the coming months.

Another Committee study has focussed on Canada's larger cities, and began with a consideration of social challenges, notably poverty, housing and homelessness. Jeopardizing early childhood opportunities was a key issue and alarm identified by witnesses across these themes. Testimony from these witnesses is also cited in this report, and an interim report on these themes is expected in 2009.

³ Rianne Mahon and Susan Phillips, "Dual-Earner Families Caught in a Liberal Welfare Regime? The Politics of Child Care Policy in Canada", in *Child Care at the Crossroads*, 2005, p. 56.

Another Senate Committee has also focussed on children and their early development: the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights. In its report, the Committee conducted an intensive study of Canada's compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and reported on the gap between government "rhetoric and reality" that has left Canadian children vulnerable and with no representation. The Committee's final report recommends that:

...the federal government meet with provincial and territorial governments to coordinate the establishment of measurable standards and guidelines for delivering early childhood development and child care to children across the country, matched by adequate funding. Consultations should begin immediately, with proposed solutions to be presented to the Canadian public by July 2009.⁴

Now it is the intention of the Senate Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology to report on developments in Canada and other countries since the OECD's reports, and to assess these developments against the principles, country-specific recommendations and more general recommendations articulated in the reports.

⁴ Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, Children: *The Silenced Citizens – Effective Implementation of Canada's International Obligations with respect to the Rights of Children*, Final Report, April 2007, p. 145.

2. THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

The Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Policy project was launched by the OECD's Education Committee in March 1998 following the 1996 Ministerial meeting on *Making Learning a Reality for All*. At this meeting, the Education Ministers of the OECD member countries made early childhood education and care a high priority with the specific goal of improving access and quality of services.

The thematic review took place in two stages. In the first, 12 countries that had volunteered at the 1998 meeting were reviewed. They were: Australia, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States. A comparative report was presented at an international conference in Sweden in 2001.

At its meeting in 2001, the Education Committee of the OECD authorized a second round of reviews, involving eight more countries: Austria, Canada, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Korea and Mexico. These reviews took place from 2002 to 2004. Canada was the 17th country to be reviewed among the 21 that volunteered to participate in the process.

The OECD also commissioned research on key topics concerning curriculum, services for low-income and disadvantaged families, financing and research and data collection. The 50 reports that make up the OECD's review of education and care services for pre-school-aged children comprise the largest body of comparative policy research to date in the field. This eight-year study allowed Canada to evaluate itself against its international peers and provided a unique opportunity to draw on best practices in early learning and child care policy and delivery.

2.1 OECD's Canada study and report

2.1.1 METHOD

The same method was applied to all countries that were reviewed.

Participating countries commissioned a Background Report structured along guidelines accepted by all participants. For Canada, the 137-page report released in 2003 was commissioned by Human Resources

Development Canada and written by Gillian Doherty, Martha Friendly and Jane Beach.⁵

A review team, composed of an OECD Secretariat member and experts, visited participating countries, interviewed the main stakeholders involved in ECEC policy, and observed some ECEC programs. In Canada, the review team visited Manitoba, Saskatchewan, British Columbia and Prince Edward Island from September 21st to October 3rd, 2003.⁶

A "Country Note" was prepared by the review team, based on the Background Report and the evidence gathered during their visit. Country Notes for all participating member countries were integrated into a comprehensive comparative report from the OECD.

2.1.2. FINDINGS

The *Early Childhood Education and Care Policy: Canada Country Note*⁷ was the result of that process in Canada. The overall evaluation by the review team of ECEC services in Canada, excluding services delivered in Quebec, was generally negative, describing services as a "patchwork of uneconomic, fragmented services, within which a small "child care" sector is seen as a labour market support, often without a focused child development and education role."⁸

IDENTIFIED STRENGTHS

In the country note, strengths in Canada's system were identified:

- remunerated parental leave for almost a year, enacted with the *Employment Insurance Act* of 2001;

⁵ Gillian Doherty, Martha Friendly and Jane Beach, *OECD Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care Canadian Background Report*, Canada, 2003. Accessed from <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/41/36/33852192.pdf> 5 August 2008.

⁶ For the sake of comparison, the review team for the USA traveled from 26 September to 8 October 1999, and visited Colorado, North Carolina and Ohio (*OECD Country Note, Early Childhood and Education and Care Policy in the United States of America*, July 2000, p. 6, available online at

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/52/33/2535075.pdf>). These American states were "chosen" because of their specific characteristics, whereas in Canada, the four provinces were the only ones that agreed to be involved in the study, according to Norma Greenaway, based on an interview with Martha Friendly (Norma Greenaway, "Childcare Inadequate, OECD says: Four-province study" in *National Post*, 26 October 2004, National Edition, p. A11). The review team for Canada regretted in particular "not having the opportunity to review the new policies in Quebec, which seem to have progressed far beyond a 'child care' perspective." *Country Note for Canada*, p. 84.

⁷ OECD (2004), pp. 55-56.

⁸ Ibid, p. 6.

- Quebec’s early education and care policies and their child care services which account for about 40% of regulated child care places in Canada;
- efforts of provincial administrations to maintain ECEC services “despite a withdrawal of Federal funding and a climate of suspicion of public services” following the end of the Canada Assistance Plan in 1996;
- growing consultation and co-operation between federal and provincial/territorial governments (e.g., multilateral agreements which supported development of ECEC services, ended in 2007);
- well-established kindergarten early education network for children over 5 years;
- the contribution of non-profit, community organizations to the provision of regulated early childhood services, accounting for approximately 80% of subsidized child care provision; and
- Canadian expertise in ECEC research.⁹

CONCERNS

The main elements of concern raised by the review team were:

- weak public funding of ECEC services, especially for children under 5 years;
- the separation of child care from early education;
- limited access to affordable child care services and particular issues related to access for Aboriginal children;
- the quality of child care, e.g., very poor accommodation, child care workers’ protective and interventionist approach, lack of direct access to outside space;
- the apparent predominance of unregulated care; and
- staff qualifications and training and other issues related to their recruitment and retention, e.g., absence of federal and provincial/territorial guidelines and low wage levels, and limited tradition of professional development.¹⁰

2.1.3. CANADA-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OECD

Canada-specific recommendations were included in the country note.

Upstream policy recommendations:

- Strengthen the then-existing federal/provincial/territorial agreements and focus them on child development and learning.
- Encourage provincial governments to develop, with major stakeholder groups, an early childhood strategy with priority

⁹ Ibid, 55-56.

¹⁰ Ibid, pp. 55-68.

- targets, benchmarks and timelines, and with guaranteed budgets to fund appropriate governance and expansion.
- Build bridges between child care and kindergarten education, with the aim of integrating ECEC both at ground level, and at policy and management levels.

Funding and financing recommendations:

- Substantially increase public funding of services for young children.
- Ensure the creation of a transparent and accountable funding system, and for parents, a fairer sharing of ECEC funding.
- Devise an efficient means of funding a universal early childhood service for children 1 to 6 years, delivered equitably by mixed providers, governed by public mandated agencies.

Recommendations with regard to access:

- Continue efforts to expand access while promoting greater equity.
- In so far as possible, include children with special educational needs in public early development/education services.
- Reinforce policies to support and include Aboriginal children.

Recommendations to improve quality:

- Develop a national quality framework for early childhood services across all sectors, and the infrastructure at the provincial level to ensure effective implementation.
- Link accreditation of services to structural requirements and the achievement of quality targets.
- Review ECEC professional profiles, improve recruitment levels and strengthen initial and in-service training of staff.
- Provide publicly funded, high-quality intensive interventions in all disadvantaged areas.
- Provide attractive indoor and outdoor learning environments.
- Co-ordinate Canadian ECEC research and through funding, orient it further toward important policy issues.

While many of these recommendations could be acted upon only by provincial and municipal governments, others would require changes in federal policy, programs or income transfers to implement.

2.2. OECD's comparative study

On September 19, 2006, the OECD released the final summary – *Starting Strong II*. This report outlined progress made by the participating countries in responding to recommendations made in the first report (which did not include Canada), and compares the progress made, highlights innovative approaches and proposes policy options.

2.2.1. GENERAL FINDINGS

Starting Strong II notes progress across countries in a number of areas:

- a growing consensus that governments must invest in and regulate early childhood education and care;
- a trend towards integrating early childhood policy and administration under one ministry, often education;
- greater contact between early childhood centres and schools, and growing use of national curricular frameworks in the early childhood sector; the provision of at least two years of kindergarten before children enter compulsory schooling; growing, but still insufficient, government investment in services;
- more emphasis on quality improvement;
- an understanding of the need for qualified staff, able to respond to changing social and family conditions;
- an increase in university chairs in early childhood education and care policy; and
- recognition of the need for more country research and data collection in the field.

The report revealed three key areas where problems persist across countries: **access**, **funding**, and **quality**.

2.2.2. KEY FINDINGS

ACCESS ISSUES

With respect to access, infants and toddlers were the most neglected group in the countries studied. A defined policy approach was least likely for this age group and service fragmentation is more prevalent. The most frequent public policy response was longer maternity and parental leaves but few were found to be sufficiently long or flexible, to cover the time gap between parents' return to work and the beginning of more accessible program provision. Because regulated care is scarce and the labour force participation of mothers with very young children is high in most countries, the majority of young children are in unregulated arrangements.

The age at which young children have a legal right to attend free programs (usually under education) varies considerably across countries: 2 to 2.5 years in Belgium; 3 in Italy; 4 in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Close to 100% of 3-year-olds attend regulated early learning programs in Italy, France, and Belgium. In the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK, coverage ranges from 50% to 90%. Canada falls in with Greece, Ireland, Korea, Mexico, Switzerland and Turkey where attendance by 3-year-olds is “negligible.”

By age 5, most countries provide at least part-day programs that are widely attended. Some countries target their public early childhood support to disadvantaged populations. This approach is less successful in reaching vulnerable children than countries striving for universal provision. For example, in the US, only 45% of 3- to 5-year-olds from low-income groups are in early childhood programs compared to 75% from high-income groups. In Canada, only 20% of lone parents and 5% of disadvantaged groups are covered. No country provides adequate service to children with special needs.

FUNDING ISSUES

Public spending on early learning and care services for children from birth to compulsory schooling ranges from a low of 0.2% to a high of 2% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Canada was ranked as the lowest spender, number 14 out of the 14 countries for which information was provided, behind Australia and the Netherlands. Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland were ranked as the highest contributors. Costs to parents are lowest in countries taking a universal approach to early learning services and highest in countries where public support is targeted.

QUALITY ISSUES

Quality was reported to vary widely across countries. Staff working with younger children and in programs operated outside of public education was reported to be more poorly trained and compensated. Standards for non-educational programs tended to be lower and less rigorously monitored and assessed, particularly for younger children.

The OECD report also noted structural barriers that gave rise to policy incoherence, service fragmentation and reduced accountability. For example, a variety of government departments – education, child care, health – were identified as responsible for young children, each with its own conceptual framework. These departments could have distinct, and often competing, mandates, while overlapping

responsibilities for funding and delivery by each level of government add to the fragmentation.

2.2.3. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OECD

The OECD gave a common set of policy recommendations to all participating countries:

- to attend to the social context of early childhood development;
- to place well-being, early development and learning at the core of ECEC work, while respecting the child's agency and natural learning strategies;
- to create the governance structures necessary for system accountability and quality assurance.;
- to develop with the stakeholders broad guidelines and curricular standards for all ECEC services;
- to base public funding estimates for ECEC on achieving quality pedagogical goals;
- to reduce child poverty and exclusion through upstream fiscal, social and labour policies, and to increase resources within universal programs for children with diverse learning rights;
- to encourage family and community involvement in early childhood services;
- to improve the working conditions and professional education of ECEC staff;
- to provide freedom, funding and support to early childhood services; and
- to aspire to ECEC systems that support broad learning, participation and democracy.

Of these general recommendations, the Government of Canada has historically played a role in the social context of child care and the fiscal, social and labour policies that contribute to the reduction of child poverty and exclusion. In addition, it has transferred significant funds to provincial and territorial governments, sometimes with conditions, and sometimes without. These arrangements are discussed in more detail later in this report.

2.2.4. CANADA IN COMPARISON

As the committee has heard and discussed, Canada did not fare well in the final comparative study, published by the OECD in 2006. In particular, the Committee has discussed Canada's low ranking with

respect to federal spending on child care,¹¹ and with respect to public investments on services for families and young children as percentages of GDP.¹² Nonetheless, the Committee heard that the government supports the work of the OECD:

...Canada absolutely endorses the process and the work of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. We are a member country...We absolutely endorse the work and the principles. (Shawn Tupper, Director General for Social Policy, Human Resources and Social Development Canada, Evidence, 7 June 2007)

The Committee also heard that more recent international comparisons show Canada falling behind:

The Save the Children report from the U.K... noted that Canada had fallen from fifth to twenty-fifth in their child index, largely attributable to the number of children engaged in pre-school education. We have evidence that not only was Canada a laggard before — and certainly the OECD studies on child care illustrated that — but we are now falling further behind our industrial counterparts. (Katherine Scott, Canadian Council on Social Development, Evidence, May 10, 2007)

2.2.5. OECD MODELS

As a result of its first round of reviews and in its comparative report, the OECD identified characteristics of successful ECEC services and policies:

- a systemic and integrated approach to ECEC policy;
- a strong and equal partnership with the education system;
- a universal approach to access, with particular attention to children in need of special support;
- substantial public investment in services and the infrastructure;
- a participatory approach to quality improvement and assurance;
- appropriate training and working conditions for staff in all forms of provision;
- systematic attention to data collection and monitoring; and
- a stable framework and long-term agenda for research and evaluation.¹³

A substantial portion of the report, including the comparative tables, was dedicated to "...examining the progress made in these areas by the countries participating in the review."¹⁴

¹¹ OECD, *Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care*, 2006, p. 105. The Committee heard testimony from government officials and received information that contests the figures used in the comparison.

¹² Ibid, p. 104.

¹³ Ibid, pp. 3-4.

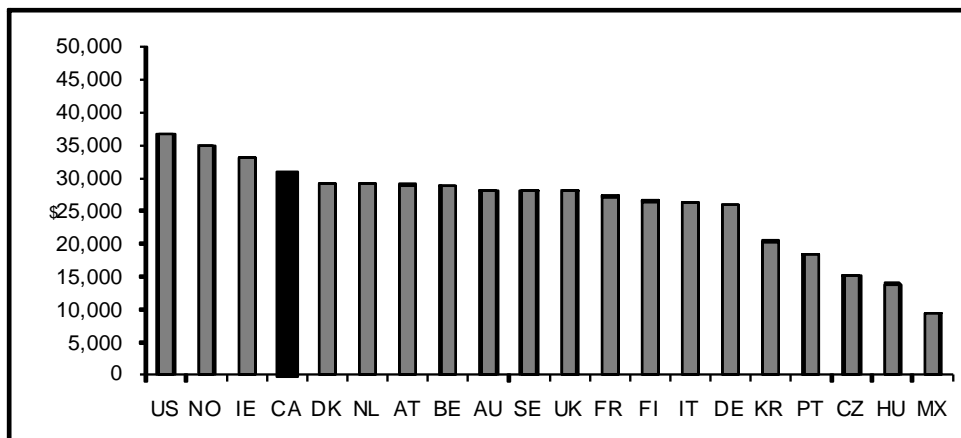
The cross-national comparisons prepared for *Starting Strong II* reveal just how far Canada lags behind.

Among the 20 countries in the OECD review Canada scored in the top 10 in the following categories: wealth (4th in GDP per capita); amount paid by parents for early childhood services (4th); child poverty (7th); and the proportion of “working mothers” (7th for mothers with children less than 3 years old; 8th for mothers with children less than 6 years old).

Canada ranked very low among other OECD countries on several measurements: early childhood education attendance by children under 6 years old (14th for children aged 0 to 3; last for children aged 3 to 6); paid maternity and parental leave (in the lower third of “effective” programs); spending on social programs as a proportion of GDP (15th); and spending on all child and family programs (16th). Finally, Canada was reported to come last on spending on early learning and child care services out of 14 countries compared.

Information on developments in some of the countries ahead of Canada – France, Sweden, Australia and German – along with New Zealand and Cuba, is provided later in this report.

Figure 1 - GDP per capita (in U.S.\$)¹⁵

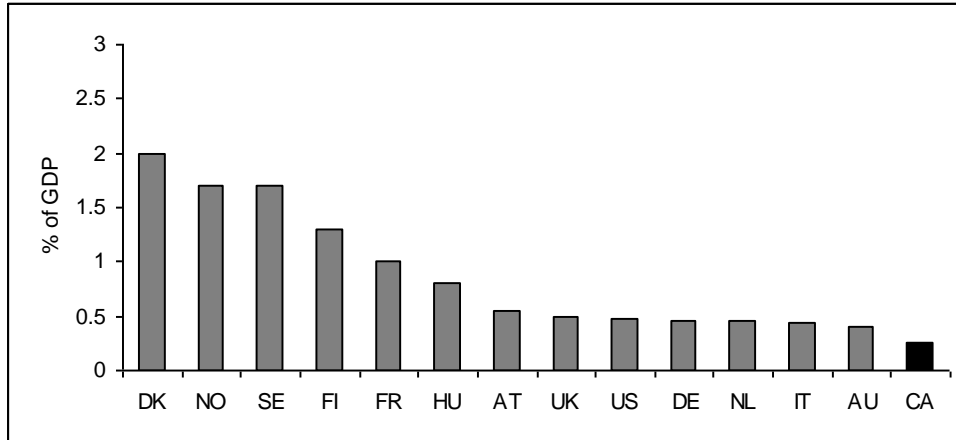


Data source: OECD, “Country Profiles,” *Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care*, 2006.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 4.

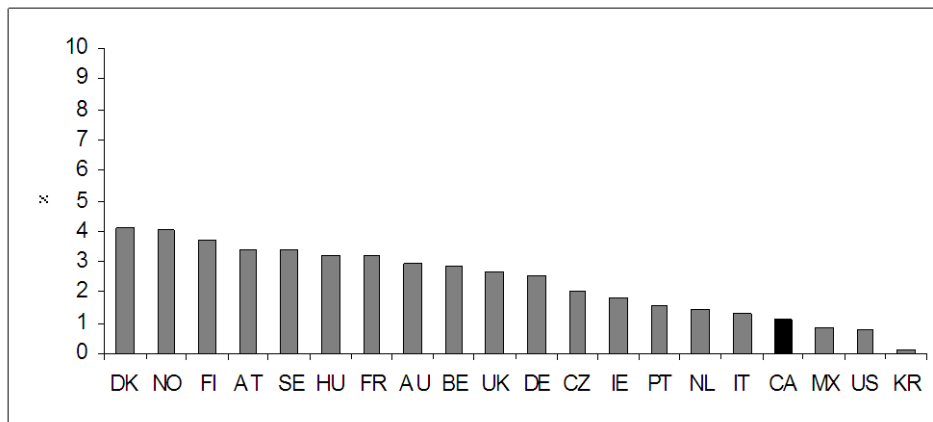
¹⁵ Figures 1, 2 and 3 from Martha Friendly, *Early learning and child care: How does Canada Measure Up?* Briefing note. Child Care Resource and Research Unit, 2006.

Figure 2 - Public spending on Early Learning and Child Care programs for children aged 0 to 6 years (as a % of GDP)



Data source: OECD, "Annex C," *Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care*, pg. 246.

Figure 3 - Public spending on benefits/services for families/young children



Note: Includes total cash benefits and total family services. Public expenditures based on International Standard Classification.
 Data source: OECD, "Annex C," *Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care*, pg. 246.

Spending calculations in *Starting Strong II* were based on information provided in background reports; in Canada’s case, those were based on 2001 data on spending.¹⁶ The Committee heard testimony from a federal official, reminding the Committee that spending levels had changed in the interim:

I would like to use this opportunity today to let the committee know the data dates back to 2003 and perhaps is not an accurate reflection of the status of our situation today. Since that time, investments have increased at both the federal and

¹⁶ John Graham, one of the authors of the report, included in a memo from Martha Friendly to federal officials, dated 19 November 2007.

provincial levels. (Shawn Tupper, Director General, Social Policy, Human Resources and Social Development Canada, Evidence, 7 June 2007)

2.3. Developments in other countries

International comparison reveals that ECEC has become a key policy priority in many countries. This section provides an overview of international trends in the provision of ECEC in relation to the best practice principles outlined in the OECD's report *Starting Strong II*:¹⁷ integration of services, universal access, quality and data collection and monitoring. The Committee chose six countries to review: Sweden, France, Germany, Australia, New Zealand and Cuba. (More detailed information about each of these countries is provided in Appendix 4.) These countries were selected because they either out-performed Canada in the OECD review, or represented a particular model of ECEC provision from which Canada could learn.

2.3.1. COUNTRIES REVIEWED

Sweden's provision of ECEC was seen by the OECD as an ideal model.¹⁸ In Sweden, early childhood education and care is one of main the pillars of its welfare state. ECEC is mainly provided by the state at minimal cost to parents, with high quality standards and well-educated and remunerated staff. Swedes see the provision of high quality ECEC as a means of both fostering the development of the child, and enabling parents to participate in the labour market.¹⁹

The OECD found the investment and support for ECEC in France to be particularly impressive.²⁰ France spent 1% of its GDP on ECEC services in 2004, placing it just below the high-ranking Scandinavian countries.²¹ France's spending allows it to provide universal access and enrolment for 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds, as well as 35% of 2-year-olds in its world famous pre-schools or *écoles maternelles*.²²

¹⁷ OECD, *Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care*, 2006.

¹⁸ OECD, *OECD Country Note: Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Sweden*, December 1999, p. 38.

¹⁹ Barbara Martin Korpi, *The Politics of Pre-School-intentions and decisions underlying the emergence and growth of the Swedish pre-school*, 15 October 2007, p. 26.

²⁰ OECD, *OECD Country Note: Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in France*, February 2004, p. 33.

²¹ OECD (2006), p. 105.

²² OECD (2004), *OECD Country Note - France*, p. 33.

Germany provided the cradle for many of the theories and practices of the ECEC profession in Europe.²³ Early childhood education and care in Continental Europe rests on the concept of *Socialpaedagogik*, or social pedagogy, which seeks to address the needs of the whole child, rather than focusing solely on scholastic outcomes.²⁴ Germany is also of particular interest to Canadian policy practitioners because it is a federal country and therefore faces similar jurisdictional challenges in addressing children's issues.

Australia has many of the same challenges as Canada in the provision of ECEC. As a federal state with a mixed system of ECEC service provision, including profit and non-profit organizations, and State and Territorial governments, Australia must also serve subpopulations, including rural, remote and Aboriginal communities. The OECD identified Australia's policies and programs targeted to meet the needs of these communities as both innovative and effective.²⁵

Though not among the countries reviewed by the OECD, New Zealand represents a successful model of the complete integration of ECEC services, extending from public administration to the training of ECEC workers. New Zealand also integrates the culture, beliefs and needs of its Aboriginal peoples into its national programs and strategies, which could serve as a model for Canada to follow.

Finally, Cuba's impressive achievements in the area of early childhood education and care contributed to its meeting UNESCO's six "Education for All" goals, which include universal primary education, gender parity and quality of education.²⁶ Despite having few economic resources, Cuban third- and fourth-graders have consistently out-performed their Latin American counterparts in mathematics and language skills, a success attributed to their high quality education system.²⁷ In effect, Cuba has challenged the assumption that economic prosperity is necessary for positive early childhood development and has

²³ OECD, *OECD Country Note: Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in The Federal Republic of Germany*, 26 November 2004, p. 19.

²⁴ OECD, *OECD Country Note - Germany*, p. 19.

²⁵ *OECD Country Note: Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Australia*, November 2001, p. 30.

²⁶ UNESCO, *Strong Foundations: Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2007*, Paris, 2006, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/0014/001477/147794E.pdf> p. 64.

²⁷ Lavinia Gasperini, "The Cuban Education System: Lessons and Dilemmas," *Country Studies: Education Reform and Management Publication Series*, vol. 1, no. 5, July 2000, p. 5.

demonstrated that policy choices are significant contributors to improving development outcomes for children.²⁸

2.3.2. INTEGRATION OF ECEC SERVICES

To overcome the traditional separation between early childhood education and care, the OECD recommended that countries work towards establishing a systematic and integrated approach to early education and care.²⁹ This included the establishment of a co-ordinated policy framework, a lead ministry, strong links to parents and communities, and a participatory approach to reform. In the countries examined, the levels of integration in the provision of ECEC services vary widely.

New Zealand, Cuba and Sweden have very highly integrated models of ECEC services, with a single department responsible for education and child care, a common curriculum, equal funding structures and equivalent staff qualifications for both early learning and schools. New Zealand was one of the first countries to integrate ECEC services with the education system. In 1986, they were integrated under one department and were given equal funding support.³⁰ By 1990, the Government had introduced common qualification requirements for workers in child care and kindergarten services. A unique set of circumstances, contributed to this outcome, including pressure from child care workers, the desire on the part of Maori and Pacific peoples for culturally appropriate early childhood education, and the election of a Labour government in 1984, with child care in its main policy agenda.³¹

In Sweden, the integration of ECEC and the school system occurred in 1998, when both pre-school and child care became the responsibility of the Department of Education and Research. The integration of services resulted from the creation of a pre-school class within the education system for children aged 6.³² However, the new pre-school class was not meant to be radically different from existing ECEC services. Child care and pre-school's common aims and objectives were established through the introduction of common national curriculum. To reinforce the integration of child care and pre-school,

²⁸ Gasperini (2000), p. 5.

²⁹ OECD (2006), p. 47.

³⁰ UNESCO, Early Childhood Education Policy Co-ordination under the Auspices of the Department/Ministry of Education: A Case Study of New Zealand, *UNESCO Early Childhood and Family Policy Series*, no. 1, March 2002, p. 15.

³¹ UNESCO (2002), p. 12-13.

³² Martin Korpi (2007), p. 63.

the Swedish *Pre-School Act* was amended so that both child care and the pre-school class would be referred to as “pre-school,” reflecting the lack of distinction between the two types of services.³³

The Cuban approach to early childhood education and care is also highly integrated.³⁴ Cuba’s single lead department for early childhood education, the Pre-school Education Bureau of the Ministry of Education, works closely with all the other departments and agencies involved in ECEC. For example, the Ministry of Education coordinates a national technical group for the Educate Your Child program, which includes all the government agencies and organizations involved in the delivery of the program, including Public Health, Culture and Sports, the Federation of Cuban Women, and the National Association of Small Farmers.³⁵ These interdepartmental coordinating groups for the program are found at all levels of government, including the provincial and municipal governments and community councils. Integration in Cuba also exists at the staffing level, as child care workers and primary school teachers all receive the same level of pay and have the same education requirements.

Australia is moving towards the integration of ECEC services from a highly fragmented system, as jurisdiction is shared between the state and territorial governments and the federal government. The funding of child care has remained a federal jurisdiction, while pre-school is the responsibility of the State and Territories. Meanwhile, as noted above, there are many different providers, including non-profit and for-profit agencies. The recently elected Labour Government has begun to address the fragmentation by establishing a common department for pre-school education and child care in 2007, called the Office of Early Childhood Education.³⁶

However, not all countries are moving towards integration. In particular, education and child care remain completely separate in France. While pre-school is highly centralized under the *Ministère d’Éducation Nationale* with a common national curriculum and universal access, child care remains decentralised. Child care is the

³³ Ibid., p. 64.

³⁴ UNESCO, *Cuba: Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programmes*, Country Profile prepared for the Education for All 2007 Global Monitoring Report, 2006.

³⁵ Subcommittee on Population Health of the Standing Senate Committee of Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Maternal Health and Early Childhood Development in Cuba: Second Report of the Subcommittee on Population Health of the Standing Senate Committee of Social Affairs, Science and Technology*, February 2008, p. 18.

³⁶ Government of Australia, “Early Childhood Education and Care,” http://www.oceccc.gov.au/new_agenda.htm (accessed 15 July, 2008).

responsibility of the *Ministère du Travail, des Relations Sociales, de la Famille, et de la Solidarité* and the national public agency, the *Caisse Nationale des Allocations Familiales* (CNAF). The CNAF works with local agencies and municipal governments to provide ECEC services in various parts of the country, resulting in uneven service provision without the same universal accessibility, or common standards as the nation-wide pre-schools.³⁷

In Germany, the OECD has not endorsed integration of the education and child care services.³⁸ While kindergarten or pre-school falls under the jurisdiction of the *Laender* (or the provinces), under Germany's *Basic Law*, child care funding is part of the federal government's responsibility to provide social welfare. The OECD noted that integration of child care and early childhood education would make child care the responsibility of the provinces, rather than part of social welfare, eliminating the federal government role in ECEC.³⁹ The OECD concluded that preservation of the federal role in child care was more important than integration with education, to sustain national uniformity in ECEC.⁴⁰

2.3.4. ACCESS

In *Starting Strong II*, the OECD recommended that countries "engage in a universal approach to access with particular attention to young children below the age of 3, as well as young children with special or additional needs."⁴¹ A universal approach, according to the OECD, requires ECEC provision to all children whose parents want them to participate. This notion of access includes both children's right to services and the availability of those services to them. It also involves equity, such that children who are disadvantaged have equal access to services.

In the countries reviewed, there is a strong trend towards making access to ECEC universal for children aged 0 to 3, in terms of both equity and availability.

Most of the countries examined have already achieved close to universal access in the area of pre-primary education for children aged 3 to 6. The exception is Australia, where it is estimated that between 13% and 20% of all 4-year-olds in Australia did not attend pre-school

³⁷ OECD (2004), *OECD Country Note - France*, p. 36.

³⁸ OECD (2004), *OECD Country Note - Germany*, p. 46.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ OECD (2006), p. 74.

or any other form of ECEC.⁴² To address this situation, the government has promised that by 2013, all children will have access to 15 hours of Government-funded, play-based early childhood education, for a minimum of 40 weeks per year, delivered by degree-qualified early childhood teachers; services will be provided in public, private and community-based pre-schools and child care in the year prior to formal schooling.⁴³ This commitment has been supported through increased budgetary allocations for ECEC services.

Despite the overall trend, access to child care and early childhood education services for children aged 0 to 3 varies considerably in other countries. While Sweden, New Zealand and Cuba have almost universal access in these areas, France and Germany do not. In the past few years, governments in both countries have made key policy changes to enhance provision of ECEC services for children under 3. For example, the French Government announced in 2008 that it intends to make access to child care for children aged 0 to 3 a legal right in the next five years, as well as create 350,000 more spaces through an investment of €1 billion.⁴⁴

Meanwhile, in 2007, the German federal and provincial governments passed a law (*Kinderfoerderungsgesetz*) to promote the financing of child care in the country. Its intent is to finance ECEC sufficiently to provide access to one-third of children under 3 years of age by 2013, in line with European Union standards.⁴⁵

In terms of improving equity in access to ECEC services, there have been innovative practices in the countries reviewed. For example, New Zealand has developed a 10-year strategic plan for early childhood education, which specifically focuses on increasing the participation in ECEC services of its Maori and Pacific populations.⁴⁶ Specific initiatives

⁴²Australian Government, *Universal Access to Early Childhood Education: Guidelines 2007-08*, March 2008, p. 1.

⁴³ Australian Government, "Universal Access to Early Childhood Education." Accessed from <http://www.ocecc.gov.au/education/default.htm> 16 July 2008.

⁴⁴ Government of France, "Rééquilibrer la politique de la famille." Accessed from http://www.premier-ministre.gouv.fr/chantiers/famille_1056/ accessed 22 July 2008.

⁴⁵ Bundesministerium fuer Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, "Ursula von derLeyen: "Der Weg zum Ausbau der Kinderbetreuung ist frei." Accessed from <http://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/generator/Politikbereiche/Familie/kinderbetreuung.html> 5 August 2008.

⁴⁶ Government of New Zealand, *Pathways to the Future: Nga Huarahi: A 10 year Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Education*, September 2002, p. 3.

under the plan include the identification of barriers to access, provision of targeted grants, and more consultation with local communities.⁴⁷

New Zealand has also incorporated the culture and beliefs of its Aboriginal peoples into its national curriculum: the *Te Whaariki*, a Maori term meaning “woven mat”.⁴⁸ The *Te Whariki* early childhood curriculum is influenced by the Maori culture, but is not restricted to programs serving indigenous peoples. It is used in all early childhood education programs and is seen as a primary entry point to bridging the cultural divide between the descendants of New Zealand’s founding peoples and its European settlers.

Australia has also developed innovative policy approaches to overcoming cultural and geographic barriers to ECEC services. The federal government has worked with state and territorial governments to develop integrated, community-specific and culturally appropriate models of ECEC service delivery. For example, *Mobile Children’s Services* are traveling resource units which serve families in rural and remote areas. They offer a range of services including child care and pre-school, as well as activities for older children, playgroups and toy libraries.⁴⁹

Cuba has also developed unique solutions to reaching children living in isolated rural and mountainous areas.⁵⁰ Cuba has adapted its early childhood education model to local settings by creating small schools that use the same staff and resources cater to different ages and school levels, but to smaller groups of children. To ensure the stability of the teacher workforce in rural schools, the education system encourages teachers to make two-year commitments to rural schools. In 2001, there were 27 pre-primary schools (*Circulos infantiles*) in mountainous areas that served as few as four children.⁵¹

Finally, Sweden has worked towards increasing access for children of unemployed parents, as well as immigrant children. Though Sweden has guaranteed access to ECEC to all children of employed parents, children of unemployed parents were left without access. This effectively discriminated against immigrant children, as their parents were more likely to be unemployed. As a result, in June 2001, children

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 10.

⁴⁸ Further details regarding the specifics of the curriculum will be provided in Appendix 4.

⁴⁹ OECD (2001), *Country Note - Australia*, p. 30.

⁵⁰ Gasperini (2000), p. 14.

⁵¹ Ibid.

aged 4 and 5 of unemployed parents were also given access to pre-schooling, in terms of both access to a space, and retention of the place they already had.⁵²

2.3.5. QUALITY, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

According to the OECD, national regulatory standards and curriculum support the quality of ECEC services.⁵³ The OECD reported particularly weak regulatory standards for ECEC services for children under 3 in the majority of countries it reviewed.⁵⁴

Australia, however, was singled out for its national quality monitoring system that is tied to funding, a practice recommended as a model for others.⁵⁵ Australia's nation-wide quality accreditation system (QIAS) evaluates the learning experiences of children; relationships among children, parents and their carers; and the types and quality of programs offered in child care centres nationwide.⁵⁶ QIAS is also tied to the provision of funding through Australia's child care subsidy, the Child Care Benefit, as Australian parents can use it only in child care centres that have been approved through the QIAS.

The OECD also found the monitoring and evaluation of ECEC programs in the countries that it reviewed to be especially weak.⁵⁷ Although not included in the review, Cuba has a particularly strong monitoring and evaluation system.⁵⁸ In Cuba, children in institutional and non-institutional ECEC programs are systematically monitored and evaluated. Every two months, children are assessed based upon developmental achievements and the objectives established for that year, or life cycle, with a final evaluation or development assessment at the end of each school level. At the end of the pre-school stage, children are asked to complete a schedule of diagnostic tasks, which are used to prepare individual profiles for each child in order to custom-design the early part of the first grade.

⁵² Martin Korpi (2007), p. 70.

⁵³ OECD (2006), p. 126.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 130.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 131.

⁵⁶ Australian Government, *Fact Sheet 15: Information for Families using Child Care*, <http://www.oceccc.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/C97009D1-F6F6-4D1C-90EC-E7568DD3DF00/20736/OECECCFactSheet15.pdf> (accessed 16 July 2008)

⁵⁷ OECD (2006), p. 175.

⁵⁸ Information on Cuba in this paragraph is drawn from the Subcommittee on Population Health of the Standing Senate Committee of Social Affairs, Science and Technology (2008), p. 20.

3. APPROACHES TO ECEC

Governments, researchers, educators, and, of course, Canadian parents do not share a single view of how children (and their parents) should be supported in their earliest years. While this will become even more evident in the examination of programs and policies across Canada, there are broad approaches that the Committee has considered in its analysis.

3.1. Early childhood development and pedagogy

In an enormously helpful presentation to the Committee on brain development, Dr. Fraser Mustard said:

Experience-based brain development in the early years of life sets neurological pathways that affect health, learning and behaviour... conditions in early life affect your risk for physical and mental health problems throughout life, and that is related to brain function. (Dr. Fraser Mustard, Founder, Council for Early Child Development, Founder's Network, Evidence, 14 February 2008)

In his presentation, Dr. Mustard told the Committee of research on 'epigenetics', a science that explores how genes are switched on or off. In a study published in 2007, he had cited evidence from experiments that demonstrated that

early nurturing and stimulation influence the expression of genes and can actually modify genetic codes that are passed along to the next generation.⁵⁹

Dr. Mustard continued, emphasizing how early learning also lays the groundwork for behavioural responses through a lifetime.

[C]onditions in early life affect your risk for physical and mental health problems throughout life, and that is related to brain function. All of you can understand that for learning, and it also is hugely true for behaviour, and behaviour includes mental health problems. (Dr. Fraser Mustard, Founder, Council for Early Child Development, Founder's Network, Evidence, 14 February 2008)

⁵⁹ Hon. Margaret Norrie McCain, J. Fraser Mustard, and Dr. Stuart Shanker, *Early Years Study 2: Putting Science into Action*, Council for Early Child Development, 2007, p. 32.

The emphasis on learning places child care in a different light, focussing on the development of the child, rather than simply transferring care-giving responsibility from a parent (usually a mother) to other care-providers, emphasizing pedagogy, not just child care.⁶⁰ The OECD report emphasizes this educational focus as a goal of funding, a basis for accountability, and an approach that necessitates more training of care-providers and early childhood educators.

However, notions of early learning often raise the spectre of toddlers at desks, with a fixed curriculum and tests to measure progress;⁶¹ an extreme view of this is described as the “pre-primary” tradition. This approach characterizes systems in the UK, Belgium, the US, France and the Netherlands.

Sometimes referred to as the ‘schoolification’ of the early years,⁶² this approach contrasts with the social pedagogic practices, common in Scandinavian countries, New Zealand, and Italy. These include a broad developmental framework and participatory curriculum development. Curriculum decisions are driven by the interests of the children within the context of their families and immediate communities. The focus is on developmental goals, interactivity with educators and peers, and a high quality of life in the early childhood setting. The curriculum contains broad orientations for children rather than prescribed outcomes.

The 2004 OECD curriculum review found little correlation between department auspice and pedagogical approaches, rather societal values and public spending were found to be more decisive.⁶³ Canadian researchers and early childhood program administrators continue to search for the appropriate balance between the pre-primary and social pedagogy traditions. In practice, a middle ground is usually reached.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Peter Moss, “From a childcare to a pedagogical discourse – or putting care in its place,” in *Children, Changing Families and Welfare States*, Jane Lewis (ed.), Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2006, p. 163.

⁶¹ Evidence of this fear among parents appeared when the Government of British Columbia released a discussion paper as part of its consideration of extending Kindergarten to a full-day program, and making registration at younger ages voluntary, as cited in Glenda Luymes, “Victoria mulls all-day kindergarten; Government also considering pre-kindergarten for younger kids,” *The Province*, 4 July 2008.

⁶² OECD (2006), p. 59.

⁶³ John Bennett, *Curriculum issues in national policy-making*. Keynote address. Paris, OECD/Malta, 2004.

⁶⁴ Jane Bertrand, “Preschool Programs: Effective Curriculum,” *Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development*, Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development, 2007, p. 3.

Table 1 - Differences between pre-primary and social pedagogy traditions⁶⁵

Pre-primary tradition	Social pedagogy tradition
Centralized development of curriculum, with frequently detailed goals and outcomes.	A broad central guideline with local curriculum development encouraged and supported.
A focus on learning standards, especially in areas useful for school readiness. Teacher child relationships tend to be formalized through reaching for detailed curriculum goals.	Focus on broad developmental goals as well as learning is stressed, interactivity with educators and peers encouraged and the quality of life in the institution is given high importance.
Often prescriptive: clear outcomes are set at national level to be reached in all centres.	Broad orientations rather than prescribed outcomes. A diffusion of goals may be experienced, with diminished accountability.
Assessment often required. Goals are clearly defined. Graded assessment of each child with respect to discrete competences is an important part of the teacher's role.	Assessment not required. Goals are broad; outcomes for each child are set by negotiation (educator-parent-child) and informally evaluated unless screening is necessary. A growing focus on individual language and communication competences.
Favoured in the UK, Belgium, the US, France and the Netherlands.	Favoured in Scandinavian countries, New Zealand, and Italy.

Dr. Mustard, in a recent publication, highlighted the importance of play and educating: "Early education should target the whole, active child and not just isolated cognitive skills. Programs should create playful environments, rich with opportunities for exploration."⁶⁶ Most Canadian provincial governments have been explicit about doing just that, including Nova Scotia, Alberta, Manitoba, Prince Edward Island, and New Brunswick.

⁶⁵ Bennett (2004).

⁶⁶ The Learning Partnership, *The Quality of Public Education in Canada*, Issue 4, 2008, pp. 9-10.

3.2. Population health

The earliest years are pivotal to a child's growth and development. Nurturing caregivers, positive learning environments, good nutrition and social interaction with other children all contribute to early physical and social development in ways that can positively affect health and well-being over a lifetime. A poor start to life often leads to problems that can impact health and long-term prospects.⁶⁷

In his recent report, the Chief Public Health Officer described the three areas "critical to healthy child development:"

- adequate income – family income should not be a barrier to positive childhood development, and support mechanisms should be in place for all children to have a good start in life;
- effective parenting and family functioning – effective parenting skills are fundamental to child development, however, parents may also require employer support for flexible work hours and maternity/parental leaves, as well as broader social support for family based opportunities and resources; and
- supportive community environments – all members of the community have a responsibility for the healthy development of children. Communities need to provide accessible health and social programs and resources for families with children.⁶⁸

Compelling evidence has been mounting for decades about the importance of early childhood experiences for the future health of children, including many factors well beyond epidemiological or other health factors, starting with conception and continuing through early development. In its hearings, the Subcommittee on Population Health heard that the top of a list of things that would improve health outcomes was early childhood development.⁶⁹

This Subcommittee has tabled four studies,⁷⁰ with a final one expected in May 2009, on population health and the determinants of health,

⁶⁷ Health Canada, *The Chief Public Health Officer's Report on the State of Public Health in Canada, 2008*, 2008, p. 46.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Dennis Raphael, Professor, School of Health Policy and Management, York University, Evidence, 28 February 2007.

⁷⁰ The four reports were: "Population Health Policy: International Perspectives," and "Maternal Health and Early Childhood Development in Cuba," both in February 2008; and "Population Health Policy: Issues and Options" and "Population Health Policy: Federal, Provincial and Territorial Perspectives, both in April 2008. These reports can be downloaded from

http://www.parl.gc.ca/common/Committee_SenRecentReps.asp?Language=E&Parl=39&Ses=2.

many of which have their roots in pregnancy, infancy and the years prior to public education.

In addition, a recent study by Canadian researchers for the World Health Organization's Commission on Social Determinants reported that greater progress toward equity could be achieved even in poor countries by investing \$1 in early childhood programming for every \$10 invested in health and education programming.⁷¹ A more locally focussed report observed the remarkable power of quality early childhood care and educational programs in improving a vast range of social outcomes, particularly for socio-economically disadvantaged children, including: higher reading and mathematics scores, increased IQ, higher levels of social competence, higher graduation rates, lower teen pregnancy rates, less smoking and drug use, higher employment and income levels, and lower crime rates.⁷²

Further, in her recent report, the Advisor on Healthy Children and Youth to the Federal Minister of Health stated that it has been repeatedly demonstrated that investments in early childhood education pay off in better life and health outcomes later in life. ECD research estimates that every \$1 invested in early childhood development is worth between \$3 and \$18 later in life.⁷³ Similarly, Canada's Chief Public Health Officer described the impact of barriers to early childhood development programs on young Canadians:

The consequences of these disadvantages include children growing into adults with lower educational attainment, weaker literacy and communication skills, fewer employment opportunities and poorer overall physical and mental health.⁷⁴

And, from a different perspective, David Dodge, when he was the Governor of the Bank of Canada, identified early childhood development and health as critical determinants of success in the broadest sense:

While parents, along with some psychologists, sociologists and public health experts, have long intuitively understood the importance of ECD, it is really only over the last quarter century or so that scientists, physicians, and social scientists have come

⁷¹ Lori G. Irwin, Arjumand Siddiqi and Clyde Hertzman, *Early Child Development: A Powerful Equalizer – Final Report*, University of British Columbia, 2007, p. 5.

⁷² M. Brownell, N. Roos, and R. Fransoo, "Is the class half empty? A population-based perspective on socio-economic status and educational outcomes", *IRPP Choices*, 12(5), 2006, p. 21.

⁷³ Mary Jo Haddad. "Children's Health Care: What's Next". May 2005, p. 7, cited in Dr. K. Kellie Leitch, "Reaching for the Top: A Report by the Advisor on Healthy Children & Youth, Minister of Health", 2008, p. 15.

⁷⁴ Health Canada (2008), p. 48.

to recognize the crucial role played by ECD. Good health (of both mother and child), good nutrition, good parenting, strong social supports, and stimulative interaction with others outside the home all combine to provide the best chance of success. Neglecting investment in any one of these areas reduces the value of investment in other areas.⁷⁵

3.3. Supporting families

Children need good quality care from the moment they get up in the morning until the time that they go to bed. There are two ways to provide that care. One way is to strengthen families; the other way is to provide substitute care outside the family. The two can go together quite nicely, but if you have one without the other, you have missed a big part of the child's day. (Douglas Willms, Professor, Canadian Research Institute for Social Policy, University of New Brunswick, Evidence, 6 June 2007)

The Committee considered supporting families from two perspectives: increasing parental choice, and increasing parenting skills.

3.3.1. PARENTAL CHOICE

Public polling would indicate that Canadians are conflicted about the most appropriate ways of supporting families with young children. Surveys indicate a majority of Canadians expect mothers, particularly lone-mothers, to work but are concerned about the well-being of young children when they do.⁷⁶

A report by the Vanier Institute of the Family⁷⁷ is often misrepresented as parents not wanting day care. In this survey, however, parents' preferences regarding the care of their children indicated the following priorities. Provided with a list of options, parents and relative care were the top choices, followed by regulated family and group care, and finally sitters and friends. As in the Canadian Council on Learning and Environics polls, the Vanier Institute survey found Canadians recognize parents need help raising their children and want their governments to contribute.

⁷⁵ David Dodge, "Human capital, early childhood development, and economic growth: An economist's perspective," May 2003, p. 4.

⁷⁶ N. Ghalan, "Attitudes toward women, work and family", *Canadian Social Trends*. Autumn 1997, pp. 16-17. Accessed from <http://www.statcan.ca/english/kits/pdf/social/women2.pdf> 15 August 2008.

⁷⁷ R. Bidy, *The Future Families Project: A Survey of Canadians Hopes and Dreams*. Vanier Institute for the Family, 2004.

The Committee began with the assumption that parents are the first and most important providers of early learning opportunities and care for children. Not a single witness or brief challenged that assumption. Witnesses emphasized the importance of choice, and recognized that choice would likely require public investment to ensure both access and quality. Further, witnesses and policy analysts alike have highlighted that the benefits of the best possible early childhood learning opportunities, whether in the home or elsewhere, benefit more than the child and his or her family, providing social benefits to the broader community over time.

However, the Committee also heard from one organization that all transfers from both federal and provincial/territorial governments intended to benefit children should be paid to parents, who would then have choices as to how to care for their children.⁷⁸ That brief also expressed its concern that public policy with respect to children was being driven by a few unrepresentative organizations: “The daycare lobby, the OECD, the European Commission, and the World Bank are currently driving the architecture of family/child policy in Canada, not the Canadian electorate, parents, or the best interests of children.”⁷⁹

The Committee recognizes that there is no consensus on the issue of non-parental care and whether and how it should be financed, and therefore endorses the notion of choice, which is also evident in many developments at the provincial and territorial level, described in more detail below.

Choice underlies the programs and policies of the federal government. In a letter to the *Toronto Star*, then-Minister for Human Resources and Social Development Canada The Honourable Monte Solberg wrote:

Our government has taken a balanced approach in giving parents choice in child care. At \$5.6 billion a year, we're making the largest investment in early learning and child care in history. We are delivering \$2.4 billion a year directly to the parents of 2 million Canadian children under 6 through the Universal Child Care Benefit. Families are also benefiting from the new \$2,000 Child Tax Credit.

Now parents can make their own choices on child care.

⁷⁸ Kids First Parent Association of Canada, “Inclusion, Equality, Empowerment & Sustainability: Policy for Families with Dependent Children,” Official submission to the Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, 2008, p. 3.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

We're also helping create new child-care spaces. Last year, we increased transfers to the provinces for child care to \$1.1 billion a year. Since then, the provinces have announced the intention to create more than 60,000 new child-care spaces across the country.⁸⁰

A cautionary note on parental choice is offered in concluding policy observations in the OECD final report on ECEC:

To enhance parental choice is an admirable aim for policy makers, but the discourse becomes less convincing when it promotes the cheapest form of child care, while professional services are cut back or made less accessible to moderate and low-income families.⁸¹

3.3.2. PARENTING SKILLS

The Committee heard about the importance of parenting to the development of young children:

There is no doubt about it; the single biggest factor in how a child turns out is parenting. What children need beyond good nutrition and safe housing is what we call good nurturance: Love, touch, reading, singing, playing, exploring, appropriate and sensitive interaction and responses to their needs, all the things that good parents give easily and naturally. This tells the child that the world is a good, safe and interesting place to be. When they know and understand this, their brain development will be optimal. (The Hon. Margaret Norrie McCain, Evidence, 14 February 2008)

The same strong message came from a scientist appearing before the Committee:

.... parents have to be the primary focus of all this health prevention. Any successful program has to be one that builds on the parents' role and provides them with the tools they need to deal with the sorts of challenges, not just in terms of biology but also in terms of the changing stresses and patterns of 21st century society.... that will give parents the tools they need to be, in essence, effective vehicles for the healthy development of their kids. (Stuart Shankar, Professor, President, Council for Early Child Development, Evidence, 30 May 2007)

Starting Strong II specified that comprehensive ECEC services must include a focus on community and family environments in which

⁸⁰ The Honourable Monte Solberg, "Parents now have choice", Letter to the Editor, *Toronto Star*, 11 July 2008, p. AA05.

⁸¹ OECD (2006), p. 213.

children live, and especially on parents.⁸² In Canada, a report based on the results of the National Longitudinal Study on Children and Youth (NLSCY) reinforced the value of intervention with parents, stating that positive parenting can overcome other disadvantages a child may face.⁸³

However, acknowledging the value of such interventions does not lead to clear directions as to the kind of interventions that are effective:

While research has demonstrated that parental input during the first 24 months of life is crucial to the “wiring of the brain”, what is much less clear is what kind of support for parents is most effective in fostering child development during that critical period.⁸⁴

While the Committee heard that parenting programs are especially important to parents of vulnerable children, and that a greater proportion of children in low-income households are vulnerable, the Committee also heard that the largest number of vulnerable children is in middle-income households. As explained in a report co-authored by two of the Committee’s witnesses,

Vulnerable children are found in all SES [socioeconomic status] groups but populations are not evenly distributed between groups. The largest numbers of children overall are found in the middle groupings. The lowest SES group has a greater percentage, but a smaller number, of vulnerable children. Conversely, children in the middle SES groups are less likely to be vulnerable, but because of the size of the group, this is where the most vulnerable children are found.⁸⁵

This implies that such programs should not be targeted based on socioeconomic status alone. More on targeted versus universal programming is provided under the discussion of service delivery options, later in this report.

The Committee also heard of the value of integrating parenting programs with early childhood education programs:

The evidence is compelling that a well-funded, integrated early child development and parenting program will improve the cognitive social functioning of all children, and all children do

⁸² Ibid., p. 55.

⁸³ Human Resources and Social Development Canada [HRSDC], the Public Health Agency of Canada [PHAC], and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada [INAC], *The Well-Being of Canada’s Young Children: Government of Canada Report 2006, 2007*, p. 33.

⁸⁴ Dodge (2003), p. 5.

⁸⁵ McCain, et. al., p. 46.

well in a high quality early child development system. (The Hon. Margaret Norrie McCain, Evidence, 14 February 2008)

More on integration of programs is provided below.

Most Canadian governments provide some form of training and support for parents, some targeted to low-income or otherwise disadvantaged children and families, some more universally available. More detailed information can be found in Appendix 3, which contains an overview of early childhood development policies and programs for each province and territory.

3.4. Integration

Integration can be understood in two ways: integration between pre-school and school programs; and integration among services for children, across sectors.

The OECD reports focused attention on the problems created by the fragmentation of early childhood service delivery, stressing the need to “build bridges between child care and kindergarten education, with the aim of integrating programs at both ground level and at policy and management levels.”⁸⁶ The experts recommended creating an adequate pan-Canadian framework and decentralizing management to the local level, arguing that it is easier to connect the pieces of the early learning and child care puzzle.

The service fragmentation that the OECD noted in its examination of Canada continues. Parenting, school readiness, pre-school, child care and kindergarten are often addressed in separate and distinct programs, rather than as a continuum of programs essential to healthy child development and preparedness for school. As a result, parents may be left to navigate on their own the confusing array of services with conflicting eligibility criteria, operating hours and mandates.

Outside Quebec, the systems coherence championed by the OECD and prescribed by many analysts and experts, including Dr. Mustard and Margaret McCain in the *Early Years Study*,⁸⁷ is still lacking. Early child development and parenting centres—linked to primary schools and other community facilities—could consolidate the above service chaos

⁸⁶ OECD (2004), p. 7.

⁸⁷ Hon. Margaret Norrie McCain & J. Fraser Mustard, *Early Years Study: Reversing the Real Brain Drain*, Canadian Institute for Advanced Research and the Founders' Network, 1996, p. 153.

into a single program addressing the needs of children from prenatal to grade one and respond to the requirements of all parents whether at home, at work and in school. These centres also encourage the development of connections among parents, and across sectors within the community in which they are located. This new paradigm, one that considers the education of young children on par with that of their older siblings, is a leap most jurisdictions are only beginning to envision.

The division between 'care' in child care centres and 'education' in kindergarten is a focus for attention for several policy studies in Canada and internationally. In most Canadian jurisdictions the same children often participate in both systems at different times in the day. A review of the literature found the transitions between two environments are often disruptive for children and inconvenient and cumbersome for parents.⁸⁸

The Committee has become aware of especially good examples of integration not only of the child care and education programs, but also inclusive of supports to parents.

In Fredericton, New Brunswick, Au P'tit Monde de Franco Inc.,⁸⁹ was established in 1979, and has occupied space in the Centre communautaire Sainte-Anne since that time. Over the years, the child care centre has undergone several expansions, and currently provides nursery school for 2- to 4-year-olds, pre-school for toddlers, junior kindergarten for 4-year olds, before-kindergarten care, after-school care for children aged 5 to 12, and summer camp. The centre in which it is located offers kindergarten to 12th grade schooling, side by side with an auditorium for community use, an art gallery and book store.

In Toronto, Ontario, Toronto First Duty (TFD) combines kindergarten, child care, and family support services into a single, universal program.⁹⁰ From this service platform, families are linked to more specialized services as required. The program is a partnership of the City of Toronto; Toronto District School Board and community agencies with operational support from the Atkinson Charitable Foundation and the Canadian Autoworkers Union. A comprehensive assessment,

⁸⁸ Susan Colley, "Policy Papers: How Can Integration of Services for Kindergarten-Aged Children be Achieved?" *The Integration Kit*, Integration Network Project, OISE/University of Toronto, September 2006, p. 20.

⁸⁹ For more information about this organization, see its website, at <http://www.franco-fredericton.com/apmf/>.

⁹⁰ For more information about this program, see its website at <http://www.toronto.ca/firstduty>.

funded in part by HRSDC, found that integrated service provision provided better quality programming, better engaged parents in their children's early learning, raised awareness of early childhood development among practitioners and parents; are well received by staff, and cost no more than traditional service delivery.⁹¹ Initial TFD research also found improved vocabulary and numeracy scores in a small sample of children.

Education in Canada is viewed as a public entitlement while care is the parent's problem, with government intervening only to support the labour force participation of low-income families. The availability of the care, or its quality, tends to be of secondary concern, particularly when the objective is the employment of lone mothers.⁹² Full integration between pre-school and school services is also challenged by differential qualification and skills required for early learning versus kindergarten, and often different regulations and other legislative requirements.

Yet, there are some bright spots. In Ontario, for example, the Integration Network, founded to generate a discussion in Canada about the policy changes required to bring about early childhood service integration for kindergarten aged children, surveyed officials and key stakeholders in New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario and Alberta. The results showed broad agreement on the need to align care and education programs at least for 4- and 5-year-old children; to consider a more coherent approach to curriculum and pedagogy; and to improve the qualifications of at least some early childhood educators. It also found a growing number of programs for pre-kindergarten aged children in the education system.⁹³

And in Vancouver, local authorities (education, municipal and parks) have been party to a shared protocol on early education, signed in 1994, which includes the following:

It should be understood that child care and education are inseparable concepts and are supported by an integrated and coherent approach to policy and practice. Childhood education and child care are located in settings where both learning and care occur and include affordable, quality, licensed child care services for children from birth to 12 years.

⁹¹ Colley (2006).

⁹² The Learning Partnership (2008), pp. 9-10; CCAAC, *From Patchwork to Framework: A Child Care Strategy for Canada*, 2004, p. 10.

⁹³ Colley, (2006), p. 50.

In Vancouver, child care is seen as a cornerstone of childhood development and therefore is the focus of this protocol.⁹⁴

Nonetheless, the overall picture is not so bright: one recent research report described the current situation with respect to linkages between early childhood learning and the school system as “one of the critical issues in the development of Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada today: the abrupt division for kindergarten-age children between “care” programs in child care centres and “education” in public kindergarten.”⁹⁵

As is discussed in greater detail under provincial programming below, several provincial governments have recently moved to integrate child care and education in a single ministry or to create an over-arching co-ordinating mechanism either within Cabinet or within their bureaucracies. At the same time, child care organizations, scholars, and local communities, with the leadership of organizations like the YWCA, have undertaken to move toward greater integration of learning for children from birth to age 12.

The YWCA has undertaken a multi-year project with a view to creating “community architecture” for early childhood learning and care. The figure below creates a continuum from completely distinct services (or fragmentation”) to an entirely integrated service

Table 2 - Fragmentation to integration⁹⁶

Fragmented	Coordination	Collaboration	Integration
Separate: •Mandate/ Philosophy •Enrolment •Management •Curriculum •Resources •Location •Legislation	•Child care in schools or K in child care centres •Shared: -enrolment -information -program planning -professional development	•Blended program •Shared space Co-management •Blended curriculum ■ Teaching team •Reciprocal credentials •Separate legislation remains	•Single ministry •Single professional qualification •Single curriculum

⁹⁴ City of Vancouver, “Child Care Protocol,” Policy Report, 3 February 2004.

Accessed from <http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20040309/p1.htm> 4 August 2008.

⁹⁵ Colley (2006), p. 3.

⁹⁶ YWCA, “Building a Community Architecture for Early Childhood Learning and Care – Session five”, presentation template, slide 10. Accessed from http://www.ywcanada.ca/public_fr/advocacy/Childcare/Session%205_BCAECLC_YWCA.ppt 3 July 2008.

Integration among different kinds of services – child care, parenting programs, health services, and so on – is also on the agenda of several provincial and territorial governments, and some other countries. The frustrations inherent in more fragmented services were described by one witness before the Committee:

The government has always done piecemeal work. There is the Community Action Program for Children, which is fabulous, thank you, but it is only for little kids. The Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program is fabulous, but they do not do housing. The Province of Ontario Healthy Babies, Healthy Children initiative is for newborns, but we do not care about the 10-year-old lighting fires or the 17-year-old on Ecstasy in the same household. It is a bad example to set for young children under 6....I advocate for much more intersectoral work. I would like to see a federal initiative make the provinces work intersectorally. (Gina Browne, Professor of Nursing and Clinical Epidemiology, McMaster University, Evidence, 28 February 2008)

Initiatives to encourage such collaboration are in place. Ontario's Best Start encourages local coordination between education, child care and parenting supports. The plan requires municipalities to work with school boards, public health units, and child care and children's services providers to develop 'hubs' located in or near schools that link families to services.⁹⁷

"Hubs" can also be organized around non-profit child care centres. Whatever their base, they can be responsible and responsive to local community representatives, and can integrate multiple children's services, easing children's transitions within a day and over time, and simplifying access to services for parents.⁹⁸

In Manitoba, for example, the Childcare Family Access Network (C-FAN) is a rural integrated hub model delivering child care programs in the six Manitoba hamlets of Langruth, Plumas, Amaranth, Alonsa, McCreary and Laurier – all communities with less than 100 people and as far apart as 70 kilometres.⁹⁹ Services range from full-time, multi-

⁹⁷ Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, "About Ontario's Best Start." Accessed from <http://www.gov.on.ca/children/english/programs/beststart/index.html> 1 August 2008.

⁹⁸ Rianne Mahon and Jane Jenson, *Learning From Each Other: Early Learning and Child Care Experiences in Canadian Cities*, City of Toronto, 2006, p. 41. Accessed from <http://www.toronto.ca/children/pdf/elresearchreport.pdf> 3 July 2008.

⁹⁹ Information on this project is taken from the website of the Childcare Family Access Network. Accessed from http://cfan.cimnet.ca/cim/85C128_216T5199.dhtm#CT7864 3 August 2008.

age child care with an integrated nursery school, to weekly nursery school or parent/child groups. C-FAN adapts the programs to the changing needs of families.

In Rocky Mountain, Alberta, a town of 7,000, the only child care centre closed, leaving no other options and no prospects for a new program. On February 1, 2008, Community Connections opened with a new 60-space child care centre opened, providing flexible care options for children from infancy to age 12. This is the first phase of a "life-cycle" facility expected to offer programs for youth, Aboriginal peoples and seniors, and include a gym, outdoor play space, community kitchen and garden, meeting space and workshop areas. To build this initiative, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers sponsored a process that brought together a wide range of stakeholders including the Mayor, Chamber of Commerce, the local Aboriginal head start and friendship centres, the women's shelter, and youth, literacy, senior and parent programs.

Integration among services targeted to children and families could be encouraged by a study of these and related programs by federal, provincial and territorial governments. Such a study could support the development of a more rational, integrated and comprehensive plan to support expectant mothers and young children, and better outcomes for both.

3.5. Accessibility

The inability to access early childhood programs as a result of distance, availability or affordability is a significant barrier. Aboriginal and immigrant children may experience additional barriers if local child programming is not culturally relevant or delivered in a familiar language.¹⁰⁰

Access to ECEC services can mean the absence of physical barriers for children, parents or staff with mobility impairments; it can mean affordability; it can mean geographic proximity, or cultural approaches that are relevant for Aboriginal or new Canadians. And finally, it can mean that children with special needs can be accommodated within a mainstream program.

The OECD report identifies access in all these senses as a compelling argument for ECEC services to be universally available:

¹⁰⁰ Health Canada (2008), p. 48.

Efforts to improve equitable access target primarily two categories of children: children with special needs due to physical, mental or sensory disabilities; and children with additional learning needs derived from family dysfunction, socio-economic disadvantage, or from ethnic, cultural or linguistic factors. In practice, many children in need of special or additional educational support have accumulated both physical and socio-cultural at-risk factors. Early childhood services are particularly important for such children, and contribute strongly to their health, social and cognitive development, as well as to the social inclusion of their families and their future participation in society.¹⁰¹

Research and evidence have also addressed accessibility as defined in each of these ways. In the Early Childhood Development Initiative, in 2000, federal, provincial and territorial governments (except Quebec, which did not sign on to the Initiative) identified inclusion across these barriers as a priority for their services.¹⁰² Federal programming includes targeted initiatives for Aboriginal children. Specific program information is provided later in this report.

In Canada, with its two official languages, access to child care in the official language of one's choice is limited. Research has demonstrated the importance of early learning environments to language transmission,¹⁰³ and the Committee heard evidence echoing this message:

I can attest to child care programs as a francophone minority living in a minority area. It has a component that preserves language and culture.... Without the early childhood program, we would lose our language and culture ...Whatever system we build in Canada has to address the needs of the Aboriginal population and the needs of francophone parents living in minority situations so that they can preserve their language and culture. (Jody Dallaire, Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, Evidence, 20 April 2007)

Like many countries, Canada is becoming increasingly urbanized, creating an even greater challenge in rural communities to create and

¹⁰¹ OECD (2006), p. 92.

¹⁰² "First Ministers' Meeting Communiqué on Early Childhood Development," September 11, 2000. Accessed from http://www.unionsociale.gc.ca/news/110900_e.html 16 July 2008.

¹⁰³ Ontario Ministry of Education, "The Aménagement Linguistique Policy: An Overview." Accessed from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/policy/linguistique/guide/index.html> 6 August 2008.

sustain the services they need. As reported by the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, more rural Canadians are seeking employment, increasing the need for high-quality non-parental care for children. In its recent report, the Committee recommended “that the federal government work with the provinces and territories to introduce an early learning and child care program that is sensitive to the needs of rural Canada.”¹⁰⁴

This recommendation echoed testimony during this study:

*The Federation of Canadian Municipalities supports a national rural child care system to support families in rural communities.... It should not be a matter of luck where families live. Everybody should have child care.*¹⁰⁵ (Donna Riddel, Manitoba Representative, Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, Evidence, 20 April 2007)

A particularly good example of meeting the needs of rural families has developed in Saskatchewan, where the Shaunavon Children's Learning Centre (SCLC) is providing licensed care on-farm care during busy seasons. Children are transported to a central farm from several nearby homes to participate in programming directed by trained early childhood education. The program began in a community hall in 1995 with three children; by 1998 was in a renovated house licensed for 36 spaces, and by 2003 had its own purpose-built space licensed for 51 children from infants through school age.

¹⁰⁴ Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, *Beyond Freefall: Halting Rural Poverty*, Final Report, June 2008, p. 177.

¹⁰⁵ For more information on the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and its policy, see “Policy Statement on Rural Issues” available on-line at <http://fcm.ca/CMFiles/rural1sjw-3262008-597.pdf>.

4. FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT

In the Canadian federation, education and child care fall primarily within provincial and territorial jurisdiction. Yet, as noted in the introduction to this report, federal involvement through transfers to both individuals and provincial and territorial governments has a long history.

4.1. Policy, programs and funding mechanisms

As in any area related to individuals and families, the federal government has a number of policy instruments from which it can choose. In the case of ECEC, transfers through the tax system, direct program spending on specific populations, and transfers to provincial and territorial governments for specific purposes have all been implemented.

4.1.1. TAX AND TRANSFERS TO INDIVIDUALS

The earliest federal interventions were through the tax system, and taxes and transfers continue to be the mechanisms of choice with respect to child care.

***CHILD CARE EXPENSES DEDUCTION*¹⁰⁶ 1972**

Since 1972, Canada's income tax system has allowed families with child care expenses related to work to deduct these expenses from taxable income before income tax rates are applied. This deduction is available to taxpayers who are employed or self-employed, or were students. Expenses that can be claimed include:

- caregivers providing child care services;
- day nursery schools and daycare centres;
- educational institutions for the part of the fees that relate to child care services;
- day camps and day sports schools where the primary goal of the camp is to care for children (an institution offering a sports study program is not a sports school); or
- boarding schools, overnight sports schools, or camps where lodging is involved.

¹⁰⁶ Information drawn from "Child Care Expenses Deduction for 2007", Form T778, Canada Revenue Agency. Accessed from <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pbg/tf/t778/t778-07e.pdf> 11 July 2008.

Payment to a relative is not a deductible expense, and the deduction must be claimed by the person with the lower income. The maximum benefit for a child under six who is not disabled is \$7,000 (for 2007); the maximum for a child under the age of 17 who is disabled is \$10,000. For children between the ages of seven and 17 who are not disabled, the maximum deduction is \$4,000.

NATIONAL CHILD BENEFIT 1998

The National Child Benefit (NCB), introduced in 1998, was part of a federal/provincial/territorial agreement¹⁰⁷ that brought a significant reform of social assistance financing. The NCB involves a combination of income transfers and spending on services that are aimed both at reducing child poverty and helping families move from social assistance to work without losing income.¹⁰⁸ The figure below depicts how the programs interact across jurisdictions.

The federal government's contribution to the NCB is a Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB), National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS) and a Child Disability Benefit (CDB) delivered through monthly payments to eligible families. All benefit amounts are adjusted annually. Figures cited below apply from July 2008 to June 2009.

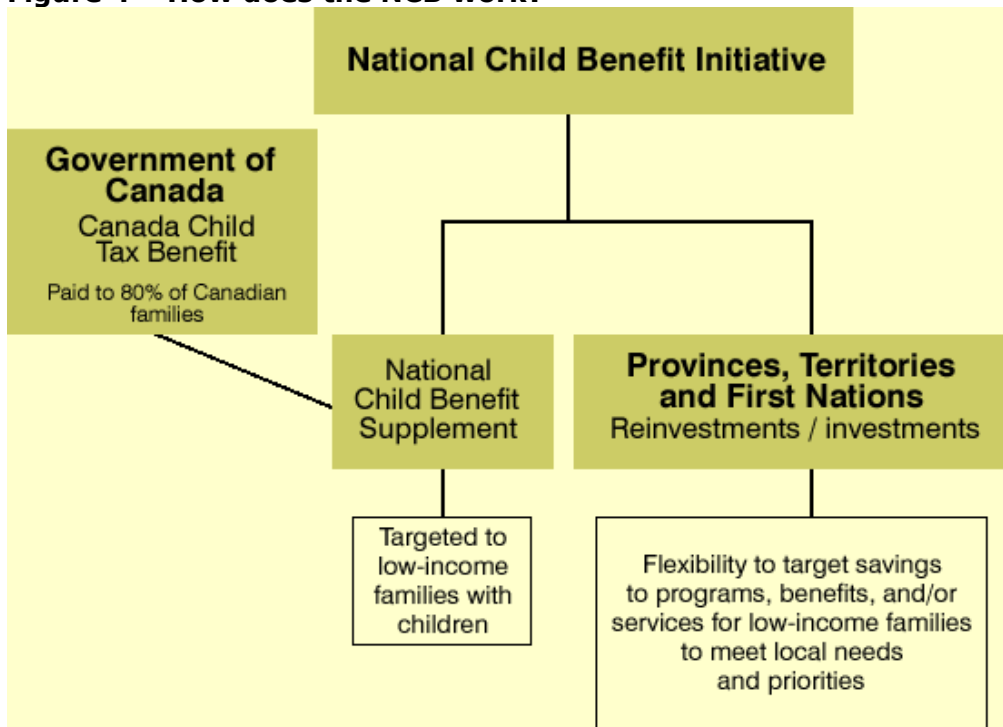
Canada Child Tax Benefit¹⁰⁹ (CCTB): The basic CCTB benefit is \$108.91 per month for each child under 18 years of age (except in Alberta, where a provincial supplement increases the amount), and an additional \$7.58 per month for a third and each additional child. The basic benefit is reduced for family net incomes over \$37,885. The reduction is 2% of the amount of family net income over that amount for a family with one child; for families with two or more children, the higher benefit is reduced by 4% of any income over that base amount.

¹⁰⁷ The Government of Quebec stated that it shared the principles behind the NCB, but has chosen not to participate.

¹⁰⁸ "The National Child Benefit: A unique partnership of the Government of Canada, Provinces and Territories and First Nations," Accessed from <http://www.nationalchildbenefit.ca/ncb/thenational1.shtml> 11 July 2008.

¹⁰⁹ "Canada Child Benefits: Benefits for the period from July 2008 to June 2009," Canada Revenue Agency. Accessed from <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pub/tg/t4114/t4114-08e.pdf> 11 July 2008 .

Figure 4 – How does the NCB work?¹¹⁰



National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS): The NCBS is paid to families with incomes below \$21,287. A family with one child receives \$168.75 per month; for a second child, a family receives \$149.33 per month; for each additional child, the amount is \$142 per month. This amount is reduced by 12.2% of family net income that is more than \$20,883 for a family with one child, by 23% for a family with two children, and by 33.3% for families with three or more children.

Child Disability Benefit (CDB): The CDB is included in the CCTB for qualified families caring for children under 18 years of age with severe and prolonged mental or physical impairments. Eligibility is based on prior approval of an application for a disability tax credit.

The federal investment through the CCTB, including the NCBS, for low-income families was projected at \$6.9 billion in 2007-2008.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ "How does the NCB work?" Accessed from <http://www.nationalchildbenefit.ca/ncb/thenational2.shtml> 11 July 2008.

¹¹¹ *The National Child Benefit Progress Report 2006*, p 5. Accessed from http://www.nationalchildbenefit.ca/ncb/Progress_Reports/2006/pdf/ncb_progress_report_2006.pdf 11 July 2008.

UNIVERSAL CHILD CARE BENEFIT 2006

The current government's first budget in May 2006 implemented a decision to provide families with \$1,200 per year per child under six, in the form of a taxable Universal Child Care Benefit, at an estimated cost of \$10.5 billion over five years.

The UCCB was promoted by the government as a "Choice in Child Care" allowance.¹¹²

CHILD TAX CREDIT 2007¹¹³

Introduced in the 2007 federal budget, either parent in a two-parent household can claim the Child Tax Credit. It provides a \$2,000 credit per child, which means that taxes owing may be reduced by a maximum of \$306 (in 2007) per child.¹¹⁴ It is not refundable, and therefore does not benefit parents with low incomes who do not owe taxes.

The Committee understands the value of these transfers to the recipient families and their children. A re-evaluation of direct support to all parents through federally funded transfers could better reflect both the value of parenting and the costs in providing children with high-quality early learning opportunities, especially in families with children with special needs.

4.1.2. DIRECT PROGRAM FUNDING

The federal government has a greater direct responsibility for on-reserve First Nations, some Aboriginal peoples, military personnel and their families, people incarcerated in federal penal institutions, and refugees and immigrants to Canada. In each of these groups, there is an early learning interest and intervention.

FIRST NATIONS AND ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

The Aboriginal population in Canada is growing, young and urban. Population growth of 45% between 1996 and 2006 pushed the

¹¹² "Choice in Child Care Plan. Notes for Remarks" by The Honourable Diane Finley Minister of Human Resources and Social Development at a Debate on the Speech from the Throne, *Choice in Child Care Plan*, House of Commons, Ottawa, 7 April 2006. Accessed from

<http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/corporate/newsroom/speeches/finleyd/060407.shtml>

11 July 2008.

¹¹³ "New Child Tax Credit", Canada Revenue Agency. Accessed from <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/agency/budget/2007/taxcredit-e.html> 5 May 2008.

¹¹⁴ "The History of Federal Child Benefits in Canada." Accessed from http://www.nationalchildbenefit.ca/ncb/Progress_Reports/2006/eng/chapter_1.shtml

11 July 2008.

numbers of Aboriginal peoples passed the million mark for the first time reaching 1,172,790. The Aboriginal median age is 13 years younger than non-Aboriginal: 27 compared to 40 years. Almost half are under 24, compared with 31% of the non-Aboriginal population. Compared to the total Canadian population, Aboriginal peoples have a higher fertility rate, 2.6 children; 1.5 for non-Aboriginal women. The portion of very young Aboriginal children (age 0-4) is twice that of non-Aboriginals: 9% compared to 5% and is projected to rise by 28% by 2016, compared to just 1% for the Canadian population.¹¹⁵

The Aboriginal population is also increasingly urban. Over 54% now live in urban centres. Children and youth make up a particularly large share. In three urban areas, more than half of the Aboriginal population was 24 and under: Regina (56%), Saskatoon (55%), and Prince Albert (56%). Education and labour markets will need to prepare for this new growth.

Aboriginal peoples are over-represented in most socio-economic risk categories, experiencing higher rates of suicide, poverty, homelessness, disrupted families, unemployment, child and spousal abuse, admission to foster care, and teen pregnancy.¹¹⁶ The same is true for negative child outcomes:

Early child development outcomes are no exception. Incidents of infant mortality, premature births and low birth rates, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, behaviour challenges, and cognitive and language delays are more prevalent in Aboriginal communities.¹¹⁷

However, there are dramatic differences between communities.¹¹⁸ Studies of First Nations communities in British Columbia, for example,

¹¹⁵ Statistics Canada, *The Daily*, 15 January 2008. Accessed from <http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/080115/d080115a.htm> 26 August 2008.

¹¹⁶ Canadian Population Health Initiative, *Improving the Health of Canadians*, Canadian Institute of Health Information, 2004, p. 80.

¹¹⁷ Jane Bertrand, "Final Report to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada," Council for Early Child Development, 31 March 2006, p. 1; M. Turcotte and J. Zhao, *A Portrait of Aboriginal Children Living in Non-reserve Areas: Results from the 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey*, Ministry of Industry, 2004, pp. 6, 11, 16.

¹¹⁸ Canadian Population Health Initiative (2004), pp. 17, 83, 84, 116; Statistics Canada, *2001 Census: Aboriginal Peoples of Canada: A Demographic Profile*. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, 2003; and Paul Kershaw, "From Medical Care to Social Care: Using the BC Atlas Of Child Development to Rethink How we Build Healthy Communities," presentation to Breakfast For Learning Provincial Advisory Gathering, Victoria BC, 19 January 2007.

find dramatic variations between communities with several rated higher on indices of child outcomes than the Canadian average.¹¹⁹

As noted above, the OECD identified access to ECEC for Aboriginal children as an important priority. In 2002, the Federal Strategy on Early Childhood Development for First Nations and Other Aboriginal Children was announced to address these very disadvantages. This initiative provided \$320 million over five years to work towards integration of federal early childhood development; build capacity and networks with annual funding to six national Aboriginal organizations and support the development of an Aboriginal service providers' network (now called Aboriginal Children's Circle of Early Learning); advance research and knowledge, including development of the Aboriginal Children's Survey; and make new investments to enhance existing programs (described in more detail below) and expand efforts to address Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder in First Nations communities.¹²⁰

In fact, on-reserve children's services are mainly dependent on the federal government for funds. Funding formulas and agreements still exist between communities and three separate federal government departments. How federal government departments work with each other and with Aboriginal communities to deliver early child development programs is an issue. Efforts to integrate existing child care programs and services have been piloted through 17 single-window service delivery demonstration projects in First Nations communities testing the impact of streamlined funding, program reporting and community development.

Nonetheless, there are barriers to such programming for Aboriginal children. The legacy of residential schools when children were removed from their parents and placed in institutions haunts Aboriginal communities. Residential school policy was designed to assimilate Aboriginal children into mainstream culture by denying them access to their language, culture and values. The school environment was harsh and high rates of tuberculosis and mortality were common.¹²¹ Consequently, even now, group programs for children, particularly

¹¹⁹ Clyde Hertzman, Closing Address to the CARS National Conference, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 22 February 2008.

¹²⁰ HRSDC, PHAC, and INAC (2007), p. 28.

¹²¹ Canadian Population Health Initiative, 2004; M. Greenwood, Aboriginal child care in review. *Interaction*, Vol. 13, No. 4, 2000. Canadian Child Care Federation, 2000, pp. 15-18.

those operated or influenced by non-Aboriginals, are often viewed with suspicion.¹²²

Further, as provinces developed their child care services and mechanisms, most did not extend their services to First Nation communities. As well, First Nation families often move back and forth between their reserve and off-reserve communities, stumbling over jurisdictional barriers as they do, as the federal government has taken the position that only issues identified in the *Indian Act* are formally federal responsibilities, while the provincial governments will provide services on reserve only if they are reimbursed.¹²³ A comprehensive review of Aboriginal child care notes that the absence of legislation and policies specific to First Nations in both federal and provincial jurisdictions has created a critical shortage and disparity in quality child care services for Aboriginal people.¹²⁴

Barriers surrounding the recruitment and retention of qualified staff that challenge child care services across Canada are magnified for Aboriginal communities. Several studies point to the need for new approaches to the training of Aboriginal teachers.

As well, there are few resources to guide culturally appropriate learning for Aboriginal children. Almost 30% of Aboriginal peoples reported that they had enough knowledge of an Aboriginal language to carry on a conversation.¹²⁵ Among children, only 16% spoke an Aboriginal language in 2001, down seven percentage points from 1996.¹²⁶ Learning materials reflective of Aboriginal cultures are scarce. Under-resourced educators are left to create materials or translate English- or French-language books and songs.¹²⁷

¹²² M. Greenwood, *An overview of the development of Aboriginal early childhood services in Canada*. ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 456 954. 2001.

¹²³ M. Greenwood, *Voices from the field – An aboriginal view on child care*. *Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development* [online].: R.E. Tremblay, R.G. Barr, R. DeV. Peters (eds.), Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development, 2004. Accessed from . <http://www.excellence-earlychildhood.ca/documents/GreenwoodANG.pdf> 16 May 2008.

¹²⁴ Margo Greenwood, *Aboriginal Child Care in Review (Part One)*, 2003. Accessed from http://www.cccf-fcsqe.ca/practice/programming/aboriginalchildcarepartI_en.htm 18 August 2008.

¹²⁵ Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Peoples in Canada in 2006: Inuit, Métis and First Nations, 2006 Census*, 2008, p. 8.

¹²⁶ Canadian Council on Learning. "State of Learning in Canada: No Time for Complacency," *Report on Learning in Canada 2007*, (2007), p. 69.

¹²⁷ Exceptions to this practice can be found in Nunavut and Northwest Territories, where the literacy councils are developing original materials in Inuktitut and other First Nations languages respectively.

While Aboriginal communities have identified early childhood programs as a prime means to promote healing and preserve Native language and culture, Aboriginal children are among the least well served in Canada.¹²⁸ For example, there are 257 First Nations communities without access to child care and many more communities do not have enough spaces to support even 20% of children from birth to 6 years of age.¹²⁹

An overview of the number of child care spaces available follows:

Table 3 - On-reserve child care centres by province/territory – 2006ⁱ

Province/Territory by Provincial/ Federal funding	Number of on-reserve centres	Regulated by Prov/Territory	Provincial Funding	Federal Funding
Newfoundland & Labrador	2	On request	Yes	Yes
Prince Edward Island	1 ⁱⁱ	No	No	Yes
Nova Scotia	13	No	No	Yes
New Brunswick	7	On request	No	Yes
Quebec	43	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ontario	64	Yes	Yes ⁱⁱⁱ	Yes ⁱⁱⁱ
Manitoba	62	Yes	Yes	Yes
Saskatchewan	78	No	No	Yes
Alberta	31	No ^{iv}	Yes ⁱⁱⁱ	Yes
British Columbia	92	Yes	Yes	Yes
Northwest Territories	51	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nunavut	45	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yukon Territory	67	Yes	Yes	Yes

i. Off-reserve child care centres and family child care agencies serving Aboriginal families are available in some provinces/territories.

ii. This represents an unlicensed kindergarten centre.

iii. Provincial funding is available through agreements between the federal government and Ontario and Alberta.

iv. On-reserve child care centres are eligible for federal government funding equivalent to parent subsidies if provincial licensing standards are met.

v. NT (outside Yellowknife) and NU are made up of Dene and Inuit communities. These figures represent all centres in the two territories.

vi. There are no reserves in YT; information refers to child care operated by Aboriginal communities.

Source: *Childcare Resource and Research Unit: The Big Picture 2007*

¹²⁸ Monica Lysack, Executive Director, Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, Evidence, 20 April 2007.

¹²⁹ National Council of Welfare, *First Nations, Métis and Inuit Children and Youth: Time to Act*, 2007, p. 46.

As noted above, four federal departments or agencies are responsible for the delivery of early learning programs to Aboriginal peoples: Health Canada, Human Resources and Social Development Canada, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, and the Public Health Agency of Canada. These initiatives and programs include: Aboriginal Head Start, both on-reserve and in urban and northern neighbourhoods; First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative (FNICCI); transfers to provincial ministries responsible for child care in Alberta and Ontario for the provision of on-reserve early childhood programming; and funding for maternal health programs with particular attention to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, which affects Aboriginal children disproportionately, through the Public Health Agency of Canada, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch.

Aboriginal Head Start: Both Aboriginal Head Start programs (on-reserve, and in urban and Northern communities) are targeted to children from birth to age 6, to help prepare them for the school years, "by meeting their emotional, social, health, nutritional and psychological needs."¹³⁰

Aboriginal Head Start On Reserve (AHSOR) is targeted to First Nations children who live on-reserve, and their families. The program is delivered in more than 300 sites, and received more than \$50 million in 2005-06, though not all was expended for this purpose and was reallocated to regional health priorities.¹³¹ Approximately 9,000 children participated in the AHSOR Program. Training is provided for outreach and home visit workers in smaller communities and for asset mapping, family support and nutrition. The Department also enhanced the AHSOR capital infrastructure by spending \$7.6 million to support capital projects.

Federal officials reported to the Committee on the benefits accruing from this program:

To date, some additional observed benefits of the program include a positive change in children's attitudes as they learn to socialize and utilize the basic skills they require in school; First Nation language development and use; the provision of nutritious foods for children and the education of their parents and staff about the relationship between nutrition and a child's capacity to learn and develop. Promoting physical activity is a key curriculum component at all sites, often in response to the

¹³⁰ HRSDC, PHAC, and INAC (2007), p. 28.

¹³¹ Ibid.

growing concern regarding the early onset of type 2 diabetes.
(Ian Potter, Assistant Deputy Minister, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, Health Canada, Evidence, 25 April 2007)

Aboriginal Head Start for Urban and Northern Communities: There are more than 140 sites where this program is operational, involving almost 4,500 children, with a budget of more than \$30 million.¹³² Its mandate is to:

- foster the spiritual, emotional, intellectual and physical growth of the child;
- foster a desire in the child for life long learning;
- support parents and guardians as the prime teachers and caregivers of their children, making sure parents/caregivers play a key role in the planning, development, operation and evaluation of the program;
- recognize and support extended families in teaching and caring for children;
- make sure the local Aboriginal community is involved in the planning, development, operation and evaluation of the program;
- make sure the initiative works with and is supported by the other community programs and services; and
- ensure the human and financial resources are used in the best way possible to produce positive outcomes and experiences for Aboriginal children, parents, families and communities.¹³³

The Committee heard evidence of the contribution early childhood learning can make in Northern communities:

Early childhood education programs in Northern communities do more than provide care while parents work or train; they have the capacity to pass on the knowledge, values and beliefs of Inuit ancestors. At their best, programs in the early years give children hope, strength and pride in who they are as Inuit.
(Jennifer Dickson, Executive Director, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, Evidence, 1 June 2007)

In New Brunswick only, the federal government funds First Nation Child and Family Services Head Start in 15 locations, providing just over \$1.4 million for centre- and home-based care. The programs objectives are "... to maintain the strength of the family unit; assist

¹³² Ibid., p, 35.

¹³³ "Aboriginal Head Start: Program Overview." Accessed from http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dca-dea/programs-mes/ahs_overview_e.html#npg 28 April 2008.

children facing physical, emotional, social and/or educational deprivation; and protect children from harmful environments.”¹³⁴

The increasing demand for early learning opportunities for urban Aboriginal children was emphasized before the Committee:

Current social and economic trends, including mobility, increasing urbanization and urban Aboriginal women's increasing education and economic independence are transforming Aboriginal family structures and spurring the demand for more organized early learning, child care and education services. (Alfred J. Gay, Policy Analyst, National Association of Friendship Centres, Evidence, 1 June 2007)

The Committee heard direct evidence of the inadequacy of Head Start funding to meet the need or even fund existing programs that are based on the model:

The Lillooet Friendship Centre kids first program (GB6) is not an Aboriginal Head Start initiative. It is as close to being a Head Start program as possible without Head Start funding. We support and believe in the model. There are only opportunities for a few communities across this nation to have a Head Start program. (Kama Steliga, Executive Director, Lillooet Friendship Centre, Evidence, 3 April 2008)

The inadequate supply of Head Start programs and spaces was also flagged by the Advisor to the Minister of Health for Child and Youth Health in her recent report; that report established the modest goal of providing Head Start programming up to 25% of Aboriginal children on- and off-reserve within five years, up from the current 18%.¹³⁵

To reach this goal of programming for an increasing proportion of Aboriginal children, sufficient resources could be allocated through Aboriginal Head Start; child care and family support programs funded through First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiatives; and health-related supports to expectant and new mothers.

First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative: This initiative is funded through Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy (AHRDS), for First Nations and Inuit children of parents entering the labour market or who have entered into a training program. It was anticipated that 7,500 child care spaces would be created and

¹³⁴ “Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy”, Horizontal Initiatives, *Report on Plans and Priorities, 2006-2007*, retrieved from http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rpp/0607/HRSDC-RHDSC/HRSDC-RHDSC08_e.asp#hi 28 April 2008.

¹³⁵ Leitch (2008), p. 8.

supported through this program in the last fiscal year.¹³⁶ The AHRDS is administered by Service Canada through 80 Aboriginal organizations.

Transfers to Alberta and Ontario for on-reserve child care: The federal government provides child care on-reserve in Ontario and Alberta by transferring funds to the responsible ministries in those governments, who then provide child care to First Nations children in accordance with their standards and regulations for all child care centres.

In Alberta, more than 800 on-reserve spaces are funded through this agreement, in 17 sites, at a cost of just over \$4 million in 2005-06. (Of this amount, just over \$1 million was transferred to the Government of Alberta to cover subsidies to parents.)¹³⁷

In Ontario, almost 3,000 spaces are funded in more than 50 First Nations, at a cost of over \$15 million in 2005-06.¹³⁸

Innovative practices are emerging in Aboriginal programs and communities across Canada. Some address the more general recommendations of the OECD for greater parental and community involvement, for improved quality, and for integration with the school system. All address the need for better access to ECEC for Aboriginal children and families. Brief descriptions are appended to this report as Appendix 2.

Both the changing relationships between governments and Aboriginal self-government organizations and the creative approaches being developed within Aboriginal communities to meet the development needs of their children would be supported by continued efforts by the appropriate federal departments (Health Canada, Human Resources and Social Development Canada, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, and the Public Health Agency of Canada) to develop more coherent programs for early child development and learning and parental supports. A meeting of these departments with their provincial and territorial counterparts, Aboriginal organizations, and community elders and leaders, could support the development of a more coherent set of policies and programs to support Aboriginal children and youth and their families, wherever they live in Canada.

¹³⁶ HRSDC, PHAC, and INAC (2007), p. 34.

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 92.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 33.

MILITARY FAMILIES

The Department of National Defence/Canadian Forces provides community based child care and related supports for military families. Services operated by a non-profit board include: child and youth programs; parent/caregiver education and support; casual and respite child care; emergency care for families in crisis.

Funding for emergency respite child care for the first 72 hours is provided by National Headquarters under specific administrative guidelines. For care beyond 72 hours, fees are geared to income, with families paying a minimum of 50% of cost with incomes below \$40,000 and full costs at incomes over \$65,000.

Canadian military personnel and their families are supported by Military Family Resource Centres (MFRCs). As of 2008, there were 43 such centres located in Canada and abroad. Their mandate covers four areas of programs and services: child/youth development and parenting support; personal development and community integration; family separation and reunion; and prevention, support and intervention.¹³⁹

Some centres provide child care directly, while others provide information and support to parents choosing child care that is offered in the broader community.

Staff of child care centres in 34 MFRCs were surveyed in 2004, as part of an assessment of child care needs among military families. The assessment provided the following summary of these survey results:

- Licensed group child care is being widely accessed by CF families both on and off base.
- Few families benefit from child care subsidies.
- The hours of service during which care is offered tends to be from 6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- There is very little evening and weekend care available to families and virtually no overnight care.
- These restricted hours of care are not flexible enough to meet the unique needs of CF families in terms of shift work, non-traditional work hours, and deployment.
- While MFRCs do play a major role in providing child care services they also work in collaboration with other service providers in order to provide referrals and advertise other services.

¹³⁹ "Military Families Services Program." Accessed from <http://www.familynavigator.ca/en/Military> 18 April 2008.

- More than half of all MFRCs maintain a registry of either licensed and/or non- licensed child care agencies and individual home care providers in the community.¹⁴⁰

The report concluded that child care was a high priority for Canadian Forces Families: “There is a demonstrated gap between need for and availability of child care services. Action must be taken quickly given the urgency surrounding the need for child care services expressed by survey respondents.” It recommended collaboration among providers and users to meet this need, and called on federal and provincial governments to provide the funding necessary.¹⁴¹

Other federally funded programs are intended to support families through deployment, separation and reunification. Examples of such services are:

- information packages related to deployment and separation;
- briefings and information sessions related to deployment and separation;
- peer support groups;
- telephone contact with CF families to see how they're coping with separation or reunion;
- workshops on coping strategies related to deployment and separation;
- social events for spouses/partners, children and teens; and
- resource libraries.¹⁴²

In 2005-06, the federal government funding for services for children of military personnel aged 0 to 6 years was \$4 million.¹⁴³ At a summit held in January 2009, the Canadian Forces Child Care Advisory Committee made two recommendations: that child care be identified as one of six priorities to fulfill the Canadian Forces Family Covenant, and that funds be designated to implement and sustain “the required infrastructure and human resources for a quality Canadian Forces-wide child care system.”¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁰ “An Assessment of the Need for Licensed Group Child Care for Canadian Forces Families”, report commissioned by Military Family Resource Centres from Centre for Research and Education in Human Services, 2004, p. 5.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² “Military Family Services Program there for you.” Accessed from http://www.forces.gc.ca/hr/cfpm/engraph/5_07/5_07_cfpn_mil-fams_e.asp 18 April 2008.

¹⁴³ Martha Friendly, Jane Beach, Carolyn Ferns, Michelle Turiano, *ECE in Canada 2006*, 7th edition, Childcare Resource and Research Unit (CRRU), June 2007, p. 21.

¹⁴⁴ Canadian Forces Child Care Advisory Committee, “CF Child Care: The Way Ahead,” presentation to Canadian Forces (CF) Family Services Summit II, January

FEDERAL PRISONERS

In Canada, as of 2004, approximately 25,000 children had a mother in jail or prison.¹⁴⁵ More recently, a mother sentenced to a federal prison while in the early stages of pregnancy gave birth to her child, and was moved to a prison with the needed space for a Mother-Child Program. This shone light on a program that has been in place more than ten years.

The objective of this program is "...to provide a supportive environment that fosters and promotes stability and continuity for the mother-child relationship."¹⁴⁶ With the "best interests of the child" as its "pre-eminent consideration", the program allows for either full-time or part-time co-location of mothers and their young children. Full-time residency is possible only until the child's fourth birthday.

The program is based upon assessments by local child welfare authorities or other agencies in the nearby community, and relies on their on-going involvement with the mother and child. It also requires the establishment of a Parenting Agreement for the inmate, which provides the framework for the program. Occasional babysitting may be provided by other inmates, who have received approval for this role from prison authorities. No spending allocation was available for this program.

IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

The Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration provides funding for Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC). The program, offered across Canada, provides basic language training in one of Canada's official languages to adult newcomers to facilitate their participation in Canadian society.

A child care component helps parents or legal guardians attend LINC classes by covering the cost of either licensed day care or on-site child care. The program includes informal on-site arrangements or spaces in local licensed child care centres. This is available for children aged 6 months to 6 years.

2009. Accessed from <https://www.cfpsa.com/en/psp/DMFS/docs/Child%20care%20presentation%20DRAFT%20E.ppt#385,9,Slide%209> 16 March 2009.

¹⁴⁵ Alison Cunningham and Linda Baker, "Invisible Victims: The Children of Women in Prison, Voices for Children", 2004.

¹⁴⁶ "Institutional Mother-Child Program", Commissioner's Directive 768, 2003. Accessed from <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/plcy/cdshtm/768cd-eng.shtml> 28 April 2008. Further information on this program is drawn from this directive, unless otherwise cited.

4.1.3. TRANSFERS TO PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES

Transfers from the federal to provincial and territorial governments for purposes related to early childhood development began in the 1960s with the Canada Assistance Plan, and have continued in a variety of forms since. These transfers are described, in chronological order, below.

COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN (CAPC) /CANADA PRENATAL NUTRITION PROGRAM (CPNP) 1993

At the 1990 United Nations World Summit for Children, Canada agreed to invest in the well-being of vulnerable children. This resulted in the establishment of the Child Development Initiative. In 1993, the Government of Canada created the Community Action Program for Children (CAPC), the largest program of this initiative. The following year, the Government then created the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP).

The two programs share a management structure (a series of administrative protocols signed at the Ministerial level, which identify the funding priorities and set out the terms and conditions for managing the program in each province or territory), and principles : children first, equity and accessibility, community based, strengthening and supporting families, flexibility, and partnerships. They are managed jointly by the federal and provincial/territorial governments through provincially based Joint Management Committees with representatives from the regionally-based office of the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), the ministries of health or social services of the respective provincial or territorial governments, and local health authorities and community organizations.

Both CAPC and the CPNP are supported by PHAC. Health Canada is still the department responsible for managing the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program for Aboriginal peoples living on-reserve.

Community Action Program for Children (CAPC) supports projects that deliver a set of integrated health and social programs designed to meet the developmental needs of children between the ages of 0 and 6. The projects target populations that are seen as most likely to be at risk, including families with low incomes; families headed by teenage parents; Métis, Inuit and off-reserve First Nations children; children who are recent immigrants or refugees; children who live in remote or isolated communities; children with developmental delays, social, emotional or behavioural problems; and children who have experienced abuse or neglect.

Projects are community-based and are implemented through partnerships with local social service providers and volunteers. In 2005-06, there were 440 CAPC projects in 3000 communities across Canada, helping 67,884 children and their families. That same year, the CAPC received \$60,867,980 in funding. Each province or territory receives an allocation of \$500,000 per year to allow for one major project. The remaining funding is allocated based upon the proportion of children aged 0-6 in each province or territory.

Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP) is delivered through two different streams: the PHAC and the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) at Health Canada. FNIHB is responsible for delivering the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program to all women who live in First Nations, Inuvialuit and Inuit communities, who are pregnant or have infants up to one year of age. The FNIHB program aims to support projects that improve the diets of pregnant and breastfeeding women, increase access to information and services on nutrition, and increase the number of women who breastfeed and the length of time they breastfeed, or increase knowledge and skill-building opportunities for both participants and program workers.

The approximately 450 projects are community-based and delivered in partnership with local organizations. In 2005-2006, the FNIHB program received \$9.3 million in funding was able to help approximately 9,000 First Nations, Inuvialuit and Inuit women living in their communities.

The PHAC is responsible for delivering the CPNP to pregnant women facing difficult life circumstances, which could threaten their health and the development of their babies. Aboriginal women living outside of their communities, as well immigrant women are given special priority.

The program aims to support community-based projects that improve maternal and infant health, reduce the incidence of unhealthy birth weights, promote and support breastfeeding, build partnerships, or strengthen community supports for pregnant women.

With an annual budget of approximately \$30 million, the PHAC component of the program supports 330 projects, involving approximately 50,000 women across the country. These projects are also funded by in kind contributions from local partnership organizations.

CAPC/CPNP National Projects Fund was established in 1997 to support both CAPC and CPNP. It is supplementary to the main funding mechanisms, and seeks to support specific CAPC and CPNP projects designed to generate knowledge and action about children, families, and the role of communities in supporting families. These projects must be time-limited and national in scope and implemented by non-profit organizations. The main objectives of the National Projects Fund are:

- to support CAPC/CPNP projects through training on specific issues, resource development and information sharing and dissemination;
- to encourage the establishment of a national network of community-based children's programs; and
- to disseminate the knowledge accumulated through the delivery of CAPC and CPNP projects to other projects and communities.
- The National Projects Fund is managed by a National Working Group of program consultants from each of the seven regions of the PHAC. This group makes recommendations to the National Office, which operates with a \$1.9 million Grants and Contributions budget.

The Committee heard strong support for continuing funding of these programs:

Those are federal programs for the early childhood years and we have strong data which supports those programs. The limiting step is a dollar issue. I would encourage the federal government to continue to support and expand those particular programs. They reach their mark. They work with very disadvantaged communities, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. Aboriginal Head Start has two versions, on-reserve and off-reserve. They are both successful and responsive to local communities. (Hilliell Goelman, Director, Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP), Council for Early Child Development, Evidence, 30 May 2007)

CANADA SOCIAL TRANSFER 1995

In 1995, the federal government replaced the Canada Assistance Plan (a cost-shared agreement in which the federal government paid 50% of provincial and territorial expenses on social assistance and social services) and Established Program Financing (which provided per-capita block-funding for health and post-secondary education to provincial and territorial governments) with a single Canada Health and Social Transfer, which was entirely per-capita block funding.¹⁴⁷

Early childhood learning is included in CHST transfers, explicitly so after the development of Early Childhood Development Initiative, in

¹⁴⁷ Amounts of other more general transfers to provincial governments may not be established on a per-capita basis.

2000. (This initiative is described in more detail below.) As part of the initiative, the federal government added \$2.2 billion to the CHST, with a commitment to continue to do so through to 2005-2006.¹⁴⁸ Existing funding for early childhood development and early learning and child care transferred to provinces and territories through the Canada Social Transfer has been extended to 2013-2014.¹⁴⁹

In 2003, the CHST was separated into two transfers: the Canada Health Transfer and the Canada Social Transfer (CST). The latter was to cover transfers for social and post-secondary education spending. In 2006-07, the federal government transferred \$8.5 billion in the Canada Social Transfer to provincial and territorial governments.¹⁵⁰ This amount will grow by 3% annually beginning in 2009-2010.¹⁵¹

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S AGENDA 1997

In January 1997, the federal-provincial-territorial Council on Social Policy Renewal asked health and social service ministries to explore possibilities for a National Children's Agenda. By August of that year, at their annual conference, Premiers expressed "strong support" for such an agreement, as part of their social policy renewal efforts.¹⁵²

In the Speech from the Throne in June 1997, the Governor General said:

The federal, provincial and territorial governments agreed in January 1997 to work together to develop the National Children's Agenda, a comprehensive strategy to improve the well-being of Canada's children.

Federal, provincial and territorial governments will work together to develop this broader agenda for children, including clear outcome measures by which to gauge success.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁸ Stephen Laurent and François Vaillancourt, *Federal-Provincial Transfers for Social Programs in Canada*, IRPP Working Paper number 2004-07, Institute for Research on Public Policy, July 2004, p. 6.

¹⁴⁹ "Just the Facts - Children and Families: Child Care," Human Resources and Social Development Canada, Accessed from http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/corporate/facts/children_families.shtml#child_care 14 July 2008.

¹⁵⁰ *Public Accounts 2007*, Volume II, Finance 9.6.

¹⁵¹ "Just the Facts: Children and Families".

¹⁵² "Backgrounder - National Children's Agenda," Accessed from http://www.unionsociale.gc.ca/nca/nca1_e.html 14 July 2008.

¹⁵³ "Speech from the Throne to Open the First Session Thirty-Sixth Parliament of Canada," 1997. Accessed from http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/index.asp?lang=eng&page=information&sub=publications&doc=sft-ddt/1997_e.htm 14 July 2008.

The federal government committed to three new initiatives: the establishment of Centres of Excellence "... to deepen our understanding of children's development and well-being and to improve our ability to respond to their needs;" expansion of Aboriginal Head Start program onto reserves; and measurement and reporting on "the readiness of Canadian children to learn."¹⁵⁴

The Subcommittee on Population Health heard of the important contribution of the centres of excellence a decade later, and the linkages that have resulted between population health and early childhood learning:

I want to point out the centres of excellence for children, because that is really a very important asset in terms of synthesis of information. We have a knowledge hub on early childhood development in Montreal — the Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development — that is connected to the work with Clyde Hertzman that is connected to the social determinants of health. (Dr. Sylvie Stachenko, Public Health Agency of Canada, Evidence, 22 March 2007)

Hosted by l'Université de Montréal, the Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development (CEECD) is a clearing house for organizations and individuals interested in promoting healthy child development. The centre conducts research on child development from conception to age five; identifies and synthesizes the best scientific work in the field; disseminates findings to service providers, and policymakers; makes recommendations on the services and policies needed to ensure optimum early childhood development; and consults with governments and services providers.

The centre publishes the Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development, an online resource compiled by national and international experts that covers a wide range of early development topics, including aggression and parenting skills. More than 270 authors from 11 countries have contributed to this unique and accessible resource, which is designed to be expanded and updated as new knowledge emerges.

The CEECD also works with the Canadian Council on Learning's (CCL) recently established Early Childhood Learning Knowledge Centre, which is building a national network of experts to identify priorities for research, identify best practices, and create networks to ensure that

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

the most current knowledge about early childhood learning is shared across Canada.

NATIONAL CHILD BENEFIT 1998

As noted above, while the government of Canada provides income benefits to individual families, the provincial/territorial governments and First Nations were meant to reinvest funds that they previously allocated to social assistance recipients. In particular, the funds reinvested were to be allocated to the following program areas:

- “child/day care initiatives;
- child benefits and earned income supplements;
- early childhood services and children-at-risk services;
- supplementary health benefits;
- youth initiatives; and
- other NCB programs, benefits and services (e.g., literacy, employment support programs).”¹⁵⁵

The following tables report on how much of the NCB reinvestments combined with new investments by provincial and territorial governments were spent on child care initiatives:

Table 4 - Reinvestments and new investments by provincial and territorial governments on child care initiatives¹⁵⁶

	2003–2004	2004–2005	2005–2006	2006–2007
	Expenditures	Expenditures	Estimates	Estimates
Provincial/territorial expenditures	\$242.0	\$251.7	\$267.4	\$282.6
Percentage of total NCB reinvestments and investments	27.3%	28.0%	30.6%	33.3%

Table 5 - Reinvestments and new investments by provincial and territorial governments on early childhood and children-at-risk services¹⁵⁷

	2003–2004	2004–2005	2005–2006	2006–2007
	Expenditures	Expenditures	Estimates	Estimates
Provincial/territorial expenditures	\$139.9	\$150.8	\$157.0	\$162.8
Percentage of total NCB reinvestments and investments	15.8%	16.8%	18.0%	19.2%

¹⁵⁵ The National Child Benefit Progress Report 2005, p. 3. Accessed from http://www.nationalchildbenefit.ca/ncb/Progress_Reports/2005/pdf/ncb_progress_report_2005.pdf 11 July 2008.

¹⁵⁶ The National Child Benefit Progress Report 2006, Table 4, p. 14. Accessed from http://www.nationalchildbenefit.ca/ncb/Progress_Reports/2006/pdf/ncb_progress_report_2006.pdf 11 July 2008.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

While the breakdown by component is not available for the First Nations reinvestment and investment, also permitted by the National Child Benefit tax benefits, the total amount reinvested in 2006-2007 was estimated at \$48.3 million.

SOCIAL UNION FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT (SUFA) 1999

In 1999, the federal, provincial and territorial governments (except Quebec which agreed in principle but did not sign) agreed to a new set of arrangements for funding in areas of mutual interest and concern. It set out to provide a framework for creating roughly comparable, adequately funded social services to meet the needs of Canadians.¹⁵⁸

The first two priorities identified by the signatory governments were services for Canadians with disabilities, and childhood development.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (2000)

One of the first agreements after the introduction of SUFA, the Early Childhood Development Initiative committed the federal government to spending \$2.2 billion in early childhood development over five years, starting in 2001-2002.¹⁵⁹

Provincial and territorial governments agreed to use this increased funding to

- “promote healthy pregnancy, birth and infancy,
- improve parenting and family supports,
- strengthen early childhood development, learning and care, and
- strengthen community supports.”¹⁶⁰

The agreement did not require spending in all areas. In the first years, less than 10% was used for child care and only six of 13 governments invested in regulated care. None of the biggest provinces — Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario — did.¹⁶¹

First Ministers also made a joint commitment to report annually on “their investments and progress” with respect to the priorities

¹⁵⁸ “A Framework to Improve the Social Union for Canadians: An Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Governments of the Provinces and Territories,” News release, February 4, 1999. Accessed from http://www.unionsociale.gc.ca/news/020499_e.html 14 July 2008.

¹⁵⁹ Government of Canada, “Early Childhood Development – Backgrounder,” September 2000. Accessed from http://www.unionsociale.gc.ca/nca/ecd-back_e.html 14 July 2008.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ CRRU, “The Early Childhood Development Agreement: Provincial initiatives and spending allocations, 2001- 2002,” 2001.

identified above, to “develop a shared framework, including jointly agreed comparable indicators to permit each government to report on progress in improving and expanding early childhood development programs and services,” and to report publicly and regularly using these indicators.¹⁶²

Table 6 - Cash Transfers in Support of the Early Childhood Development Agreement (\$ millions)¹⁶³

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	Total
Newfoundland and Labrador	5.1	6.6	8.2	8.1	8.0	7.8	7.7	51.5
Prince Edward Island	1.3	1.7	2.2	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.1	13.8
Nova Scotia	9.0	11.9	14.8	14.7	14.5	14.3	14.2	93.5
New Brunswick	7.3	9.6	11.9	11.8	11.6	11.5	11.4	75.0
Quebec	71.6	95.0	118.3	118.0	117.7	117.3	117.0	754.9
Ontario	115.0	154.2	193.5	194.0	194.4	194.4	194.9	1,240.4
Manitoba	11.1	14.7	18.3	18.3	18.2	18.1	18.0	116.8
Saskatchewan	9.7	12.7	15.7	15.6	15.4	15.1	15.0	99.1
Alberta	29.6	39.7	49.9	50.1	50.7	51.6	51.8	323.4
British Columbia	39.4	52.5	65.6	65.7	65.9	66.1	66.2	421.4
Yukon	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	3.1
Northwest Territories	0.4	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.6	4.2
Nunavut	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	3.0
TOTAL	300.0	400.0	500.0	500.0	500.0	500.0	500.0	3,200.0

Note: Figures are based on Statistics Canada population estimates up to 2006-07 and projections for 2007-08. Figures beyond 2003-04 are subject to revision upon periodic release of Statistics Canada official population estimates. Totals may not add due to rounding.

MULTILATERAL FRAMEWORK ON EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE (2003)

The 2003 Multilateral Framework Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care focused directly on pre-school child care. It permitted the provinces and territories to select from a broad spending menu: information provision, fee subsidies, quality assurance systems, capital and operating grants, training and professional development, and wage enhancements. Funding could go to commercial as well as non-profit providers.

It also identified principles of effective approaches to early learning and child care: availability and accessibility, quality, inclusion, and parental choice.¹⁶⁴

Finally, the Agreement contained more explicit commitments with respect to reporting:

¹⁶² “First Ministers’ Meeting Communiqué on Early Childhood Development,” September 11, 2000, from Social Union website. Accessed from http://www.unionsociale.gc.ca/news/110900_e.html 16 July 2008.

¹⁶³ HRSDC, PHAC, and INAC (2007), p. 4. Accessed from http://www.socialunion.ca/ecdelcc_ae/2007/en/a_e_report.pdf 16 July 2008.

¹⁶⁴ “Multilateral Framework Agreement,” appended in HRSDC, PHAC, and INAC (2007), p. 73-74.

Ministers will report annually to Canadians on all early learning and child care programs and services as defined in this Framework, beginning with a baseline report for 2002–2003. Reports will include:

- descriptive and expenditure information on all early learning and child care programs and services;
- indicators of availability, such as number of spaces in early learning and child care settings broken down by age of child and type of setting;
- indicators of affordability, such as number of children receiving subsidies, income and social eligibility for fee subsidies, and maximum subsidy by age of child; and
- indicators of quality, such as training requirements, child-caregiver ratios and group size, where available.¹⁶⁵

A recent government-funded review of the reporting of governments concluded that the commitments made in 2000 have not been honoured by most governments:

[F]ew governments have clear public reporting that allows the public to easily track progress throughout the required reporting period (2000/01 through 2005/06). None meet all of the performance and reporting requirements outlined in the FPT Agreements. This central finding is highlighted by the fact that of the 13 jurisdictions reviewed, 8 are missing reports for one or more of the required years so the public cannot track all of the federal transfers and total investments in child care services.¹⁶⁶

This report highlighted that reporting requirements were to the “public” of each government, not their legislatures or through the federal government, and that the agreements were political in nature, not legally binding.¹⁶⁷ Within that context, the report made specific recommendations to governments with respect to reporting and accountability: improve reporting to make the reports more accessible, clear, comprehensiveness and comparable; involve stakeholders (including legislators) setting goals, developing plans and monitoring results; focus on a few critical indicators; establish targets and benchmarks; and have the reports audited.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 75.

¹⁶⁶ Lynell Anderson and Tammy Findlay, *Making the Connections: Using Public Reporting to Track the Progress on Child Care Services in Canada*, Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, 2007, p. 4.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 8.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. pp. 5-6.

MOVING CANADA FORWARD: FOUNDATIONS – AN EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE PROGRAM (2004)

In October 2004, the same month that the OECD released its final report reviewing the Canadian child care system, the federal government announced the “Foundations” program “to accelerate the building of a Canada-wide system of early learning and child care.”¹⁶⁹

AGREEMENTS-IN-PRINCIPLE ON EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE 2005, AND CANADA-QUÉBEC AGREEMENT ON EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE

This was followed in February 2005 by an agreement among federal, provincial and territorial governments outlining the principles on which such a system should be founded: quality, universally inclusive, accessible and developmental, or “QUAD”. In its 2005 budget, the federal government earmarked \$5 billion over five years in support. Between April and November 2005, the Government of Canada negotiated interim bilateral agreements with all 10 provinces, although only three final agreements (Ontario, Manitoba and Quebec) were signed before the 2006 election was called.

Recognizing the gains already made by Quebec, its agreement was confined to funding. The other provincial documents outlined plans for meeting the QUAD goals. The agreements included a provision allowing either party to withdraw upon giving a year’s notice.

The committee heard praise for these agreements:

The strength of the Early Learning and Childcare Agreements-in-Principle that were signed in 2005 was the flexibility to do things differently in different provinces. What is right for Toronto might not be right for rural Saskatchewan. (Dr. Kevin Milligan, Assistant Professor, University of British Columbia, Evidence, 6 June 2007)

The new government gave one year’s notice on these agreements, which expired the following year.

CHILD CARE SPACES INITIATIVE (2006)

In addition to the Universal Child Care Benefit (described in more detail above, the newly elected government also committed \$250 million annually for five years into a program (beginning in 2007) that would go directly to private and community efforts to create 125,000 new spaces.

¹⁶⁹ Statement by Prime Minister Paul Martin. “Moving Canada Forward: Foundations – An Early Learning and Child Care Program.” Ottawa, June 3, 2004.

Human Resources and Social Development Canada undertook a broad consultation process following the announcement of this initiative; with respect to employer-sponsored child care, the department's report concluded that tax credits and other financial supports may prove insufficient incentives to employers to provide child care spaces. The report continued,

Most employers indicated they understand the role that child care can play in recruitment and retention for their businesses. They are also aware of the benefits of supporting work-life balance for their employees. Nevertheless, most businesses, small businesses in particular, do not envision themselves delivering child care. Most are interested in supporting their employees' ability to purchase child care in the community, but because it is treated as a taxable benefit they often choose not to provide this support. They also recognize value in partnerships with local child care providers, but not in setting up child care themselves and suggested that the incentive should be targeted toward the providers, not employers.

Moreover, equity concerns were raised about employer-sponsored child care. Participants feared that an initiative focussed on employer-sponsored child care would exclude families living in rural areas or Aboriginal communities, parents who do not work or are self-employed, and those whose employer chooses not to support employee child care needs.¹⁷⁰

These results were confirmed in June 2006, when the *Globe and Mail Report on Business* published the results of its C-Suite survey, a quarterly poll of 150 senior company officials, indicating 75% were unlikely to take up the government's offer.¹⁷¹ Shortly thereafter, the Minister for Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC) established an independent advisory panel, Ministerial Advisory Committee on the Government of Canada's Child Care Spaces Initiative, headed by Dr. Gordon Chong.

The Committee recommended a multi-pronged approach advanced in his report: a dedicated fund to increase supply; decrease demand

¹⁷⁰ Human Resources and Social Development Canada, "What We've Heard... Summary of Consultations on the Child Care Spaces Initiative," 2007. Accessed from http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/public_consultations/child_care/report_summary.shtml#challenges 10 July 2008.

¹⁷¹ "More than 90 per cent of C-level executives expect continued economic growth," from CTV website. Accessed from http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/show/CTVShows/20060611/ctv_release_20060611/20060612 21 July 2008.

through improved parental leaves; help to parents to cover fees; and increased awareness of child care needs.¹⁷² With respect to employer-sponsored child care, the Committee report said:

Consultations as well as the Committee's own experience has shown, however, that employers are concerned about getting directly involved in building, operating or directly providing child care and would rather work with existing child care providers.¹⁷³

Following the report of the Committee, the dedicated funds were transferred to provincial and territorial governments for the creation of spaces.

Incremental budgetary increases for families and children directed towards early childhood learning and child care spaces, combined with continued increasing investment in programs by provincial and territorial governments would contribute to meeting the needs of parents and their children.

4.2. Federal leadership

All levels of government have demonstrated a strong commitment to early child development, including the provision of high-quality non-parental care for children. This report documents the remarkable steps forward taken across Canada.

An important government-funded analysis of provincial and territorial reports on spending of federal transfers with respect to early childhood development, cited earlier in this report, concluded that federal spending and leadership was a strong contributor to the improvements seen in quality and accessibility across Canadian jurisdictions.¹⁷⁴

Still, the Committee heard words of caution about the possibility of back-sliding:

We have made a lot of progress on family policy, although in the areas of child care and child benefits, there is a danger now that some of the changes being made at the federal level will unravel years of progress. (Ken Battle, Caledon Institute of Social Policy, Evidence, 3 May 2007)

¹⁷² Ministerial Advisory Committee on the Government of Canada's Child Care Spaces Initiative, "Supporting Canadian Children & Families: Addressing the Gap Between The Supply and Demand for High Quality Child Care," January 2007.

¹⁷³ Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁷⁴ Anderson and Findlay (2007), p. 5.

The Committee and its subcommittees have heard witnesses and reviewed research demonstrating the wish and need for a clear leadership role for the federal government.

Provincial officials and child care advocates told the Committee and its subcommittees of the need for federal leadership. The Prince Edward Island Assistant Deputy Minister of Health explained her rationale for such a federal role:

[A] truly national early childhood education and care program would pay big dividends in the area of population health. Experts agree that there are three characteristics of quality child care: low child-to-adult ratios, highly educated staff with specialized training, and age-appropriate equipment and facilities. It follows that children from low-income households benefit the most from quality child care. Currently, each province and territory has its own approach to early childhood education, and the approach varies considerably from province to province. (Teresa Hennebery, Assistant Deputy Minister, Health Operations, P.E.I. Department of Health, Evidence, 28 November 2007)

From British Columbia, the Committee heard:

In B.C. we know that without strong national leadership, money alone will not solve our problem. Our crisis can be solved, though, by political will and political leadership, both provincially and federally. (Susan Harney, Vice-Chair, Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, Evidence, 20 April 2007)

Nova Scotia's Poverty Working Group called on Nova Scotia to "advocate for a National Child Care Strategy that recognizes the need for quality, universal, accessible, developmentally appropriate child care."¹⁷⁵

At the national level, the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, for example, told the Committee that federal leadership (and funding) were critical to the achievement of comparable services across the country.¹⁷⁶ The YWCA, in its work on integration of child care services, called on the federal government to pass a *Federal Early Learning and Child Care Act* to entitle access regardless of disadvantage or difference and to provide financial incentives to provincial and

¹⁷⁵ "Report of the "Poverty Reduction Working Group," Nova Scotia, June 2008, p. 31.

¹⁷⁶ Jody Dallaire, Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, Evidence, 20 April 2007.

territorial governments to integrate early learning and family supports.¹⁷⁷

As well, in its deliberations on poverty, Committee members heard calls for federal leadership on child development issues from the Caledon Institute of Social Policy, First Call BC, Campaign 2000, and the Canadian Council on Social Development.

The federal government itself has recently acknowledged its leadership role through Human Resources and Social Development Canada:

Through investments in key initiatives, participating governments have agreed to policy objectives that will enhance the well-being of children and the economic security of individuals as well as families with children. The Department is responsible for federal leadership on these initiatives and is actively involved in facilitating learning and reporting on results.¹⁷⁸

While federal leadership can take many forms, as evidenced by Canada's shifting role with respect to early childhood development, the Committee has considered creating an ombudsperson, a commissioner, and/or a Minister of State. Based on research conducted for this Committee, a Library of Parliament report outlined the advantages and disadvantages of each.¹⁷⁹ The Committee recognizes the merits of each.

1. The Committee recommends that the Prime Minister appoint a Minister of State for Children and Youth, under the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development Canada, with responsibilities to include working with provincial and territorial government to advance quality early learning, parent programs and child care, as well as research human development and early childhood development and learning.

The Committee noted that the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights called for the appointment of a Children's Commissioner, and

¹⁷⁷ Debra Mayer and Farheen Beg, *Building a Community Architecture for Early Childhood Learning and Care: Analysis and Recommendations*, YWCA Canada, 2006, p. 53.

¹⁷⁸ Human Resources and Social Development Canada, *2006 – 2007 Estimates: A Departmental Performance Report*, 2007, p. 92.

¹⁷⁹ Karin Phillips and Havi Echenberg, "Minister of State for Children, PRB 08-03E, April 2008. Accessed from <http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/library/PRBpubs/prb0803-e.htm> 18 August 2008.

would support such an appointment, should the newly appointed Minister of State choose to make it.

In recognition of the importance of other stakeholders, and provincial and territorial autonomy and differences with respect to early childhood development, the Committee has considered mechanisms to ensure that such information and perspectives are available to the new Minister of State.

According to section 9 (1) of the *Department of Human Resources and Skills Development Act* (2005, c.34, H-5.7), the minister “may establish advisory and other committees and provide for their membership, duties, functions and operation.”¹⁸⁰ The department has currently appointed twelve such advisory councils, commissions and tribunals.¹⁸¹

For example, the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development Canada appointed a National Seniors Council to advise the Secretary of State for Seniors and Minister of Human Resources and Social Development on issues affecting seniors.¹⁸² Similarly, the National Council of Welfare (NCW) was established in 1969 as an arms-length advisory body to the then-Minister of Health and Welfare, now the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development. The NCW advises the minister on the needs and problems of low-income Canadians by publishing reports and functioning as a vehicle through which Canadians can make their point of view known to the government.¹⁸³

Some provinces and territories have established special advisory councils to examine children’s issues. For example, the Government of Quebec has established Le Conseil de la famille et de l’enfance, an agency whose mandate is to examine future trends effecting children

¹⁸⁰ The department is now called the *Department of Human Resources and Social Development*, though its legislative basis, *Department of Human Resources and Skills Development Act* (2005, c.34, H-5.7) remains the same.

¹⁸¹ Department of Human Resources and Social Development Canada, “Governor in Council Appointments”, http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/corporate/about_us/public_appointments/index.shtml#12. Accessed 26 February 2008.

¹⁸² National Seniors Council, “About us”, http://www.seniorscouncil.gc.ca/en/about_us/index.shtml. Accessed 20 February 2008.

¹⁸³ National Council of Welfare, “Mandate,” <http://www.ncwcnbes.net/en/aboutus/mandate-mandat.html> (accessed 25 February 2008).

and families, as well as advise the Minister of Families on social policy.¹⁸⁴

With appropriate staff, such a Council is also consistent with the OECD's observation that "an expert secretariat"¹⁸⁵ could provide federal support for collaboration with and coordination among provincial and territorial initiatives with respect to children.

2. The Committee recommends that the Minister for Human Resources and Social Development appoint a National Advisory Council on Children, to advise the Minister of State for Children and Youth and through the Minister of State, other Ministers on how best to support parents and to advance quality early learning and child care. The Council membership is to include Parliamentarians, other stakeholders, community leaders and parents, with appropriate representation from Aboriginal communities.

¹⁸⁴ Conseil de la famille et de l'enfance, "Pour assurer l'avenir"
<http://www.cfe.gouv.qc.ca/>. Accessed 23 February 2008.

¹⁸⁵ OECD (2004), p. 72.

5. PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL AND LOCAL POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

Across Canada, provincial and territorial governments legislate with respect to ECEC, with appropriate regulations, funding, policies and programs to ensure that non-parental care is safe, that young children are in learning environments, and that parents have a choice in how care for their children is provided. Beyond those broad similarities, each provincial and territorial government has developed its own set of policies and programs, and most continue to amend, revise and approve them, making any snapshot of existing programs and policies dated almost as soon as it is captured. The following information, and the more detailed overviews of programming in each province and territory contained in Appendix 3, were current at the time of writing (August 2008).

5.1. Provincial/territorial trends

However, broad trends indicate that governments across Canada are moving in directions consistent with some of the country-specific recommendations to Canada made by the OECD at the time of its review:

- the encouragement of provincial governments to develop an early childhood strategy with appropriate budgets;
- substantial increases in funding; early childhood service for children 1 to 6 years, delivered equitably by mixed providers, governed by public mandated agencies;
- expanded access and greater equity; and
- inclusion of children with special educational needs in mainstream programs.

5.1.1. FRAMEWORKS/STRATEGIES

Strategies or frameworks are now in place in most provinces: Newfoundland and Labrador,¹⁸⁶ Nova Scotia,¹⁸⁷ New Brunswick,¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ Newfoundland and Labrador Health and Community Services, "Province Enhances Early Learning and Child Care Plan," *News Release*, 30 November 2007. Accessed from <http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2007/health/1130n02.htm> 1 August 2008.

¹⁸⁷ Nova Scotia Community Services, "The Early Learning and Child Care Plan." Accessed from <http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/families/ELCCProgram.html> 1 August 2008.

Manitoba,¹⁸⁹ Alberta,¹⁹⁰ Yukon,¹⁹¹ and Northwest Territories.¹⁹² In several of these provinces, related spending commitments have also been made. Quebec has been the leader in Canada, with the early learning system often held up for comparison within Canada and beyond. Quebec has had a Family Policy since 1997, of which early learning was a key component. It has also introduced a more recent detailed framework for perinatal policy, from pregnancy to age 1.¹⁹³ These frameworks are addressed in more detail in Appendix 3.

The Committee heard from witnesses that Quebec has set a level of coherence and investment well beyond that in other provinces and territories:

Quebec has always been at the forefront within the social policy domain generally. Certainly, the creation of the child care system – the five-dollar-a-day system that is now seven-dollar-a-day system—has had a huge impact on access and has permitted families to make those choices. Quebec chose to make the investment and to build that system. (Shawn Tupper, Director General, Social Policy, HRSDC, 7 June 2007)

Another witness described the Quebec model as “far superior to anything we have anywhere else.”¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁸ *Be Ready for Success: A 10 Year Early Childhood Strategy for New Brunswick*, Province of New Brunswick, Fredericton, June 2008.

¹⁸⁹ *Healthy Child Manitoba, Family Choices: Manitoba’s Five-Year Agenda for Early Learning and Child Care*, 2008. Accessed from http://www.gov.mb.ca/asset_library/en/familychoices.pdf 1 August 2008.

¹⁹⁰ Alberta Children and Youth Services, “Creating Child Care Choices: A plan to support our families,” *Backgrounder*, 9 May 2008. Accessed from <http://alberta.ca/acn/200805/23490CED55609-98BD-B51C-511D68C6FF21A568.html> 22 July 2008.

¹⁹¹ Yukon Child Care Working Group, “Strategic Planning Document: A Four-Year Plan for Yukon Early Childhood Education and Care,” 2003. Accessed from <http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca/downloads/eccplan.pdf> 28 July 2008.

¹⁹² GNWT Department of Education, Culture and Employment, and Health and Social Services, *Framework for Action – Early Childhood Development*, May 2001. Accessed from

<http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/Publications/PDF%20Publications%20Files/Early%20Childhood/Framework%20for%20Action.pdf> 29 July 2008.

¹⁹³ Le ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux du Québec, *Politique de périnatalité : Un projet porteur de vie 2008-2018 – Synthèse*, 2008. Accessed from <http://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/acrobat/f/documentation/2008/08-918-02.pdf> 31 July 2008.

¹⁹⁴ Michael Goldberg, Chair, First Call BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition, *Evidence*, 7 February 2008.

5.1.2. INTEGRATION

Within Canada, there have been movements toward interdepartmental collaboration at the provincial/territorial level. Manitoba was among the first to break down the bureaucratic barriers among departments seeking to provide services to young children, through the creation of an interdepartmental Cabinet committee entitled Healthy Child Manitoba in 2006.¹⁹⁵

New Brunswick has more recently created a Ministerial Committee on Early Childhood Development and Care to provide

multi-departmental leadership and coordination on policy related to early childhood development and child care in New Brunswick, with a focus on children up to age 6 ... and [to improve] the integration of early childhood and child care policies, programs and services across all levels of government.¹⁹⁶

In British Columbia, the departments share responsibility: the Ministry of Education “shares responsibility for early learning” with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Children and Family Development.¹⁹⁷

Further examples of collaboration across departments, at the staff and/or the ministerial level, are provided in Appendix 3.

5.1.3. INCREASING FUNDING LEVEL, INCREASED SPACES, AND MIXED DELIVERY

As noted above, federal transfers to provincial governments for early child care have been uneven since the time of the OECD report, with transfers to some provinces under bilateral agreements with the previous government, and then smaller transfers to all governments from the government, introduced in 2007. Despite the uneven flow of funds, virtually every province and territory has increased its spending on child care, and on related early childhood and family support programs.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ “Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet: Ministerial Messages.” Accessed from <http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthychild/welcome/index.html> 11 August 2008.

¹⁹⁶ Private correspondence by email from Diane Lutes, Program Consultant, Early Childhood and School Based Services, Social Development New Brunswick, dated 27 May 2008.

¹⁹⁷ BC Ministry of Education, “Early Learning.” Accessed from http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/literacy/early_learning/ 22 July 2008.

¹⁹⁸ In northern territories, particularly Nunavut and Northwest Territories, capacity is not always available in small and isolated communities, despite government policy,

For example, Quebec had announced its intention to increase the number of reduced-rate spaces (those offered at \$7 per day) by 20,000 over four years. More recently, the government announced that it was ahead of schedule, with proposals already submitted for 18,000 spaces, anticipated within one more year, two years ahead of schedule.¹⁹⁹ But Quebec is not unique in this regard

British Columbia has increased the number of regulated spaces by 10,000 from 2004-05 to 2007-08.²⁰⁰ Nova Scotia's 10-year plan includes the creation of 1,000 additional spaces. And the Northwest Territories has increased by 500 the number of regulated spaces in the last five years.²⁰¹ Further details on spending patterns in all provinces and territories are included in Appendix 3.

While the focus of funding increases in different provinces and territories has varied, almost every province and territory has increased the funds to create and sustain more "spaces" in regulated child care facilities, whether centre-based or home-based. The table below provides data on this expansion.

program and funding commitments. In these territories, increased funds have been committed, but have not always been expended.

¹⁹⁹ Quebec Ministère de la Famille et des Aînés, « Objectif 2010 : 20 000 places ». Accessed from <http://www.mfa.gouv.qc.ca/services-de-garde/operation/presentation/> 31 July 2008.

²⁰⁰ British Columbia Ministry of Child and Family Development, *2007/08 Annual Service Plan Report*, June 2008, p. 25. Accessed from http://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/Annual_Reports/2007_2008/cfd/cfd.pdf 23 July 2008.

²⁰¹ Data are taken from annual reports on early childhood development, available from <http://www.hlthss.gov.nt.ca/english/publications/reports.asp> except data from 2003, 2006-07 and 2007-08, which were from private correspondence from Gillian Moir, Child Care Consultant, GNWT, dated 29 July 2008.

Table 7 - Total regulated child care spaces by province/territory – 1992, 1995, 1998, 2001, 2004, 2006, 2007²⁰²

	1992	1995	1998	2001	2004	2006	2007
NL	3,568	4,202	4,275	4,226	4,921	5,642	5868
PE	4,123	3,888	3,717	4,270	4,771	4,681	4824
NS	10,826	10,645	11,163	11,464	12,759	12,982	13,247
NB	7,162	7,952	9,204	11,086	11,897	13,163	14,170
QC ¹	78,388	111,452	175,002	234,905	321,732	361,533	364,572
ON	145,545	147,853	167,090 ²	173,135 ²	206,743 ²	229,875	243,488
MB	18,977	18,846	20,490	23,022	25,634	25,984	26,375
SK	6,418	7,266	7,124	7,166	7,910	8,712	8,850
AB	51,656	51,088	47,033	47,693	63,351 (46,238) ³	66,288 (47,587) ³	71,177
BC	42,927	59,794	68,978	72,949	80,230	79,190	82,386
NT	963	1,286	1,351	1,234	1,219	1,525	1,703
NU	n/a	n/a	n/a	932	1,014	987	970
YT	1,020	1,060	1,307	1,348	1,369	1,330(997) ⁴	1,293
Canada	371,573	425,332	516,734	593,430	745,925	811,262	837,923

1 Quebec's figures include school-age spaces which are operated by schools under the Ministry of Education. In neither 2006 nor 2007 was a figure for school-age spaces available. In 2006, we calculated an estimate based on the *ECEC in Canada 2004* figure of 141,977 school-age spaces and expanded it using the same percentage increase as the increase in total centre-based spaces for children aged 0-4 from 2004-2006 - 13.7%. The estimated 2006 figure - 161,428 - was again used in 2007.

2 Ontario's figures for total regulated spaces may not be comparable consistently from year to year. In some earlier years, Ontario was not able to determine whether regulated family child care spaces were or were not included in total regulated spaces.

3 School-age child care in Alberta became regulated for the first time in 2004. For purpose of comparison with previous years, the 2004 and 2006 figures include total number of spaces with and without school-age care.

4 1,330 is the total number of regulated spaces and has been used for comparison purposes with previous years. The figure in brackets represents the total number of occupied spaces.

Provincial and territorial governments have also been emphasizing parental choice and mixed delivery systems in recent developments. (A fuller discussion of the merits of various kinds of delivery systems is addressed in a separate section below.) For example, Quebec offers a fully-funded public system, and announced 18,000 additional subsidized spaces by 2012 earlier this year; the government recently announced it would meet its target two years ahead of schedule. Yet, the 2008-09 budget also increased the amount of the tax credit available to either parent, to create more equity between families in spaces that are subsidized by government and those that are not.²⁰³

Along similar lines, the Government of Alberta recently announced a significant increase in child care spending, including, for the first time,

²⁰² Child Care Resource and Research Unit, *Child Care space statistics 2007*, p. 15. Accessed from <http://www.childcarecanada.org/pubs/other/spaces/ccspacestatistics07.pdf> 1 August 2008.

²⁰³ Government of Quebec, "Supporting the Family and the Wellbeing of Quebecers," *2008-2009 Budget: Budget Plan*, March 2008, p. E-9.

subsidies for child care spaces, in the context of a plan entitled "Creating Child Care Choices." Manitoba's plan is entitled "Family Choices." In some provinces, operating and start-up subsidies are provided only to non-profit providers, but subsidies are available to parents, regardless of the provider's for-profit or non-profit status.

5.1.4. INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Witnesses told the Committee of the importance of including children with special needs in mainstream services, especially children with autism:

[O]ne very small project that was funded small in terms of funds was a project that supported centres to improve their quality so that they could include children with special needs. Prior to that, we were looking at a deficit model where we would look at children and would have to obtain a diagnosis. I am sure you have heard about the difficulties in autism. In those early years, we often see that a child does not seem to be thriving but we do not know what is wrong. Diagnosis to get additional funding for supports just does not happen. Those children were being excluded from programs, yet they were the children whose parents felt that they would benefit the most from being in a social situation. (Monica Lysack, Executive Director, Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, 20 April 2007)

The Committee also heard testimony about the importance of stable, longer term funding to permit inclusion of special-needs children into mainstream early learning services:

[W]hen the community child care program is strong and healthy, the accommodation for all children is easy. When the community child care program is fragile and we do not know if funding is coming tomorrow or what cuts and fees are going on, it is difficult to accommodate any child. With a strong community child care system and with a bit of extra money, we can and want to include all children in the community. (Susan Harney, Vice-Chair, Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, Evidence, 20 April 2007)

To provide access to children with special needs, some provinces, including Newfoundland and Labrador, Quebec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, Alberta and British Columbia have budgeted new operational and capital funding to increase the number of child care spaces. Ontario expected its full-day early learning

program to free up the equivalent of 20,000 child care spaces once fully operational.²⁰⁴

Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Manitoba and the Yukon have devoted new resources and staff to support the integration of children with special needs into early childhood programs. Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and the Yukon have also targeted under-served groups including infants, and families requiring non-traditional and seasonal care. Manitoba has increased the supply of part day nursery school to provide early learning options for more families, and Nova Scotia extended its operating grants to part day and school age programs.

A number of jurisdiction have taken steps to address child care affordability for parents by increasing the amount of their child care subsidy -- Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, Yukon, Newfoundland and Labrador, Alberta -- and/or by changing the eligibility criteria to allow access for more parents – Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador and the Yukon.

5.1.5. CURRICULUM

A further emerging trend among provinces and territories is the creation of an early learning curriculum, sometimes as a resource and sometimes as a requirement in licensed facilities. New Brunswick,²⁰⁵ Ontario,²⁰⁶ and now Manitoba²⁰⁷ are following Quebec's lead and piloting curriculum frameworks for early childhood settings. In Nunavut, "[a]n Elders Committee within Curriculum and School Services in Arviat helps to ensure that the foundational principles and concepts critical to delivering a kindergarten program are included in the development of new Kindergarten curriculum units. They also help to ensure that the curriculum reflects traditional learning and teaching and addresses the need for a strong language and cultural component

²⁰⁴ Laurie Monsebraaten and Robert Benzie, "Liberals woo parents," *Toronto Star*, 6 September 2007. Accessed from <http://www.thestar.com/OntarioElection/article/253727> 7 August 2008.

²⁰⁵ Megan O'Toole, "Curriculum for preschoolers to be unveiled today," *New Brunswick Telegraph-Journal*, 25 June 2008, p. A4.

²⁰⁶ Best Start Expert Panel on Early Learning, *Early Learning for Every Child Today: A framework for Ontario early childhood settings*, 2006. Accessed from http://www.gov.on.ca/children/graphics/stel02_183342.pdf 7 July 2008.

²⁰⁷ This commitment has been made in Manitoba's new five-year plan: *Healthy Child Manitoba* (2008), p. 6.

that is based on Inuit values and beliefs. Curriculum units continue to be developed and implemented in Nunavut schools.”²⁰⁸

5.2. Local responses

In most provinces and territories, local governments do not have a legally mandated role in the provision of early learning.

In Ontario, however, municipal governments are required to act as administrative agents of the provincial government with respect to child care. Designated as Consolidated Municipal Services Managers, local governments are “the service system managers for child care and are responsible for planning and managing the delivery of child care services at the community level.”²⁰⁹ In addition, the local governments continue to bear 20% of all costs associated with these services.

In Alberta, a somewhat similar situation exists, though it is voluntary, rather than mandatory. The provincial government has contracted with local governments or Métis settlements to provide Family and Community Support Services. Under these contracts, communities design and deliver social programs that are preventive in nature to promote and enhance well-being among individuals, families, and communities. The programs depend on community resources, often involving volunteers in management and delivery.²¹⁰

The local authorities pay 20% of costs associated with programs funded through this mechanism. Under these agreements, local governments may subsidize child care fees for school-aged children.²¹¹

Local governments, however, have many levers that can be used to encourage the creation of early learning facilities, including zoning, a convening and coordinating role, and direct spending. An early example came from Vancouver, which in 1990, “decided to formalize and expand its mandate and involvement in child care by adopting the

²⁰⁸ *Nunavut 2004-2007 Early Childhood Development Update Report/Early Learning & Child Care Update Report*. Accessed from Available at <http://www.gov.nu.ca/education/eng/pubdoc/2004-2007%20-%20English%20-%20ECD%20Update%20Report.pdf> 5 August 2008 (see p. 19-20).

²⁰⁹ Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, “Roles and Responsibilities,” p. 3.

²¹⁰ Alberta Children and Youth Services, “Family and Community Support Services.” Accessed from <http://child.alberta.ca/home/1022.cfm> 4 August 2008.

²¹¹ Alberta Children and Youth Services, “Child Care Licensing.” Accessed from <http://www.child.gov.ab.ca/home/764.cfm> 4 August 2008.

Civic Childcare Strategy.”²¹² This strategy included a policy, a goal for a comprehensive service system, and an action plan.

Four years later, the Vancouver City Council passed a protocol that was also passed by the local school board, and the local park authority. It established a framework for collaboration “to work toward building a comprehensive range of childhood education and care services.”²¹³ Governed by a Joint Council, this protocol continues to function to this day, staffed by a child care co-ordinator in the social planning section of the City’s bureaucracy.

In 2006, Vancouver was one of ten cities, led by the City of Toronto, to organize a study of municipal roles in the provision of child care services.²¹⁴ The study was funded by Social Development Canada, the City of Toronto and the Vancouver Joint Council on Child Care. This study found:

that cities advocate for more and better ELCC, work in partnership with provincial authorities, school boards and community organizations, carry out research, have local children’s advisory committees, take the lead in promoting innovation in ELCC such as the creation of children’s services hubs, use zoning provisions and development charges to build ELCC facilities, and support community networks such as those organized by the YWCA and local United Ways.²¹⁵

The Committee has learned through its hearings of many innovative local responses, relying on existing powers, and believes they should be encouraged. One approach to this would be for the federal government to establish a federal funding initiative comparable to “New Horizons” for seniors, to encourage the development of innovative, effective programs, especially to reach and serve children and families in rural and isolated communities, and to share the results widely with a view to their replication.

²¹² City of Vancouver Social Planning, “The City of Vancouver believes childcare is important.” Accessed from <http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/initiatives/childcare/ccstrategy2.htm> 4 August 2008.

²¹³ City of Vancouver, “Child Care Protocol,” Policy Report, 3 February 2004. Accessed from <http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20040309/p1.htm> 4 August 2008.

²¹⁴ City of Toronto, “National study finds Toronto has insufficient services for children,” July 5, 2006. Accessed from <http://wx.toronto.ca/inter/it/newsrel.nsf/7017df2f20edbe2885256619004e428e/30e0da17c04f63e852571a2004d573c?OpenDocument> 4 August 2008.

²¹⁵ Mahon and Jenson (2006), p. 3.

5.3. Stronger partnerships

Calls from witnesses and others for a national framework, or guidelines, necessitate a partnership with provincial and territorial governments, who regulate the sector, and make funding and policy decisions. These governments, along with parents, educators, scholars, and advocates are central actors in early learning and development. All sectors of society can only benefit from a full and open discussion to strengthen our shared commitments to child development. Only with all these partners can supports to children and their parents, including prenatal health, child health, human development and early childhood education, parenting programs, and quality child care, be made available and affordable for all families wherever they live.

Federal, provincial and territorial governments have demonstrated in the recent past the high and shared priority they place on Canada's youngest residents. As one of the first two priorities identified under the Social Union Framework Agreement, child development has been the focus of multiple shared approaches in the past ten years.

Further, inside many provincial and territorial governments, more interdisciplinary approaches to child development have been explored and implemented.

Yet, the Committee heard of the need for greater collaboration:

What we have learned from working with parents, caregivers, others across the country and from the international evidence, points to a clear path.... (with) a legislative framework that provides, at the high level, a set of overall standards and indicators that the system needs to meet across the country. That overall level allows for provincial flexibility....with federal leadership and transfers to the provinces and territoriesaccountable for the quality, affordability and expansion in service that is required across the country.... We want to place that child care system building within a context of valuing families and parents and helping them to balance their work responsibilities.... We see child care within a broader family policy context. (Lynell Anderson, Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, Evidence, 20 April 2007)

Both federal and provincial governments are needed to contribute to continuous improvement in outcomes for children and families across Canada, and to implement key recommendations from the OECD's

Starting Strong II, and Canada Country note, including the development of “a national quality framework for early childhood services across all sectors, and the infrastructure at the provincial level to ensure effective implementation.”²¹⁶ Witnesses identified specific elements they’d like to see included in such a framework, including the development of a shared vision of human development, quality early learning, child care and supports for parents, including parenting programs; a 10-year time-line to develop the framework building on existing and future provincial and territorial frameworks and plans; and the establishment and implementation of measurable standards and guidelines to evaluate Canada’s progress towards quality early learning and child care and support for their parents.

3. The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada call a series of meetings of federal, provincial, and territorial Ministers with responsibility for children and youth, beginning within one year of this report to:

- a. establish a pan-Canadian framework to provide policies and programs to support children and their families; and**
- b. establish a federal/provincial/territorial Council of Ministers responsible for early learning and child care and parental supports, to meet annually, to review Canada’s progress with respect to other OECD countries, and to share best practices within Canada.**

²¹⁶ OECD (2004), pp. 55-56.

6. PROGRAM DESIGN

Canada's approach is mixed regulated and unregulated spaces funded by a mix of operating subsidies, fee subsidies, and parental fees, in a mix of not-for-profit and for-profit facilities, some centre-based and some home-based. While the Committee heard from a number of witnesses advocating for one or the other of each of those dichotomies, this mixed system is evident in almost every jurisdiction across Canada, as noted above.

More information on delivery options, some current practices and Committee testimony is provided below.

6.1. Regulated/unregulated²¹⁷

Not enough child care services are regulated by provincial and territorial policy and/or legislation that outline licensing or monitoring standards. These standards vary among jurisdictions, but generally include maximum child-to-adult ratios, minimum training and educational requirements for staff, and minimum standards for facilities and equipment.

Each jurisdiction provides a mechanism for monitoring and enforcing compliance with standards (for example, through the use of inspections and/or public reporting of non-compliance).

Regulated child care is provided in licensed family child care settings as well as in child care centres. For the family or home-based care, supervision may be provided directly by government or by centre-based providers or not-for-profit agencies created for this purpose.

The number of regulated spaces and their proportion of the total number of spaces available vary widely among provinces. The most recent data available, for 2004, are in the table below.

²¹⁷ Information in this section is based on and updated from Julie Cool, *Child Care in Canada: Regulated, Unregulated, Private or Public*, PRB 04-18E, Parliamentary Information and Research Service, Library of Parliament, June 2004. Accessed from <http://lpintrabp.parl.gc.ca/lopimages2/prbpubs/inbrief1000/prb0418-e.asp#regulatedtxt> 21 July 2008.

Table 8 - Regulated child care 2004²¹⁸

Province/Territory	Regulated childcare spaces ¹	Regulated childcare spaces as a per cent of the total of 0-5 year-old children	Per cent of regulated centre-based spaces that are not "for-profit"
Newfoundland and Labrador	4 921	15.7	27.0
PEI	4 100	46.6	30.0
Nova Scotia	12 759	23.0	55.0
New Brunswick	11 897	26.1	–
Quebec ²	321 732	72.6	88.0
Ontario	206 743	24.8	78.0
Manitoba	25 634	33.8	92.0
Saskatchewan	7 910	11.4	100.0
Alberta	47 952	21.9	46.0
British Columbia	80 230	31.5	–
Northwest Territories	1 219	28.3	100.0
Nunavut	1 014	25.1	100.0
Yukon Territory	1 369	66.1	74.0
Canada	745 254	36.4	79.0 ³

Note: Regulated childcare spaces include school-age care and thus over estimate the spaces truly available for 0-5 year old children.

1. Nursery schools (part time) are not regulated in Quebec, Saskatchewan and the Yukon Territory and so are not included in these figures.
2. Quebec's figures include school-age spaces which are under the aegis of the Ministry of Education.
3. Total does not include British Columbia and New Brunswick (which do not provide figures on the breakdown between for-profit and not-for-profit institutions).

Source: OECD calculations based on data from Childcare Resource and Research Unit (2005).

Not all child care providers are monitored for their adherence to minimum standards. Each province and territory allows child care providers to care for a small number of children; maximum numbers across the country in unregulated child care range from a low of two children excluding the caregiver's children in British Columbia to a high of eight children including the caregiver's children in Saskatchewan.²¹⁹

Most child care in Canada currently takes place in unregulated settings, including parental care, care by relatives, and care within or outside the family home by caregivers such as babysitters and nannies. Given the diversity of unregulated child care options, the quality of care in unregulated settings is likely to vary widely and is difficult to assess.

Although a limited number of families have access to subsidized spaces in regulated child care settings, the high cost of regulated child care in Canada today is a barrier for many low- and middle-income families. Some families choose to place their children in unregulated child care.

²¹⁸ OECD *Surveys: Canada*, 2006, p. 134.

²¹⁹ Friendly, et. al. (2007), Table 20, p. 216.

As noted above, most child care experts and advocates, including those who testified before the Committee or its subcommittees, identify the need for services that provide learning environments for young children, in addition to child care for those whose parents are in the paid workforce and who choose to involve their children in these environments. They argue that optimal learning environments require trained service providers; child care providers in unregulated settings may not have the education, training, and support required to provide an enriching early childhood experience.

On the other hand, it has been argued, including in a brief to the Committee, that parents are best situated to choose the type of child care that best meets the needs of their children, and that these choices might include unregulated care.

6.2. For-profit/not-for-profit

The debate about the relative merits of for-profit and not-for-profit child care providers was summarized in a recent Canadian analysis:

Many believe that nonprofit organizations are inefficient because they lack the profit motive that would give them incentives to cut costs and make sharp business decisions. Many others believe that nonprofit organizations spend money more wisely and provide better financial accountability in the service of human needs because they have no incentive to siphon revenues off into owner profits. Some believe that nonprofits inevitably produce better quality services for their clients; some believe that for-profits provide better quality because they are more responsive to customer demands.²²⁰

The for-profit versus non-profit debate is based not primarily on economic ideology, but on whether the market can be more efficient in meeting rising demand, both in terms of creating spaces more quickly and being able to operate them at a lower cost; this, in turn is related to concerns about quality. These same questions and concerns have emerged in other countries.

In Sweden,²²¹ as ECEC became recognized as a societal responsibility in the 1970s, the state and municipalities began providing an

²²⁰ Gordon Cleveland, et. al., *An Economic Perspective on the Current and Future Role of Nonprofit Provision of Early Learning and Child Care Services in Canada: Final Report*, University of Toronto, 2007, p. 13.

²²¹ Barbara Martin Korpi, *The Politics of Pre-School-intentions and decisions underlying the emergence and growth of the Swedish pre-school*, 15 October 2007, p. 43-55.

increasing proportion of the financing, while the running of child care centres and play schools came under the authority of the municipalities. The “municipalisation” of ECEC services was supported by the municipalities as well as the trade unions, because it enabled coherent planning, higher quality of services and secure financing and working conditions for staff.

In the 1980s, this consensus was challenged by non-socialist parties, who thought that private alternatives might reduce the rising costs of ECEC services. Companies began providing child care centres for their employees, but in the form of parental co-operatives so that they would qualify for state grants.

By 1990, the Government recognized the need for a broader pool of providers and passed legislation allowing state grants to be given to private child care centres and leisure-time centres run by private persons, associations or religious groups, as long as the conditions were the same as other providers. The decision as to whether or not state grants would be allotted to private organizations rested with municipalities.

These changes resulted in an increase in the proportion of privately run pre-schools in Sweden, particularly in large cities and suburbs. In February 2006, the establishment of private ECEC services was an election issue.

In Germany, child care has traditionally been provided and dominated by non-profits, particularly churches; therefore it has not emerged as a main topic of debate. While there are for-profit providers, who receive the same opportunities for funding and same requirements as non-profit providers,²²² they are few in number, and seem to have little influence over the overall system.²²³ Further, because funding arrangements are determined at the lowest levels of government (the municipality), they vary widely across the country.²²⁴

²²² Government of Germany, Bundesministerium fuer Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, *OECD Early Childhood Policy Review 2002-2004 Background Report Germany*, 2004, p. 34.

²²³ OECD, *OECD Country Note: Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in the Federal Republic of Germany*, 26 November, 2004, p. 29.

²²⁴ OECD, *OECD Country Note: Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Australia*, November 2001, p. 17.

In Australia,²²⁵ the debate about for-profit and non-profit provision has been more heated. In 1990, the Australian Government decided to provide subsidies to families using for-profit ECEC services, for two reasons: to provide equity for parents who chose to send their children to for-profit services, and to stimulate private investment in the child care sector. This decision was consistent with the federal government's considerable financial support to Australia's robust private, non-government school sector. To further "level the playing field" between for-profit and not-for profit ECEC services, the Government also decided in 1998 to remove direct subsidies to non-profit ECEC services. Quality concerns that could arise with reliance on for-profit providers are addressed by requiring that government subsidies be used only for care with providers that have been assessed through the national Quality Improvement and Accreditation System.

Because the early childhood development system in Australia was based in grassroots, non-profit organizations, these decisions were contentious. Moreover, the provision of subsidies to for-profit ECEC services resulted in rapid expansion and ultimately, an over-supply of ECEC services. The opposition to some providers, particularly to the largest for-profit provider (that trades on the Australian stock exchange), recently spilled over to Canada, as the same company, under a different name, began to solicit Canadian providers to buy their centres.²²⁶

In France, which has recently announced aggressive expansion plans for its child care provision, subsidies to for-profit agencies are a means of increasing the supply. Although local municipal authorities (communes) and non-profit organizations are the main service providers for non-pre-school care, the French Government is providing incentives to private companies, including for-profit organizations, to establish child care centres. Incentives include subsidies, as well as tax breaks.²²⁷

²²⁵ OECD, *OECD Country Note: Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Australia*, November 2001, p. 19-20.

²²⁶ See, for example, Sean Myers, "Aussie day-care company eyes Calgary; City operators being approached to sell facilities," *Calgary Herald*, 24 October 2007, p. B3, or Robert Cribb and Dale Brazao, "'Big-box' daycare coming to Canada; Industry worried as Aussie 'Fast Eddy' looking to expand his \$2.2 billion empire," *Toronto Star*, 20 October 2007, p. A1.

²²⁷ OECD, *OECD Country Note: Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in France*, February 2004, p. 31.

In New Zealand, all licensed and/or chartered early childhood education programs are subsidized directly or indirectly, without regard for their non-profit or for-profit status.²²⁸ From the 1970s onwards, the focus of ECEC policy debates in New Zealand has been on the integration of education and care. Consequently, funding debates have focused on ensuring that child care receives the same amount of financial support as early education services from the government. Within that context, there has also been resistance by child care advocates to public funding for privately owned child care centres.²²⁹

In Canada, as noted earlier in this paper, parental choice is a high priority, and the existence of for-profit centres in every province and territory requires policy and political decisions about what kind of public funding, if any, should be limited to non-profit providers.²³⁰ In the stated interest of choice, provincial and territorial governments have been moving toward greater public funding going into for-profit providers' hands.

For example, in October 2007, British Columbia changed a long-standing position making public capital funding available to for-profit operators. Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Alberta also flow capital funds to commercial providers. Quebec's child care expansion, originally centred on using the non-profit Centre des Petits Enfants as the service platform, has been equalized to allow for-profit firms to play a bigger role in providing services and potentially open up the province to for-profit chains.

Yet, the Committee heard from a witness that a mixed system could not provide the quality of care needed for optimal development of young children:

My basic rule is that if you want equity and equality in your society, you must make certain that the program is available to all families with young children. If you can sell that to a mixed system, more power to you. I will be blunt with you: No country has sold that to a mixed system. (Dr. Fraser Mustard, Council for Early Childhood Development, Evidence, 14 February 2008)

²²⁸ UNESCO, *Early Childhood Education Policy Co-ordination under the Auspices of the Department/Ministry of Education: Case Study of New Zealand*, March 2002, p. 26.

²²⁹ UNESCO (2002), p. 8.

²³⁰ Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC, "Hindsight from Australia - Foresight for BC," p. 1.

That ELCC programs are best developed by the public and community sector has been well established in research: a recent review²³¹ shows that a variety of quality problems are associated with operating child care for a profit including low wages, lower levels of staff training, lower compliance with legislated requirements, poorer staff to child ratios and poorer morale. The author states that “when child care is conceived of as a public good, rather than a market commodity, its close relationship to social capital and social inclusion becomes obvious.”²³²

A large quality study²³³ by the Institut de la statistique du Québec collected from a large sample of 450 profit and non profit centres and 200 family child care homes. Researchers used the “Echelle d’observation de la qualité éducative,” an evaluation tool developed specifically to assess quality in Quebec’s regulated child programs. Substantial differences were found between the non-profit CPEs and the commercial operators. Only a small number of commercial pre-school classes scored in the good or very good range, compared to a substantial number of CPEs which scored in the good level or above.

A Canadian analysis quantified the advantage provided by not-for-profit delivery at 12%.²³⁴ It also concluded, based on economic analysis of outcome data, that:

Although there are good quality nonprofits and poor quality nonprofits, nonprofit centres are overrepresented at higher levels of quality and underrepresented at lower levels of quality. Although the frequency distributions of quality in nonprofit and in for-profit care overlap, the nonprofit distribution is shifted towards higher quality levels.²³⁵

Other analysts have argued that for-profit care is considerably more efficient; one in particular used Australia’s widespread provision by for-profit providers as an example:

²³¹ S. Prentice, *For-profit child care: Past, present, future*, Child Care Resource and Research Unit, 2005.

²³² *Ibid.*, p. 18.

²³³ L.Bourgon and C. Lavallée et al., *Échelle d’observation de la qualité éducative: le service de garde préscolaire. Version utilisée dans l’enquête Grandir en qualité 2003*, 2003, Québec: Ministère de la Famille et de l’Enfance, as cited in Gordon Cleveland, et. al., *An Economic Perspective on the Current and Future Role of Nonprofit Provision of Early Learning and Child Care Services in Canada Final Project Report*, 2007, p. 47.

²³⁴ Cleveland, et. al.(2007), p. 17.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

By shifting the funding mechanism to one based on parental choice and by allowing the private sector to participate fully, the Australian government was able to boost supply and satisfy parents. A recent survey [2003] reports that 94 percent of Australian families are content with their access to all forms of child care.²³⁶

An analysis of Quebec's reduced-rate child care system indicated that for-profit centres provide less expensive care for children, but attributes the difference to the lower proportion of staff who have training in ECE and the resulting lower salaries, compared to the more qualified staff in non-profit centres.²³⁷ A separate analysis confirmed differences in wages levels: the average wage for educators in a commercial centre was \$12.72 compared to \$15.81 in non-profit Centres de la Petite Enfance in 2003.²³⁸

Figure 5 - Percent of centre-based child care spaces that are not-for-profit by province/territory 2006²³⁹



²³⁶ Peter Shawn Taylor, "Private Sector Can Meet Child Care Demands," *Fraser Forum*, March 2004, p. 6.

²³⁷ Norma Kozhaya, "\$7-a-Day Childcare: Are Parents Getting What They Need?" *Economic Note*, Montreal Economic Institute, October 2006, p. 3. Accessed from http://www.iedm.org/uploaded/pdf/octobre06_en.pdf 1 August 2008.

²³⁸ Cleveland, et. al. (2007), p. 49.

²³⁹ CRRU, *Trends and Analysis 2007 - Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2006*, 2007, p .8.

6.3. Universal/targeted

The national discussion about universal child care in Canada has a long history, having begun in 1970 with a recommendation for such a program in the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women.²⁴⁰ However, universal early learning programs for children do not begin in the majority of Canada's provinces/territories until children are 5, far older than their counterparts in Europe, many American states and even some developing nations.

The OECD reviewed substantial research that indicates all children benefit from high quality ECEC programs, although disadvantaged children may benefit more. This finding is not a call to create programs exclusively for the underprivileged.

Canadian studies document the problems with targeting and demonstrate that interventions directed at particular neighbourhoods or populations miss the majority of children at risk. Eligible families will often shun targeted services to avoid the associated stigma,²⁴¹ a finding which suggests targeted approaches within universal programming are most effective. Research suggests these strategies would both raise the bar for children's outcomes, and level it across different groups of children.²⁴²

One witness before the Population Health Subcommittee made a compelling case for universal programs:

Why make programs universal? It is important to note that substantial international research on policies shows that countries with targeted programs for the poor do less well at alleviating poverty... Those programs are less likely to be financed in the long run by governments; they are less sustained; and they tend to be lower quality.... I urge you to focus on the central social determinant of health, poverty and inequalities....to make sure that, while being aware of

²⁴⁰ Cheryl N. Collier, "Is Canada Ready for a New Universal Social Program? Comparing the Cases of Universal Medicare in the 1960s and "Universal" Child Care in the New Millennium," Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, 30 May to 1 June 2007, p. 4.

²⁴¹ C. Hughes and K. McCuaig, *When Mom Must Work: Family day care as a welfare-to-work option*. Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, 2000. Accessed from http://www.childcarecanada.org/CPAG_CCEF/moms_welfare/four.html 15 August 2008.

²⁴² D. Willms (ed), *Vulnerable children*. University of Alberta Press, Edmonton, Alberta, 2002.

heightened needs of certain sub-populations, these needs are addressed within the context of universal programs. (Dr. Jody Heymann, McGill Institute for Health and Social Policy, Evidence, 28 March 2007)

A second witness made a compelling case for a mix of targeted and universal programs:

Many people say that we should start with the targeted, the most unfortunate children. Others say we should start with the universal and what all children need. I agree with both camps. We have to have some programs that are universal, such as child care and universal pre-school education, but we cannot ignore the fact that there are children who face specific challenges. (Hilliel Goelman, Director, Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP), Council for Early Child Development, Evidence, 30 May 2007)

Based on the testimony and research before it, the Committee believes that high-quality early childhood development services must be available to all who need them, and to those who choose them, to encourage the best development of children and the economic and social decisions that parents make for their families.

7. CHILD CARE STAFFING

As described above, governments across Canada are making efforts to increase both the quality and number of early childhood learning and quality child care opportunities available to Canadian children and their parents. As they do so, they are facing shortages of staff that meet current and rising standards with respect to training and qualifications.

Early childhood educators are second only to parents in supporting children's development, making the quality of the early childhood workforce the prime consideration in system building. High quality, accessible early learning and child care is not possible until the best human resource policy practices are put in place. These include adequate pre and in service training; positive working conditions and compensation levels that promote staffing stability. Excellent early childhood systems require human resource support that goes beyond the front line early educators to include – program directors, teacher educators, academic researchers, policy makers, monitors and planners and even knowledgeable politicians.

The work of the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council including its 2004 report, *Working for Change: Canada's Child Care Workforce Labour Market Update*, reveals the challenges. Attracting and keeping trained staff in the field was seen as a primary problem. A federal official appearing before the Committee confirmed:

The number one issue ... [is] recruitment and retention. We are not paying people enough. They are entering the training programs, obtaining their certificates, but using those as stepping stones into other careers. We are not getting a system built up where we have that stability. (Shawn Tupper, HRSDC, Evidence, 7 June 2007)

The Chair of the Advisory Committee on Child Care Spaces appointed by the Minister for HRSDC associated the loss of qualified staff with the loss of quality in child care programs:

The studies that show child care is not good, in most cases it is because there is a turnover. There is a turnover because child care workers are not paid well. They are not held in sufficiently high esteem so that they stay in the profession. (Dr. Gordon Chong, Chairman, Social Housing Services Corporation; Former chairperson, Ministerial Advisory Committee on Child Care Spaces Initiative, Evidence, 7 June 2007)

7.1. Staffing requirements

Provincial and territorial legislation and regulation establish requirements with respect to requirements for training and the number of staff-to-child ratio. In each province and territory, individuals may care for a maximum number of children, without being subject to the regulations and requirements established for larger home-based or centre-based providers.

In most licensed home-based facilities, regulations require criminal record checks for the primary caregiver, first aid training, and character references. Some jurisdictions require a basic introductory course (of, perhaps, 40 hours) in early child development. However, an increasing number of jurisdictions are requiring that home providers be supervised by either government staff or government-approved agencies.

Examples include Nova Scotia,²⁴³ where Licensed Family Home Day Care agencies are authorized by the provincial government to “approve, manage and support providers offering child care services in their own homes.” Each of these agencies must hire a “family home consultant” who visits and works with home-based providers “to promote safe environments for children and promote early childhood development.”

Similarly in Quebec,²⁴⁴ the government contracts with 163 coordinating agencies, each with a specific geographic area of responsibility, to supervise home-based care providers. These agencies provide information on availability of spaces and allocate them to applicants, and inspect home-based providers to ensure compliance with license obligations.

Requirements with respect to centre-based care are usually much higher, including levels of training required for centre directors, supervisors or manager, and staff. The requirements vary across Canada, but almost every provincial and territorial government has set minimum requirements. A snapshot of human resources requirements

²⁴³ This information is taken from “Nova Scotia: Recent Developments in Child Care and Other Early Childhood Education and Care Services - 2006/07 & 2007/08”, attached to private correspondence from Kerry Deagle, Senior Policy Analyst, Federal Provincial Social Initiatives Unit, Nova Scotia Department of Community Services, dated 27 May 2008.

²⁴⁴ This information is taken from Mahon and Jenson (2006), p. 18.

in centre-based care from 2006 reported that: “[n]o jurisdiction requires all child care staff to have postsecondary ECE training.

In a number of provinces/territories, it is required for only a minority of staff.”²⁴⁵ Further, required training in centre-based care ranged from none to a diploma requiring one to three years education. In 2006, seven provinces required ECE training of at least one year for directors, but no management or supervisory training was required.²⁴⁶

The Committee recognizes the importance of qualified staff. A review of the requirements for caregivers, educators and social workers working in publicly funded family support and early learning and child care programs by the Government of Canada, in collaboration with appropriate provincial and territorial ministers, and unions, would be useful.

In addition, all provinces and territories establish staff-to-child ratios that vary with the age of the children. All require a higher number of staff-per-child for infants, and it declines as the age of children rises. The following table captures the staff-to-child ratio for various age groups in each province and territory, in 2006.

Table 9 - Maximum staff: child ratios in full-day centre-based child care by age and province/territory – 2006²⁴⁷

Province/Territory	At 12 months	At 36 months	At five years
Newfoundland & Labrador	1:3	1:5	1:8
Prince Edward Island	1:3	1:10	1:12
Nova Scotia	1:4	1:8	1:15
New Brunswick	1:3	1:7	1:12
Quebec	1:5	1:8	1:10
Ontario ²	3:10	1:8	1:12
Manitoba	1:4	1:8	1:10
Saskatchewan	1:3	1:10	1:10
Alberta	1:3	1:8	1:10
British Columbia	1:4	1:8	1:8
Northwest Territories	1:3	1:8	1:10
Nunavut	1:3	1:8	1:10
Yukon Territory	1:4	1:8	1:8

²⁴⁵ CRRU (2007), pp. 7-8.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Friendly, et. al. (2007), p. 216.

7.2. Recruitment and retention

A study of child care workers and centres, based on a survey of child care centres, sought to understand the reasons for the high turnover rate among staff and the challenges in recruiting new staff. The study, published as the OECD was conducting its own review, concluded:

Solving recruitment and retention problems in child care requires a comprehensive, multi-pronged approach. This approach must take into account and simultaneously address: (1) the need to moderate the stress in the job; (2) compensation (wages, benefits and working conditions); (3) the accessibility of early child care and education training; and (4) the current low level of public respect for the job."²⁴⁸

A 2005 study addressing demand for a child care workforce, and supply to meet the demand identified the need to address preparation and support of workers; the working environment, including wages and benefits, health and safety, employment status and career advancement opportunities; increased skills training for current and future workers; and recognition of the value and importance of the contribution workers make.²⁴⁹ The report concludes that four policy areas must be addressed to ensure adequate supply of a quality child care workforce: "a general policy framework that clearly recognizes the central role of child care to early childhood development strategies..., coherent public policies across the sector to effectively manage the demand for child care and early childhood educators..., sufficient funding of the sector..., [and] labour market information to guide decision making..."²⁵⁰

A year later, the federal government consulted with about 300 stakeholders across Canada; its summary report indicated that recruitment and retention of staff was the greatest challenge in the sector.²⁵¹ When an advisory committee appointed by the Minister of

²⁴⁸ Gillian Doherty and Barry Forer, *Shedding New Light: Staff Recruitment and Retention Challenges in Child Care*, Child Care Human Resources Sector Council, 2004, p. 5. Accessed from http://www.ccsc-cssge.ca/english/pdf/research/SheddingNewLight_en.pdf 10 July 2008.

²⁴⁹ Jane Beach, et al., *Working for change: Canada's child care workforce: labour market update. Main report*, Child Care Human Resources Sector Council, 2004. Accessed from http://www.ccsc-cssge.ca/english/pdf/research/CCHRSC20main_en.pdf 10 July 2008.

²⁵⁰ Ibid. pp. 123-124.

²⁵¹ Human Resources and Social Development Canada, "What We've Heard... Summary of Consultations on the Child Care Spaces Initiative," 2007. Accessed from

HRSDC to consider child care spaces reported in 2007, it offered the following assessment:

While human resources issues were outside the Committee's mandate, Committee members noted that high quality child care is only achievable when the child care workforce is stable. The Committee recognizes that one of the biggest challenges in expanding and enhancing child care spaces will be related to Human Resources. The current shortage of qualified child care staff in Canada could seriously hamper efforts to expand the supply of spaces.²⁵²

The Committee heard of the particular challenges in recruiting Aboriginal staff:

[W]e are understanding how important it is to have a well-prepared workforce. As others have expressed the challenges in our mainstream society, it is a hundred fold on reserve. (Monica Lysack, Executive Director, Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, Evidence, 20 April 2007)

The OECD's specific recommendations to Canada included the need to recruit more staff, and its broader recommendations called for greater recognition of the role and importance of early childhood educators. Programs at the provincial and territorial levels are consistent with those recommendations.

In 2007 and 2008 alone, efforts including subsidies for tuition, bonuses for workers returning to the child care field, and increased wages were announced in several provinces and one territory: Saskatchewan,²⁵³ Nova Scotia,²⁵⁴ Ontario,²⁵⁵ Manitoba,²⁵⁶ New Brunswick,²⁵⁷ Newfoundland and Labrador,²⁵⁸ Alberta,²⁵⁹ British Columbia,²⁶⁰ and Yukon.²⁶¹

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/public_consultations/child_care/report_summary.shtml#challenges 10 July 2008.

²⁵² Ministerial Advisory Committee on the Government of Canada's Child Care Spaces Initiative (2007), p. 22.

²⁵³ Trevor Newell, "Wage increase announced for Saskatchewan child-care workers," *Leader Post*, 6 May 2008. Retrieved from <http://www.canada.com/reginaleaderpost/news/story.html?id=c6ddf41d-71df-4d0a-b66f-9e6b94ae3c05&k=455> 31 July 2008.

²⁵⁴ "The Minister's Letter to Directors – April 8, 2008". Accessed from http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/families/provider/documents/ELCC_Letter_April_8_2008.pdf 3 July 2008.

²⁵⁵ Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, *Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Service Results-based Plan Briefing Book 2008-09*, p. 31. Accessed from <http://www.gov.on.ca/children/graphics/247796.pdf> 15 July 2008.

²⁵⁶ *Healthy Child Manitoba* (2008), p. 1.

²⁵⁷ Private correspondence by email from Diane Lutes, Program Consultant,

The Committee heard that these efforts, while laudable, are not yet accomplishing their goals:

[In Alberta] accreditation, salary enhancement and education have been supported in the province, but we are still in crisis for recruitment and retention. (Susan Elson, Secretary, Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, Evidence, 20 April 2007)

Some provincial and territorial governments have also improved access to training for child care staff. The Committee heard of a particularly creative approach:

The province conducted a pilot program where they located the training necessary to become an early childhood educator in that neighbourhood and they provided child care for those women while they were becoming trained. At the end of that course, the women have a certificate or a diploma in early childhood education. (Molly McCracken, Researcher, Manitoba office, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Evidence, 21 May 2007)

A persistent stumbling block in recruitment is the differential compensation for educators in the “child care” system and those in the pre-school and school systems. The Committee heard testimony on the salary differentials:

[Child care salaries] are nowhere near teachers’ salaries. In New Brunswick we probably had some of the lowest wages in the country ... With some government investment we have had the staff fees go up. Trained staff earns just over \$11 an hour; untrained staff, \$9 an hour. The wages are very low because parents cannot afford to pay higher fees to subsidize. We are

Early Childhood and School Based Services, Social Development New Brunswick, dated 27 May 2008.

²⁵⁸ Newfoundland and Labrador Health and Community Service, “Province Enhances Early Learning and Child Care Plan”, News Release, November 30, 2007. Accessed from <http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2007/health/1130n02.htm> 3 August 2008.

²⁵⁹ Alberta Children and Youth Services, *Spotlight on Child Care*, 2008, p. 1.

Accessed from

http://www.child.alberta.ca/home/documents/childcare/doc_spotlight_childCare.pdf

22 July 2008.

²⁶⁰ MCFD, “Early Childhood Educator Incentive Grant Program: Frequently Asked Questions.” Accessed from

http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/ece_incentive/pdf/incentive_faq.pdf 23 July

2008.

²⁶¹ Yukon Health & Social Services, “Childcare Operators Receive Second Increase for Wages,” News Release, 23 July 2008. Accessed from

http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca/news/2008/id_132/ 29 July 2008.

subsidizing child care, but unfortunately it is on the back of the workforce. (Jody Dallaire, President, Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, Evidence, 20 April 2007)

More information about provincial and territorial efforts is contained in the province or territory-specific program descriptions contained in Appendix 3.

An evaluation of salaries paid to qualified staff in all early childhood education, child care and family support programs by federal, provincial, and territorial governments could contribute to a goal of encouraging parity with kindergarten and elementary school teachers.

8. RESEARCH/DATA

The OECD review congratulated Canada on its advanced data collection systems and encouraged it to “further enhance public accountability mechanisms through rigorous and comparative data collection.”²⁶²

Over the past 25 years, the findings from population-based research have supported the development of early childhood policies, programs and practices.²⁶³

8.1. Current sources

8.1.1. NATIONAL LONGITUDINAL STUDY ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The federal government continues to develop its research capacity. In 1994 it launched the National Longitudinal Study on Children and Youth (NLSCY) which collects data on 30,000 children. Seven cycles have been completed. Changes were made to the child care section of the survey in the seventh cycle (2006-2007), to improve the quality of information collected on the types of child care settings children attend.

The NLSCY has followed a representative sample of over 22,000 children aged 0-11 since 1994 and continues to add new cohorts. Data is gathered at birth on weight and complications; motor and social development is assessed at age 3; vocabulary at ages 4 and 5; and behaviour at ages 2 to 5. Children are considered vulnerable if they have at least one serious learning or behavioural problem.

This cohort continues to be followed with data collected at each two-year cycle. In addition, each cycle includes newly born children ages 0 to 23 months who are followed until they are 4 to 5 to gain additional data on early child development. The seventh survey cycle was completed in 2006-07, and the data from this cycle will become available in 2009.

²⁶² OECD (2006), p. 83.

²⁶³ Material for this section is largely drawn from J. Bertrand, “Canada: Longitudinal Monitoring of ECD Outcomes” in Mary Eming Young and Linda M. Richardson (eds.), *Early Child Development From Measurement to Action A Priority for Growth and Equity*, World Bank: Washington, DC., 2007.

The NLSCY data helped clarify whether poor child development is inextricably linked to poverty. A long-held belief is that poor child development is primarily an economic issue. The worse outcome of such a belief system is nothing can be done; the best is that interventions should be targeted to poor children and families. Yet, the NLSCY data show that 65% of low-income children aged 4 to 6 years are not considered vulnerable, while up to 25% of the middle class and more than 10% of affluent children are. As the Committee heard,

Good evidence shows that all children benefit from high-quality early learning and child care programs. The Canadian research using the NLSCY shows clearly that not just low-income children are at risk but children across the entire income spectrum. In fact, middle income children are more at risk because there are more of them. (Martha Friendly, Childcare Resource and Research Unit, Evidence, 6 June 2007)

8.1.2. ABORIGINAL CHILDREN'S SURVEY

Information from the Aboriginal Children's Survey (ACS) will help to fill the vacuum of knowledge about the health and well-being of First Nations, Inuit and Métis children 0 to 6 years.

Data collection began in the 2006 with a sample of 17,000 children taken from the Census; it is expected that the survey will be repeated every five years. The Committee highlights the importance of the continuation of this survey.

8.1.3. L'ÉTUDE LONGITUDINALE DU DÉVELOPPEMENT DES ENFANTS DU QUÉBEC (ELDEQ)

The ELDEQ is an ongoing prospective longitudinal study of children in Quebec, beginning at 5 months of age. The initial sample of 2,120 children is representative of all single-infant births in 1998 in the province of Québec except for those in Cri and Inuit territories or on First Nations reserves. The ELDEQ shares features with the Québec Newborn Twin Study and the NLSCY. Its main goals are to describe and understand the developmental trajectories of emotional, cognitive, behavioural, and school adjustment during early and middle childhood.

The study gathers socio-demographic characteristics, maternal health during pregnancy and birth history, parental lifestyle and health, family functioning, parent-child interactions, child temperament, motor and social development, behaviour; sleep patterns and nutrition, and type and quality of child care, kindergarten, and primary school.

At 5 months, characteristics about the sex and well being of the child are collected and a detailed profile of the mother and family compiled. The 17-month assessment collects data about children's emotional maturity, health, visits to healthcare specialists, social competence, and cognitive development.

These children were then followed annually from 5 months to 8 years and are assessed biennially until age 12.

8.1.4. UNDERSTANDING THE EARLY YEARS

In 1999, the Government of Canada introduced an initiative that drew on the country's accumulating longitudinal findings about the vulnerability and development of young children.

Understanding the Early Years (UEY) involves 12 communities. Each community received a 5-year grant to map early childhood needs and undertake planning processes. Five communities received funding in 2000–01 and seven more in 2002–03. The 12 community reports document: children's readiness to learn; factors influencing child development in the family and community; and the availability of local resources for young children and families.

The information is specific to neighbourhoods and is useful to communities for designing and implementing early childhood policies and programs and for prioritizing investments to enable children to thrive during their early years.

8.1.5. ONTARIO CHILD HEALTH STUDY

The Ontario Child Health Study (OCHS) is a population-based, longitudinal study of the effects of early childhood experiences and development on later adult health, quality of life, and functioning. The survey was conducted by Statistics Canada on behalf of the Canadian Centre for Studies of Children at Risk at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

Over a 17-year period the research team collected data on the mental and physical health of more than 3,000 children ages 4 to 16 years in two communities in Ontario. Since the initial survey, the researchers conducted two follow-up studies of the same cohort, in 1987 and again in 2001, as young adults at ages 21 to 33 years.²⁶⁴ The availability of

²⁶⁴ D. Offord, et. al., Ontario Child Health Study. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 44, 1987 pp. 832–36; Offord Centre for Child Studies, *Ontario Child Health Study*, 2006.

17-year data tracking of the health of young children into adulthood makes this study significant.

The study found that one in five children in Canada has a serious mental health (emotional or behavioural) problem that will compromise their later health and function as adults, and that children in poor families are at greater risk for developing these problems than children in families with higher incomes.²⁶⁵

8.1.6. BETTER BEGINNINGS, BETTER FUTURES²⁶⁶

Better Beginnings, Better Futures is a planned, 25-year, longitudinal, primary prevention, research, and demonstration intervention for young children.

It grew out of the Ontario Child Health Study. The model has influenced new programs, including the federal Community Action Programs for Children and Ontario's Healthy Babies, Healthy Children.²⁶⁷ The intervention targets young children, ages 0 to 4 and 4 to 8 years, who reside in low-income neighbourhoods and are at high risk of developmental problems, and evaluates results. The participating families and communities are diverse, and the findings are being used in Canada to inform local and national policy decisions about children's health and development.

Researchers are collecting and analyzing data on more than 100 outcome measures pertaining to children's and parents' social and emotional functioning; children's behavioural and academic functioning; and neighbourhood and community variables.

Analyses have found that children residing in several of the Better Beginnings neighbourhoods showed significantly lower rates of emotional problems (anxiety and depression) and improved social skills (self-control and cooperative behaviour), compared to children in comparison neighbourhoods. Children living in the intervention sites generally benefited from reduced rates of smoking in the home, higher rates of breast feeding and improved dietary intake. Children also had

²⁶⁵ Additional information is available from Offord Centre for Child Studies, "Ontario Child Health Study." Accessed from <http://www.offordcentre.com/ochs/index.html> 3 August 2008.

²⁶⁶ Information is taken from the "Better Beginnings, Better Futures" website, unless otherwise noted. Accessed from <http://bbbf.queensu.ca> 3 August 2008.

²⁶⁷ McCain and Mustard (1999).

more timely immunizations and parents felt they had better access to professional supports.²⁶⁸

A follow up study - Better Beginnings, 2008 - found that the percentage of children receiving special education services decreased and parents reported improved ratings of involvement with their child's teacher and feeling safer or more satisfied with their neighbourhood.

The local Better Beginnings, Better Futures organizations also served as effective catalysts for partnership-building among service agencies. Through participation on Better Beginnings committees, local services became more knowledgeable about the community, and more interested in and trusting of each other. This led to more efficient use of scarce program resources during times of provincial program cutbacks.

8.1.7. THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT INSTRUMENT (EDI)

Developed by researchers at the Offord Centre for Child Studies at McMaster University, the EDI is used in schools across Canada and captures developmental outcomes at age 5 on five scales: physical well-being; emotional health; social competence; language skills; and, general knowledge and cognitive skills. Children are deemed vulnerable if they are in the bottom 10 percentile in at least one of the five subscales. The results for individual children can be aggregated up to an entire community, to assess neighbourhood influences. Assessing the state of children's development at kindergarten appears to be a reliable gauge since differences at age 5 appear to persist throughout life.²⁶⁹

Information about where Canadian children stand on these dimensions as they begin their school careers can provide important insights for developing educational policies and practices in the country.²⁷⁰ In Canada, the EDI data have been collected for over 400,000 children up

²⁶⁸ Peters, R. DeV., *Better Beginnings, Better Futures: A comprehensive, community-based project for early childhood development. Highlights of Lessons Learned*, Better Beginnings, Better Futures Research Coordination Unit Technical Report, 2004, pp. 11-12.

²⁶⁹ M. Janus and D. Offord, Development and Psychometric Properties of the Early Development Instrument (EDI): A Measure of Children's School Readiness. *Canadian Journal of Behavioral Science* 39(1):1-22, 2007, p. 13.

²⁷⁵ E.M. Thomas, *Readiness to learn at school among five-year -old children in Canada.*, Statistics Canada, Special Surveys Division, Children and Youth Research Paper Series, 2006, p.6. Accessed from <http://www.statcan.ca/english/research/89-599-MIE/89-599-MIE2006004.pdf> 15 August 2008.

to 2006. A normative data set was created based on 116,800 5-year-olds. British Columbia, Manitoba, and Ontario have implemented the EDI for all kindergarten children.

In Vancouver, researchers are using the EDI to identify vulnerable children and aggregate the number and percent by quintile levels of vulnerability (from least to most vulnerable) throughout the province. The results clearly show a socio-economic gradient of vulnerability related to household income, showing that vulnerability cuts across all districts. The largest percentage of kindergarten children scoring in the bottom 10% of EDI scores was in one of the poorest districts (55.2%), while the smallest percentage of this group of children was in one of the wealthiest districts (17.7%).²⁷¹

In an annual report on child health and well-being, the Toronto District School Board matched EDI data with Statistics Canada's census data to document the level, extent, and types of vulnerability among children throughout the city. The results are similar to those found in Vancouver, demonstrating a social gradient of vulnerability in which the children's EDI scores track with the average income of families with children in the community. Approximately 25% of 4-year old children in schools in the poorer and poorest economic districts of Toronto scored in the lowest decile in two or more domains of the EDI.²⁷²

8.1.8. THE COMPOSITE LEARNING INDEX (CLI)

Developed by the Canadian Council on Learning (CCL), the Composite Learning Index (CLI) is the first national learning index not only in Canada but in the world. The CLI combines several sources of data to generate numeric scores representing the state of lifelong learning in Canada and its many communities. A high score for a particular area means that it has learning conditions most favourable to economic and social success.

Results of the CLI are released annually to monitor the progress of lifelong learning over time. By drawing attention to the specific learning indicators, the CLI provides a gateway for exploring different issues related to learning in Canada.²⁷³

²⁷¹ Jane Bertrand, "Canada: Longitudinal Monitoring of ECD Outcomes" in Mary Eming Young (ed.), *Early Child Development From Measurement to Action A Priority for Growth and Equity*, 2007, World Bank, p. 135.

²⁷² City of Toronto, *Toronto Report Card for Children Update 2003, 2004*, p. 45.

²⁷³ M. Lachance, F. Cartwright and C. Boughton, "Introducing the Composite Learning Index (CLI)," *Bringing it Together: Merging Community-Based, Life-Course, Linked*

The CLI uses a “basket” of 15 indicators to measure the state of lifelong learning. They are categorized under four major ‘pillars’:

- Learning to Know involves developing the foundation of skills and knowledge needed to function in the world. This includes literacy, numeracy, general knowledge, and critical thinking.
- Learning to Do refers to the acquisition of applied skills. It can encompass technical and hands-on skills and knowledge, and is tied closely to occupational success.
- Learning to Live Together involves developing values of respect and concern for others, fostering social and interpersonal skills and an appreciation of the diversity of Canadians. This area of learning contributes to a cohesive society.
- Learning to be refers to the learning that helps develop the whole person (mind, body, and spirit). This aspect concerns personal discovery, self-knowledge, creativity, and achieving a healthy balance in life.²⁷⁴

8.2. Federal role

While these studies each provide invaluable information, they do not aggregate into national evidence related to early child development. The Committee heard testimony that Canada is still lacking in data to make solid assessments of our programs and progress. One witness described the need to know more about how our children are developing:

What we need is more comprehensive monitoring at the provincial level, starting with children at birth....Frankly; we do not know how well we are doing. Although I endorse most of the OECD recommendations, they were not based on direct assessment of data collected from children. We need to look at children's general knowledge...their behavioural and social development, cognitive development, language and physical development. We need instruments that measure skills and say what skills kids have at age three and when they enter school. That needs to be done in a very transparent way that provides results at the community level and also back to the individual level. Finally, we need to use those kinds of results with an explicit link to social and educational policy, and use it to provide a framework for evaluation and research. (Douglas Willms, Professor, Canadian Research Institute for Social Policy, Evidence, 6 June 2007)

Data, and Social Indicator Approaches to Monitoring Child Development Proceedings from the Early Childhood Learning Knowledge Centre's Monitoring Committee Workshop. Canadian Council on Learning, Montreal, Quebec, 2007.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

Another witness emphasized the need for more information about the impacts of child care itself:

We need to know more about [daycare's] effects, both beneficial and adverse, and particularly, we need to know how things like the age at which children start daycare, the type of daycare structures and the features that characterize good and bad daycare contribute to those effects. (Dr. Michael Kramer, Scientific Director, Institute of Human Development, Child and Youth Health, Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Evidence, 30 May 2007)

Finally, Dr. Mustard provided the succinct statement on the need for better data: "Remember: No data, no problem, no policy."²⁷⁵

In its country note, the OECD reported:

A Federal secretariat could support on a regular basis the work of the provinces in early education and care, build bridges between certification and training regimes across the country, develop pan-Canadian standards and encourage common data collection. A dedicated federal department could also take the lead in the field of research and public information.²⁷⁶

Canada's expertise in research on early child development and learning was recognized by the OECD as one of our strengths. Yet, the Committee learned that better data are needed for research, evaluation and accountability purposes, to measure progress and identify gaps with respect to supporting the early development of children.

4. Therefore, the Committee recommends that the Government of Canada, in collaboration with provincial and territorial counterparts and researchers, create an adequately funded, robust system of data collection, evaluation and research, promoting all aspects of quality human development and in early childhood programming including the development of curricula, program evaluation and child outcome measures.

²⁷⁵ Dr. Fraser Mustard, Founder, Council for Early Child Development, Founder's Network, Evidence, 14 February 2008.

²⁷⁶ OECD, 2004, p. 7.

9. CONCLUSION

Throughout the preparation of this Senate report, we were reminded repeatedly that Canadian parents want the best for their children and they want to be the best possible parents. The family home is the cradle of learning and of love. Yet most fathers and mothers must enter the nation's workforce to provide for the financial needs of their families. Many parents do not have an extended family nearby to help; they are looking to their communities and their governments to make a greater commitment to the provision of quality licensed early childhood education and child care, either in a centre or in a family setting, as well as in after-school care and recreation. Canadians know that "It takes a village to raise a child".

The Government of Canada has an opportunity to be a champion for families in the 21st century, providing strong leadership, working to bring all parts of Canada up to the highest possible standards of care and learning, matched by dedicated funding, while supporting provincial and territorial governments, and communities, to develop a shared vision and a shared commitment to Canada's parents and their children.

The Government of Canada has demonstrated leadership over decades in this area, using a variety of mechanisms and programs to help provincial, territorial and local governments work with communities to meet the needs of children and their families. Now, provincial and territorial governments are setting ambitious goals with respect to early childhood development and for quality child care. They need the federal government to play a strong and supporting role.

Parents will make their own choices for themselves and their children, but all parents can benefit from a network of community programs – urban and rural, north and south, east and west – providing them and their children with learning opportunities based on the most current knowledge of human development, and focused on best practices in early childhood development and caring for children.

In view of the OECD report *Starting Strong II*, an in-depth analysis of total direct funding from all government sources to support families with pre-school children, as well as government funding for child care and associated programming for parents and children, is required to develop a base upon which incremental increases in funding can be

expressed ultimately as a percentage of GDP, to allow international comparisons as well as national accountability.

This analysis should also review funding for research to support the Committee's recommendation for an adequately funded, robust system of research, including longitudinal studies on infant mortality, birth weight, neonatal deaths, child health and development, early intervention, readiness to learn, and elementary achievement levels especially in literacy, language and numeracy. The science of human development must underlie all of Canada's research on children.

Many young families struggle financially, juggling their limited dollars among basic needs such as housing and food. Canadian consensus is clear. There is a lack in communities across this nation of quality, affordable child care and early childhood education programs to meet the needs and the choices of parents. There is, however, less agreement among governments and within the population of how much the investment should be and how the costs for these initiatives can be shared.

Canada can become a nation that empowers women and men as parents, and as their children's first and most important teachers, so that all parents can offer their children the very best start in life, from the moment of conception, accepting nothing less than high quality health, education and care services. Working together, at all levels of government, we can be "A Canada Fit for Children". We can support parents, in the home, in the community and in the workplace, to raise the healthiest children and the smartest children, ready to become the next generation of proud Canadians. There can be no greater investment. Families are the fundamental building blocks of our nation, and each child, considering all talents or challenges, deserves the opportunity to reach his or her potential.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends:

1. that the Prime Minister appoint a Minister of State for Children and Youth, under the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development Canada, with responsibilities to include working with provincial and territorial government to advance quality early learning, parent programs and child care, as well as research human development and early childhood development and learning;
2. that the Minister for Human Resources and Social Development appoint a National Advisory Council on Children, to advise the Minister of State for Children and Youth and through the Minister of State, other Ministers on how best to support parents and to advance quality early learning and child care. The Council membership is to include Parliamentarians, other stakeholders, community leaders and parents, with appropriate representation from Aboriginal communities;
3. that the Government of Canada call a series of meetings of federal, provincial, and territorial Ministers with responsibility for children and youth, beginning within one year of this report to:
 - a. establish a pan-Canadian framework to provide policies and programs to support children and their families; and
 - b. establish a federal/provincial/territorial Council of Ministers responsible for early learning and child care and parental supports, to meet annually, to review Canada's progress with respect to other OECD countries, and to share best practices within Canada; and
4. that the Government of Canada, in collaboration with provincial and territorial counterparts and researchers, create an adequately funded, robust system of data collection, evaluation and research, promoting all aspects of quality human development and in early childhood programming including the development of curricula, program evaluation and child outcome measures.

APPENDIX 1 – WITNESS LIST

ORGANIZATION	NAME, TITLE	DATE OF APPEARANCE
39th Parliament - 1st Session		
Child Care Advocacy Association Of Canada	Jody Dallaire, President	20-04-2007
Child Care Advocacy Association Of Canada	Monica Lysack, Executive Director	20-04-2007
Child Care Advocacy Association Of Canada	Susan Elson, Secretary	20-04-2007
Child Care Advocacy Association Of Canada	Susan Harney, Vice Chair	20-04-2007
Child Care Advocacy Association Of Canada	Elizabeth Ablett, Ontario Representative	20-04-2007
Child Care Advocacy Association Of Canada	Donna Riddel, Manitoba Representative	20-04-2007
Child Care Advocacy Association Of Canada	Lynell Anderson, Senior Project Manager	20-04-2007
Childcare Resource and Research Unit, University of Toronto	Martha Friendly, Coordinator	06-06-2007
University of New Brunswick	Douglas Willms, Professor, Canadian Research Institute for Social Policy	06-06-2007
University of British Columbia	Kevin Milligan, Professor, Department of Economics	06-06-2007
Human Resources and Social Development Canada	Shawn Tupper, Director General, Social Policy	07-06-2007

Social Housing Services Corporation	Dr. Gordon Chong, Chairman; Former chairperson, Ministerial Advisory Committee on Child Care Spaces Initiative	07-06-2007
39th Parliament - 2nd Session		
Founder's Network	Dr. Fraser Mustard, Founder, Council for Early Child Development	14-02-2008
Council for Early Child Development	The Honourable Margaret Norrie McCain, Co-Chair, The Early Years	14-02-2008

APPENDIX 2

INNOVATIVE PRACTICES IN ECEC

Intergenerational healing as a first step in promoting child development in Nunavut²⁷⁷

Coral Harbour is an Inuit community of 780 people located on Southampton Island in Nunavut. The only way of reaching Coral Harbour is by plane. The only transportation on the island itself is dog sled, snow mobile and a few four-wheel drives.

The challenges facing families of Coral Harbour are not dissimilar to other remote Aboriginal communities. Imposed governance structures and intergenerational and cross cultural clashes impede a cohesive response to children and the programs that serve them. The mainly white, professional and managerial personnel are not permanent residents and turnover regularly, encumbers the continuity of projects and relationships. The child rearing approaches of grandparents whose focus is to drive home important safety lessons in a harsh environment, differ from those of young parents who have been exposed to child development information.

In 2004, a community leader called on Rural Voices, a community development program that works with remote and rural communities to develop responsive services. Using what it calls the CARS process, facilitators help communities decide how they can draw on their existing community services and assets to more effectively support children and families. The CARS approach recognizes that directing change from outside the community is not be sustainable. Instead they began by gathering moms and dads around their own kitchen tables to provide comfortable forums for young parents to voice their concerns.

The community has a Head Start program and a child care centre both operating independently and staffed by caregivers undergoing long-distance training. The Rural Voices facilitators didn't begin with service reorganization. The community hosts were surprised and encouraged by the participation and have taken on the consultative process. "Early childhood development is all about making change,"

²⁷⁷ Information on this program is drawn from personal interviews with staff involved.

says Carol Gott of Rural Voices. "Parents must feel they control their own environment before they can contemplate changes for their children."

Involving young families in self-government, Nisga'a Nation of Nass River²⁷⁸

In 2000 the Nisga'a Nation of the Nass River Valley in Northern BC became the first Aboriginal people to negotiate self government with the Government of Canada. The excitement permeates the entire community of 7,000 as it develops new self-made governing structures, laws and policies. Hundreds of people attend meetings debating everything from the pros and cons of different models of home ownership to whether dogs should be licensed.

Rural Voices was contacted by the Nisga'a government to help involve young people in this exciting nation building opportunity. Participating in long meetings is hard when there are small children to be fed and put to bed. Young families were also dealing with a hold-over from the past. Different levels of governments had installed various early childhood programs including child care, nursery schools and head start; but all had trouble finding qualified staff and none offered sufficient hours to allow mothers to work, or go to school, and none offered support to allow parents to attend community meetings. In addition young parents were confronted with the suspicions of community elders who were uncomfortable with organized child care.

Using the Rural Voices facilitators the families came together to identify their common concerns as young parents. They sought and won a designated youth seat on the Nisga'a governing council and now, with control over their national assets, they are in the process of reorganizing their early childhood programs. Through their activity the young families have raised the profile of child care as an economic development issue.

In addition, Nisga'a leaders have recognized that youth who leave the Nass Valley to continue their education can not bring their skills back to the community without child care and recent plans to establish a call centre were put on hold until a solution could be found for the child care needs of the workforce.

²⁷⁸ Information on this program is drawn from personal interviews with staff.

Integrating early childhood services in First Nations communities

Federal consultations on integrating early childhood services for Aboriginal communities led the Fisher River Cree Nation to see the advantage of a single location for families to access all the available early childhood services.

Early childhood leaders were worried that a government-led initiative would be lengthy; with council approval, they mobilized community support. They found a strong consensus to connect the child development centre to the school. To convince school officials, a gymnasium was added to the building plans to share with the school's children.

The 'hub' approach to early childhood services has helped to breakdown access barriers. For example, child care had only been available to parents who were working or in school. With the outreach program and the new centre, all young children in the community benefit from participating in the early child development hub.

The early child development hub contains: early learning and care for infants and pre-schoolers; an after-school program for school-age children; the Head Start program, a nursery, and kindergarten; early childhood development health programs including prenatal nutrition and a full-time speech and language specialist; a Parents' Room; a kitchen to teach cooking and nutrition; and space for Child and Family Services to provide workshops.

Shelia Murdock, the community innovator behind the project, said "In some ways, we are ahead of the mainstream early childhood sector in the province, which is now starting to show interest in piloting the hub model. We decided what was needed and acted without waiting of government to tell us."²⁷⁹

A research study on three such initiatives among rural First Nation communities in British Columbia concluded that such an approach can build community cohesion, and can frame service delivery in a culturally appropriate way.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁹ OECD (2006), p. 19.

²⁸⁰ Jessica Ball, "Early Childhood Care and Development Programs as Hook and Hub for Inter-sectoral Service Delivery in First Nations Communities," *Journal of Aboriginal Health*, March 2005, p. 36.

First Nations Partnership Programs (FNPP)

In 1989, frustrated with mainstream early childhood education (ECE) training programs, the Meadow Lake Tribal Council of northern Saskatchewan approached the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria about establishing an innovative ECE training program and partnership. Dialogue began on how a curriculum might be created to incorporate the language, cultural practices and child care goals of the Cree and Dene communities around Meadow Lake. During the 1990s, through partnerships between the university and other First Nations communities, a framework for community-based ECE training was built. Seven Aboriginal bands and tribal councils across western Canada have now worked with a university-based team to deliver ECE training in their own communities.

Teachers trained by the program emphasize the colours and symbols of the Medicine Wheel in the physical environment of the centre. Items are labelled in the traditional language of the children as well as in English. The children are taught traditional songs. English nursery rhymes, plays and stories are translated. Elders are enlisted to introduce traditional stories, arts and crafts to the children as a regular part of their daily experience. Children try snowshoeing and making miniature snowshoes, tepees and moccasins. At the same time, the children are introduced to reading in English and use computers, cameras and printers to tell their own stories.

Cited in an international compendium of best practices for indigenous knowledge, the approach grew from its initiation in 1989 in this community by 2002 to involve 55 First Nation communities.²⁸¹ It assists communities in meeting four inter-related goals: to offer organized Early Childhood Care and Development initiatives; to build capacity for local employment as providers of care and other development services for young children and families; to support training and labour market participation of adults by providing quality child care; and to sustain indigenous culture and traditional language through training for community members.²⁸²

²⁸¹ J. Ball and A. Pence, "The generative curriculum model: A bicultural community-based approach to building capacity for early childhood care and development in indigenous communities in Canada," in Karin Boven and Jun Morohashi (editors), *Best Practices using Indigenous Knowledge*, Nuffic, The Hague, The Netherlands, and UNESCO/MOST, Paris, France, 2002, p. 189. Accessed from <http://web.uvic.ca/fnpp/bestpractices.pdf> 11 July 2008.

²⁸² Ibid.

Roots of Empathy

Roots of Empathy (ROE) is an evidence-based classroom program that has shown dramatic effect in raising children's social and emotional competence, reducing levels of aggression and increasing pro-social behaviour. The evidence is a series of national and international research studies measuring the differences in outcomes between children who are involved in the program and those who are not, and whether any positive effects endure over time.

Researchers at the University of British Columbia took a lead role in the initial evaluations of ROE. Beginning in 2000, the team conducted several studies across different grades and populations. Results for all studies showed that ROE children exhibited significant increases in emotional understanding and pro-social behaviours and significant decreases in aggression, compared to children not in the program. Subsequent studies that also examined peer ratings of pro-social behaviours found a significant increase in ROE children's ratings of peer pro-social behaviour – namely that they felt that their peers shared and helped more, and were more inclusive. Children also reported a significant increase in their feelings of supportiveness in the classroom.

In 2001, the Government of Manitoba commissioned a three-year follow-up study of ROE, measuring pro-social behaviour, physical aggression, and indirect aggression. Results of the study show a significant improvement in all three behaviours in ROE children immediately after the program, with improvements in behaviours maintained three years later, and some behaviours continuing to show improvement.

Researchers at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto evaluated the degree to which the methods and approaches support character education. They concluded that ROE is an effective program for developing social and emotional learning, based on scientific research on child development and personal and professional experience of leading educators and health practitioners.

It should be noted that this report included one study from the University of Alberta which found no significant effects from the program. In the ROE report (March 2008), the pilot project and the methodology were questioned.

APPENDIX 3

OVERVIEW OF EARLY LEARNING POLICIES AND PROGRAMS IN PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES

Alberta

Responsible department(s)

The Ministry of Alberta Children and Youth Services is responsible for child care in Alberta.

Framework/strategy

On 9 May 2008, the Alberta government introduced a new child care plan, entitled *Creating Child Care Choices*. In a document that recognizes the primary role of parents, their increasing participation in the labour force, and the need for work-life balance, the government commits to 14,000 new spaces over three years for children up to age 12. As its title suggests, the plan emphasizes parental choice:

[The plan] ...gives community partners the tools to create new child care spaces in a variety of settings, including family day homes, nursery schools, day cares and out-of-school care programs.²⁸³

Access/inclusion

As noted below, subsidies for low- and moderate-income families using accredited child care or whose children are being cared for by a relative will increase to ensure their continued access to care. Those using accredited care were scheduled to receive a 3.8% increase effective September 2008, while those whose children were being cared for by a relative would receive a 26% increase, presumably increasing choice for families.

In addition, the plan will see increased subsidies to accredited child care providers for infant care, to act as an incentive to increase the number of infant care spaces available, and will provide subsidies to families of school-aged children.

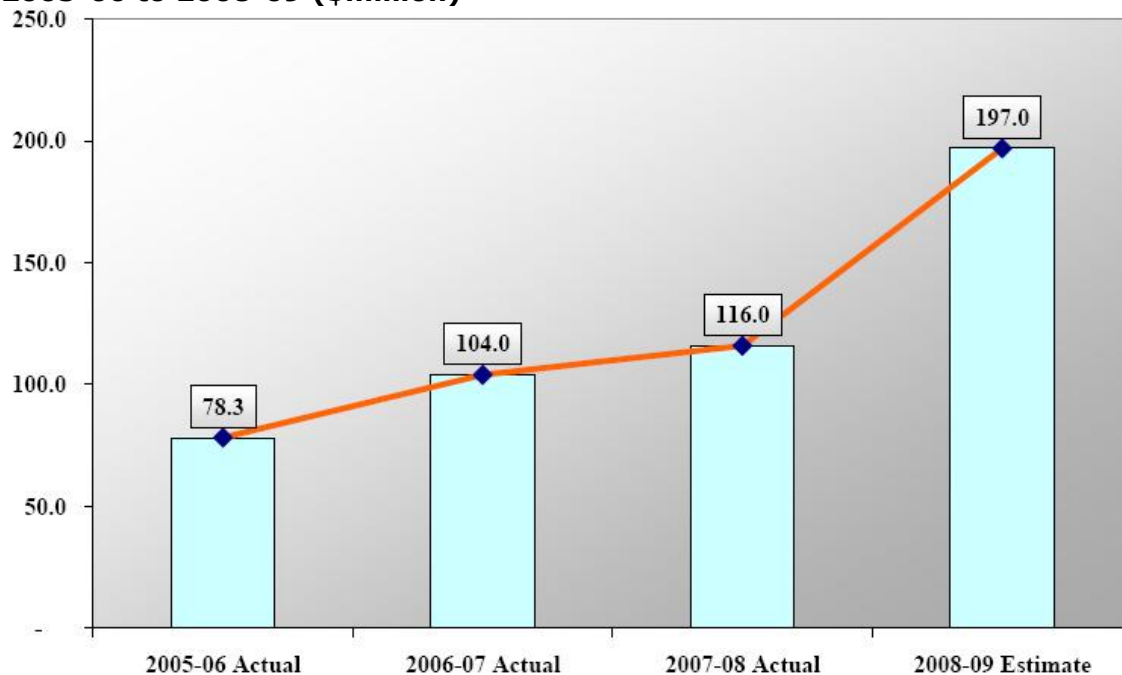
²⁸³ Alberta Children and Youth Services, "Creating Child Care Choices: A plan to support our families," *Backgrounder*, 9 May 2008. Accessed from <http://alberta.ca/acn/200805/23490CED55609-98BD-B51C-511D68C6FF21A568.html> 22 July 2008.

As of March 2008, the government reported that 8,087 families with children attending a day care were receiving a provincial child care subsidy; 2,090 families with children attending an approved family day home were receiving a subsidy.²⁸⁴

Funding levels

The April 2008 budget announcements combined with the commitments made in the Creating Child Care Choices plan will result in significant increases in government spending for child care, including early childhood learning. The chart below, taken from a Government of Alberta website, is a graphic representation of this increase in the first year. The total investment over three years is to be \$242 million.

Figure 6 - Children and Youth Services: Child Care Program Expense: 2005-06 to 2008-09 (\$million)²⁸⁵



The news release announcing the new plan indicated that funding in this fiscal year would be used for increased subsidies and infant space

²⁸⁴ Alberta Children and Youth Services, "Facts and statistics about child care in Alberta," Backgrounder, 9 May 2008. Accessed from <http://alberta.ca/acn/200805/23490CED55609-98BD-B51C-511D68C6FF21A568.html> 22 July 2008.

²⁸⁵ Alberta Children and Youth Services, "How much is Alberta investing in Child Care?" from government website. Accessed from http://www.child.gov.ab.ca/home/documents/childcare/chart_2005_06_to_2008_09.pdf 22 July 2008.

incentives, as noted above, and for capital costs associated with creating new spaces, operating grant increases tied to accreditation to improve quality, out-of-school care for school-aged children, and measures tied to staffing, outlined in more detail below.²⁸⁶

Program design

As evidenced by the title of its plan, Alberta has focussed on creating choices for families, including the above-noted subsidies for out-of-school care for lower income families of school-aged children, subsidies for those in need whose children are cared for by relatives, and a regional focus for allocating funds that can be used to create spaces in nursery schools, existing centres, near schools, in private schools, and in private family homes.

The government reported that as of March 2008, Alberta had 512 licensed day cares with a total licensed capacity of 25,729 spaces, 2,687 approved family day homes with a capacity of 11,667 spaces and 529 licensed out-of-school care programs with a capacity of 19,482 spaces. The government also reported that as of March 2008, 54% of programs for children up to 12 years of age were non-profit, while 46% were privately owned.²⁸⁷

Alberta has 10 Child and Family Services Authorities (CFSAs) and 18 Delegated First Nation Agencies (DFNAs) that deliver services to meet local priorities and the needs of children, youth, families and communities throughout the province.²⁸⁸

They are also responsible for monitoring and enforcing compliance with regulations and licensing standards in centres and family child care providers' homes. Under the regulations, providers include: day care centres (care for seven or more children under 7 years, for more than three but less than 24 consecutive hours); drop-in centres (care for seven or more children for more than three but less than 24 consecutive hours but no child can be cared for more than 40 hours in one month); nursery schools (care for seven or more children for less than three consecutive hours in a day); and out-of-school care (care

²⁸⁶ "Provincial child care plan will create more quality child care spaces for children up to 12 years of age", *Budget 2008 News Release*, 9 May 2008. Accessed from <http://alberta.ca/acn/200805/23490CED55609-98BD-B51C-511D68C6FF21A568.html> 22 July 2008.

²⁸⁷ "Facts and statistics about child care in Alberta"

²⁸⁸ Alberta Children and Youth Services, "Local Offices." Accessed from http://www.child.alberta.ca/home/local_offices.cfm 24 July 2008.

for seven or more children before and after school, during the lunch hour or when schools are closed).²⁸⁹

Under the Creating Child Care Choices plan, these authorities will have access to an \$8 million fund to assist in developing regional plans to expand the number of spaces tailored to local needs.²⁹⁰

In addition to establishing minimum standards, Alberta goes beyond licensing to a voluntary accreditation system, which creates processes to advance in accreditation, and with which is associated funding through grants to providers. Initiated in 2003, the three goals of the accreditation initiative are to: "raise the standard of child care in the province and improve best practices in early learning and child care services; support families through the provision and identification of quality care; and address issues of staff recruitment and retention in early learning and child care programs."²⁹¹ Accreditation is possible for centre-based care and agencies providing home-based care in at least three homes.

Accreditation standards include specified outcomes for the child, the parents, and the community;²⁹² not only are resources available to assist providers to become accredited, but accreditation also carries with it additional financial benefits including higher operating and wage subsidies that rise with the level of accreditation, and a listing as an accredited service on government and other websites.

As of March 2008, 296 pre-school programs had been accredited; 228 programs were working towards accreditation.²⁹³

²⁸⁹ Alberta Children and Youth Services, "Child Care Licensing," from Government of Alberta website. Accessed from <http://www.child.alberta.ca/home/764.cfm> 24 July 2008.

²⁹⁰ "Creating Child Care Choices: A plan to support our families"

²⁹¹ Alberta Association for the Accreditation of Early Learning and Care Services, "What is the background on the development of the Alberta Child Care Accreditation Program?" Accessed from http://www.abccaccred.ca/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=32&Itemid=31 22 July 2008.

²⁹² Alberta Association for the Accreditation of Early Learning and Care Services, "ACCAP Quality Standards," October 2004. Accessed from <http://www.abccaccred.ca/pdf/ACCAP%20Quality%20Standards%20General%20criteria%20only.pdf> 22 July 2008.

²⁹³ Alberta Children and Youth Services, *Spotlight on Child Care*, 2008, p. 1. Accessed from http://www.child.alberta.ca/home/documents/childcare/doc_spotlight_childCare.pdf 22 July 2008.

Human resources

In 2007, the Alberta government introduced the Staff Attraction Incentive Allowance, to “to encourage trained child care professionals to re-enter the field.”²⁹⁴ For staff with at least six months’ experience and who have been out of the field for at least six months, the incentive paid up to \$5000 over two years for full-time employees in a licensed child care centre or home-based provider. By March 2008, 160 child care workers had returned to the field in response to the incentive.²⁹⁵

The more recent announcements, in Budget 2008 in April and with the new plan released in May 2008 also offered significant supports to recruitment and retention of qualified child care staff.

These included:

- wage top-ups to increase by 60% for staff working in licensed day care centres and approved family day homes participating in accreditation processes;
- a new wage supplement of \$144 per month effective September 2008 for staff working in licensed out-of-school care programs or registered family home providers involved in out-of-school care, until April 2009, when licensed school-age programs can participate in a new accreditation program, and will therefore be eligible for the wage top-ups described above;
- expanded eligibility for the Child Care Staff Attraction Incentive Allowance effective September 2008, with a one-time payment of \$2,500 after one year of employment for individuals entering the child care profession, including out-of-school care programs;
- a new scholarship of \$2,500 for high school students who have completed a child care orientation course and have enrolled in a post-secondary early childhood program;
- a free child care orientation course online by June 2008 to increase access, especially in rural areas, to training required to begin a career in child care;
- a recruitment campaign to attract more people to the child care field and encourage those in the field to upgrade their education;
- exploration of a child care apprenticeship program; and
- enhanced child care staff equivalencies so people working in child care with related training can be certified at a higher level.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 2.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ “Creating Child Care Choices: A plan to support our families”.

Parenting programs

In order to help parents with their parenting duties, the Alberta government has put in place a series of Parent Link Centres, created on the model of family resource centres. These centres "provide supports to parents to help their children develop and arrive at school ready to learn. Parents can access information about community services, obtain referrals, meet other parents and families, and take part in quality learning activities with their children."

There are 46 Parent Link Centres spread out across the province, including one on-line, i.e., a virtual Parent Link Centre; each of these centres is uniquely designed to meet the needs of families living in each community

While programming may differ from centre to centre, each centre must offer all four core services: parent education, early childhood development and care; family support; and information and referrals.

Parenting programs are to "build parents' skills and confidence in providing a nurturing environment for their children."²⁹⁷ These programs are intended to be universal rather than targeted, and might include formal and informal workshops and seminars on issues related to parenting and early childhood development, drop-in seminars and programs, or family literacy and numeracy programs for parents and caregivers.²⁹⁸

There is also a toll-free Parent Information Line at 1-866-714-KIDS (5437)

British Columbia

Responsible department(s)

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) has primary responsibility for child care and early child development. The Ministry

²⁹⁷ Family Support America, *Guidelines for Family Support Practice*, 2nd edition, 2001, p. 4, cited in Alberta Children and Youth Services, "How the Parent Link Program Works", p. 3. Accessed from <http://www.child.gov.ab.ca/home/documents/parenting/ParentLinksGuidelineandBestPracticesExcerpt.pdf> 22 July 2008.

²⁹⁸ "How the Parent Link Program Works", p. 4.

of Education “shares responsibility for early learning with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Children and Family Development.”²⁹⁹

Links with education

Early Learning Initiatives within the Ministry of Education include: support for school boards to influence early learning of pre-schoolers; help for schools to increase the number of children who “demonstrate school readiness in Kindergarten”; and identification of “key areas of early learning for young children.”³⁰⁰ The Ministry of Education also collaborates with MCFD and Health in a “Ready, Set, Learn” program, which allows schools to engage parents of pre-schoolers and their children with an age-appropriate book and other supports.³⁰¹

In addition, in February 2008, British Columbia announced the establishment of the Early Childhood Learning Agency under the Ministry of Education to determine the feasibility of expanding early learning programs in British Columbia by assessing the benefits, costs and viability of providing full-day kindergarten for five year olds, as well as full-school-day pre-kindergarten programs for four and three year olds. The feasibility study, which began in spring 2008, will be completed by the end of this calendar year.

Finally, the Ministry of Education took the lead in developing an early learning framework, outlined in more detail below.

Curriculum

The Government of British Columbia released two “frameworks” in 2008, one on early learning and the other on children and youth. Both are intended to be interdepartmental.

Of these, the *British Columbia Early Learning Framework* is very similar to non-mandatory curriculum documents produced in other jurisdictions. It is targeted to StrongStart³⁰² facilitators, early childhood educators, and other stakeholders, including families, to guide in programming for children from birth to kindergarten.³⁰³

²⁹⁹ BC Ministry of Education, “Early Learning.” Accessed from http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/literacy/early_learning/ 22 July 2008.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ BC Ministry of Education, “Ready, Set, Learn.” Accessed from <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/literacy/rs1/> 22 July 2008.

³⁰² More information on the StrongStart program is included in the Parenting Programs section.

³⁰³ BC Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) and Ministry of Health, *British Columbia Early Learning Framework*, 2008, p. 2. http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/literacy/early_learning/f_early_learning_framework.pdf

The framework is also intended to build on existing regulation and licensing requirements for early learning facilities, and “to provide a comprehensive program of activities that address all areas of child development.”³⁰⁴ The framework sets out four areas of early learning: well-being and belonging; exploration and creativity; languages and literacies; and, social responsibility and diversity.³⁰⁵

Framework/strategy

The second framework, *Strong, Safe and Supported: A Commitment to BC’s Children & Youth*, also released in 2008, is “a government-wide integrated framework for children and youth. The framework developed on behalf of the Provincial Government and the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) is the culmination of collaboration and consultation with ministry staff and ministry partners.”³⁰⁶ The action plan identifies five “pillars” as “key elements of an effective child, youth and family development system:”³⁰⁷ prevention, early intervention, intervention and support, the Aboriginal approach, and quality assurance.

The ministry’s Strong, Safe and Supported Framework and detailed operational plan establishes a foundation that will enhance and improve services to children and youth.³⁰⁸

One of the priority actions identified in MCFD’s Strong, Safe, and Supported Action Plan is to develop, cost and implement a cross-ministry five-year Early Years Plan,³⁰⁹ to include child care and early childhood development. Its purpose is to maximize potential growth

³⁰⁴ BC Ministry of Education, “Early Learning Framework.” Accessed from http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/literacy/early_learning/early_learning_framework.htm 23 July 2008.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 17

³⁰⁶ BC Association of Family Resource Centres, “Highlights of Strong, Safe and Supported: A Commitment to BC’s Children & Youth,” *News Bulletin: Quarterly News for Family Resource Program Providers*, Spring/Summer 2008, p. 1. Accessed from <http://www.frpbc.ca/news-and-events/documents/NewsBulletin-SpringSummer08.pdf> 22 July 2008.

³⁰⁷ The Honourable Tom Christensen, Minister, Children and Family Development, “The Five Pillars: A Commitment to BC Children and Youth – A Message from the Minister”, *Strong, Safe and Supported: A Commitment to BC’s Children & Youth*, 2008.

³⁰⁸ MCFD, Operational Plan, Accessed from http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/about_us/pdf/UPDATE_OpPlan_July_18.pdf August 4, 2008.

³⁰⁹ Information about the Early Years Plan was provided by Anne B. Wetherill A/Manager, Child Care Policy, Early Years Team, BC Ministry of Children and Family Development, in electronic correspondence dated 12 August 2008.

and development for all children and families across British Columbia. The plan is expected to define the current early years and child care environments and provide a guide for the activities of government in these areas for the coming years.

Access/inclusion

Affordability is addressed with a child care subsidy for care in licensed spaces, home-based care (including in the child's home), and for out-of-school care.³¹⁰ These subsidies have been provided to 25,000 low- and middle-income families with annual incomes below \$38,000.³¹¹ For children with special needs, the government provides supported child care, and additional funding, which enabled more than 5,800 children with special needs – more than ever before – to participate in child care settings.³¹²

To promote cultural accessibility, as noted above, the Aboriginal approach is one of the pillars of the child and youth strategy. Funding is provided for the Aboriginal Early Childhood Development (AECD) Initiative, which is focused on supporting “comprehensive, integrated and culturally sustainable community-based programs in Aboriginal communities” across the province.³¹³ Forty-three AECD programs in BC aim to: increase the health and well-being of Aboriginal children; strengthen the capacity of Aboriginal communities to deliver a full range of services with an emphasis on early childhood development; and, increase awareness, outreach and access to a wide range of culturally appropriate ECD programs and services for Aboriginal children, families and communities.³¹⁴

Funding levels

From 2004-2005 to 2007-2008, the number of funded licensed child care spaces increased by more than 10,000.³¹⁵ As of March 2008, the provincial government was spending nearly \$290 million a year on child care, through programs including creating new licensed spaces;

³¹⁰ MCFD, “Child Care Subsidy.” Accessed from http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/subsidy_promo.htm 23 July 2008.

³¹¹ MCFD, “Child Care in BC,” *For the Record*, 7 March 2008, p. 1. Accessed from http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/pdfs/for_the_record_child_care_mar_08.pdf 23 July 2008.

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ MCFD, “Aboriginal Early Childhood Development.” Accessed from http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/early_childhood/aecd.htm 22 July 2008.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ MCFD, *2007/08 Annual Service Plan Report*, June 2008, p. 25. Accessed from http://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/Annual_Reports/2007_2008/cfd/cfd.pdf 23 July 2008.

operating funding; the child care subsidies and additional funding to meet special needs; assistance and incentives for early childhood educators; and, partnerships to provide parental choice.³¹⁶

The BC government has also committed to creating 2,000 new licensed spaces by 2010, with \$12.5 million in Major Capital funding.³¹⁷ This figure is included in Ministerial spending on early childhood development, child care, and support to children with special needs which has increased from \$421.8 million in 2007-08, to an estimated \$466.3 in 2008-09,; plans call for further increases, to \$473.9 million and \$477.8 million 2009-10 and 2010-11 respectively.³¹⁸

Program design

Like most provinces, British Columbia's delivery system combines centre-based and home-based care, licensed and unlicensed providers, and for-profit and not-for-profit facilities.

Licensed care options include group child care centres, pre-schools, family child care homes, out-of-school care centres, child minding centres, and supported child care.³¹⁹ Licenses are not required for care provided by a caregiver who cares for her own children and no more than two others,³²⁰ who may or may not be registered with their local Child Care Resource and Referral program. To be registered, qualifications must be met, including emergency first aid training and a criminal record check; unlicensed providers who do not register may or may not have these qualifications.³²¹

Human resources

Facing shortages of qualified staff, in January 2008, the provincial government implemented a time-limited Incentive Grant Program, to provide up to 100 early childhood educators who had not worked in a licensed child care facility for at least two years with an incentive to return to employment in a licensed child care facility. The grant was to provide \$2,500 at the completion of the first year, and an additional

³¹⁶ "Child Care in BC," p. 1.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ MCFD, "Budget February 2008: Key Budget Highlights from year to year."

Accessed from http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/about_us/budget.htm 23 July 2008.

³¹⁹ MCFD and Ministry of Health, *Parents' Guide to Selecting Child Care: Selecting and Monitoring of Licensed and Licence-not-required Child Care*, 1998, pp. 5-9.

Accessed from <http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/pdfs/com014.pdf> 23 July 2008.

³²⁰ Ibid. p. 3.

³²¹ Ibid. p. 4.

\$2,500 at the end of a second year of employment.³²² Enrolment in the program was open for six months, ending June 2008.

To assist those who are currently ECE students or who are recent graduates, the government offers two financial assistance programs: bursaries, and loan assistance. The latter is time-limited.

Bursaries are available for students in approved early childhood education courses, at \$100 per course, to a maximum of \$500 per semester.³²³ These are funded by MCFD, managed by the Early Childhood Educators of BC, and administered by VanCity Community Foundation. Applications must be submitted before the semester of study for which bursary funds are being sought, and cheques are issues upon submission of a transcript of course results.³²⁴

The government also committed to reduce BC student loan amounts owing by up to \$1,250 to ECE graduates upon completion of one year of regular employment in a licensed facility, with an addition \$1,250 reduction at the end of a second year of regular employment.³²⁵ This is a time-limited program, available only to those whose final year of study was completed between 1 January 2007 and 31 December 2008; the work requirement must be completed by the end of 2010.

Additional supports to the early childhood learning workforce include new licensing regulations and a new one-year early childhood educator certificate.³²⁶

Training in the new early learning framework was scheduled to begin in fall 2008, in partnership with three post-secondary institutions: the University of Victoria, Selkirk College, and Northern Lights College. The

³²² MCFD, "Early Childhood Educator Incentive Grant Program: Frequently Asked Questions." Accessed from http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/ece_incentive/pdf/incentive_faq.pdf 23 July 2008.

³²³ Early Childhood Educators of BC, "Information for Bursary Application," 2008, p. 2. Accessed from http://www.ecebc.ca/bursary/ecebc_bursary_info_summer08.pdf 23 July 2008.

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ StudentAid BC, "B.C. Early Childhood Educator Loan Assistance Program: frequently asked questions." Accessed from http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/studentaidbc/repay/repaymentassistance/faq_loanassistance_ece.htm 23 July 2008.

³²⁶ "Child Care in BC," p. 2.

training was targeted to ECEs, staff in ECE training institutions, and other service providers.³²⁷

Parenting programs

As noted above, the Ministry of Education funds StrongStart BC Centres in most of 60 school districts across the province; they are designed “to provide opportunities for parents and caregivers to observe and practice activities that support early learning, and to meet and make connections with other families attending the centre.”³²⁸

Where possible, they are co-located with other services for children and parents, including in under-utilized schools,³²⁹ promoting an integrated approach to early childhood learning services.

Research/data³³⁰

The Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP), a consortium of six BC universities, is funded in part by the provincial government to promote “new knowledge on early childhood development through interdisciplinary research.” In particular, MCFD’s \$7.5 million in funding for the partnership has supported:

- the Early Childhood Development Instrument (EDI), “a survey tool used to measure children’s physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, communication skills and general knowledge”;
- a provincial Atlas, which “presents a visual summary of early child development trends across neighbourhood, school district and provincial geographies in BC”³³¹; and,
- other early childhood related research projects.

³²⁷ “Early Learning Framework.”

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ Ministry of Education, “General Guidelines for StrongStart BC Centres 2007.” Accessed from http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/literacy/early_learning/guidelines.htm 23 July 2008.

³³⁰ Information on research and data is taken from MCFD, “Child Care and Early Childhood Development (ECD),” *Fact Sheet*, updated January 2007, p. 2, unless otherwise specified. Accessed from http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/pdfs/childcare_ecd_january_2007.pdf 23 July 2008.

³³¹ Paul Kershaw, Lori Irwin, Kate Trafford, Clyde Hertzman, “New Knowledge about Nurturing Neighbourhoods: The BC Atlas of Child Development – Executive Summary,” UBC Press, 2005, p. 1. Accessed from http://www.help.ubc.ca/atlas/Atlas_Exec_Summary_2005.pdf 23 July 2008.

B.C. is the first province in Canada to implement the EDI province-wide; since 2000, all school districts have participated, and more than 95% of kindergarten children have been involved.

Manitoba

Responsible department(s)

Manitoba Family Services and Housing has responsibility for child care, including licensing and monitoring child care centres and family child care homes according to The Community Child Care Standards Act and Regulations; providing grants and program assistance to eligible child care facilities; placing children with special needs into child care settings through the Children with Disabilities Program; classifying all child care assistants and early childhood educators who work in licensed child care centres; assigning a child care coordinator and subsidy advisor to work with each licensed facility; and providing child care subsidies to eligible families to help with the cost of care through the Subsidy Program.³³²

Links to education

As noted above, Manitoba was the first province to create an inter-ministerial Cabinet committee on services to children, in 2006. Entitled Healthy Child Manitoba, it brings together Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs; Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism; Manitoba Education and Youth; Manitoba Family Services and Housing; Manitoba Health; Manitoba Justice; and Status of Women.

Since 2005, Manitoba has had an Early Learning and Child Care in Schools Policy, making surplus schools a 'first-choice location for child care centres'.³³³

Framework/strategy

In 2008, the Manitoba government introduced its five-year plan for child care: *Family Choices: Manitoba's Five-Year Agenda for Early Learning and Child Care*.³³⁴

³³² Manitoba Family Services and Housing, "About the Manitoba Child Care Program." Accessed from <http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/childcare/about.html> 14 August 2008.

³³³ Government of Manitoba, "Public Schools to See More Non-Profit Child-Care Centres Established," *News Release*, November 17, 2005. Accessed from <http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/press/top/2005/11/2005-11-17-01.html> July 7, 2008.

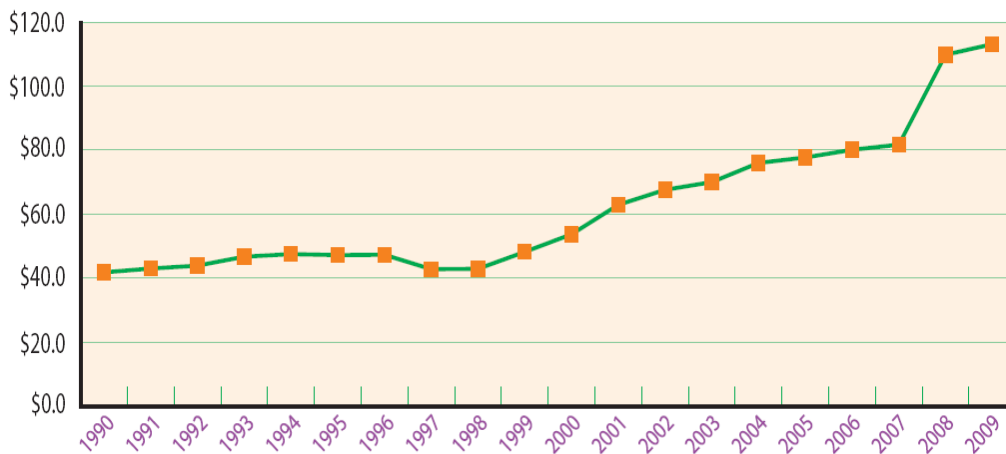
³³⁴ Manitoba Family Services and Housing (2008).

Funding levels

The Manitoba government doubled its spending on early childhood learning from 1999 to 2007,³³⁵ which has contributed to important outcomes: more than 5,000 child care spaces, enhanced nursery school initiatives, including increased access to nursery school subsidies; changed child care subsidy levels to make more low- and middle-income families eligible, graduation of 450 early childhood educators, and increase of 15% in salaries for child care staff and an increase of 12% in revenues for home-based care providers.³³⁶

The chart below shows past and anticipated increases in funding.

Figure 7 – Growth in child care funding in Manitoba (\$ millions)



Access/inclusion

Within child care, the Children with Disabilities Program is one mechanism for ensuring that children have access to mainstream and specialized services.

To address affordability issues, the Manitoba government provides financial support to cover part of the costs for child care, for parents who have low incomes, and are employed, seeking employment, studying, have medical needs themselves, or have a child for whom they have developed a plan with professionals and child care providers.³³⁷

³³⁵ Ibid., p. 2.

³³⁶ Ibid., p. 1.

³³⁷ Manitoba Family Services and Housing, "About the Manitoba Child Care Program." Accessed from <http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/childcare/about.html> 14 August 2008.

Parenting programs

Manitoba's support for parents starts with a visit from a public health nurse to each new mother, and its range of supports is broad, from general public promotion of positive parenting, through to intense case management for children with concurrent needs and their families.³³⁸

New Brunswick

Responsible department(s)

The Department of Social Development is responsible for child care in New Brunswick. Currently, the Minister for Social Development is also the Minister responsible for the Status of Women. The Department of Family and Community Services is also involved (particularly where financial assistance is concerned).³³⁹ At the Cabinet level, a new Ministerial Committee on Early Childhood Development and Care was created to provide "multi-departmental leadership and coordination on policy related to early childhood development and child care in New Brunswick, with a focus on children up to age 6 ... and [to improve] the integration of early childhood and child care policies, programs and services across all levels of government."³⁴⁰

Links with education

Early learning and child care are linked, as evidenced in the curriculum proposed in the province's new 10-year child care strategy (see below under "curriculum") and in the commitments made within the new strategy (see below under "framework/strategy" for the list of commitments).

New funding commitments also include support for early kindergarten registration, orientation sessions, Transition-to-school Coordinators, a new Early Years Evaluation (EYE) assessment tool, and various transition-to-school initiatives.³⁴¹ The Department of

³³⁸ Healthy Child Manitoba, "Triple P – Positive Parenting Program." Accessed from <http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthychild/triplep/> 21 August 2008.

³³⁹ *Helping Families with Child Care Costs*, Province of New Brunswick, Fredericton.

³⁴⁰ Private correspondence by email from Diane Lutes, Program Consultant, Early Childhood and School Based Services, Social Development New Brunswick, dated 27 May 2008.

³⁴¹ *Be Ready for Success: A 10 Year Early Childhood Strategy for New Brunswick*, Province of New Brunswick, Fredericton, June 2008, p. 10.

Education has also recently hired an Early Years Co-ordinator in each school district in the province.³⁴²

Curriculum

On 25 June 2008, New Brunswick's Social Development Minister Mary Schryer made public the province's new 10-year strategy with regard to child care. At the same time, a new curriculum (one in French, one in English, developed by l'Université de Moncton and University of New Brunswick, respectively) was announced.³⁴³ Parents and caregivers will have access to these curricula, and they will be implemented in regulated centres beginning in September 2009.

Framework/strategy

On the same date, 25 June 2008, after several months of consulting with the public and others concerned, the Government of New Brunswick made public a new 10-year strategy, *Be Ready for Success*. The Minister writes:

There is growing recognition that the right support in the early years of life creates a strong foundation for learning, behaviour and health through the school years and into adulthood. Investments in high quality child care, early learning opportunities and resources for pre-school children, and initiatives supporting parents can improve individual health, well-being and productivity, and result in benefits that accumulate over a lifetime.³⁴⁴

The new 10-year strategy, developed by the Special Ministerial Committee on Early Childhood Development and Care, was accompanied by an *Early Childhood Strategy Action Plan, 2008-2009*.³⁴⁵

The new strategy is based on the following commitments:

- to strengthen the capacity of communities and partners to support families and young children;

³⁴² Department of Education, *A Benchmark Report on the Targets of When Kids Come First – 2007*, December 2007, p. 12. Accessed from <http://www.gnb.ca/0000/publications/comm/a%20benchmark%20report%20wkcf.pdf> July 14, 2008.

³⁴³ Megan O'Toole, "Curriculum for preschoolers to be unveiled today," *New Brunswick Telegraph-Journal*, 25 June 2008, p. A4.

³⁴⁴ "Message from the Minister," *Be Ready for Success: A 10 Year Early Childhood Strategy for New Brunswick*, Province of New Brunswick, Fredericton, June 2008, p. 4.

³⁴⁵ "Early childhood strategy to ensure best start for preschool children", News Release, Social Development New Brunswick, 25 June 2008. Retrieved from <http://www.gnb.ca/cnb/news/fcs/2008e0945sd.htm> July 13, 2008.

- to support parents in ensuring their children have the early experiences necessary for healthy development and success in school and in life;
- to ensure early learning programs and child care services are of high quality;
- to improve the availability of early learning and child care services;
- to improve the affordability of early learning and child care services;
- to ensure early learning and child care services are inclusive and meet the needs of all children; and
- to rely on early childhood research, best practices and community partnerships in planning for children and families.³⁴⁶

Access/inclusion

In Canada's only officially bilingual province, 33% of residents are Francophone, and child care services reflect that proportion, with 29% of regulated child care facilities providing services in French, 57% in English only, and 14% in both official languages.

New Brunswick has addressed access in terms beyond language for the Francophone minority, and has included geographic access for rural families, and access to early learning opportunities for children with special needs:

Programs for children and families will reflect an understanding of and respect for children with special needs, the needs of children affected by family difficulties, the official language and cultural needs of children, and the needs and realities of children in rural areas.³⁴⁷

This statement of commitment is backed up by financial commitments as described in more detail below.

Funding levels

New Brunswick's annual investment of more than \$80 million is allocated to operating subsidies for child care, financial assistance for child care, and other programs for young children. Specific commitments for annual funding include:

- \$11.4 million annually for child care subsidies for low-income and moderate income families.
- \$7.5 million for one-on-one intervention services for pre-school children with autism or autism spectrum disorder; to train

³⁴⁶ Information about New Brunswick's early learning system is taken from *Be Ready for Success: A 10 Year Early Childhood Strategy for New Brunswick*, Province of New Brunswick, Fredericton, June 2008, unless otherwise cited.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

autism interventionists working with children in the school system; and for community-based autism resource centres to support children with autism, their families and caregivers;

- \$2.4 million annually in speech language and prevention services at-risk pre-school children;
- more than \$6 million for health-related services including direct financial support for low-income pregnant women; immunization for infants and children to age 6; support for community groups to design and deliver their own initiatives to support young children and families; and support to breastfeeding mothers;
- \$13 million for early intervention services, integrated day care services, the 3 ½ Year Old Screening Clinic, and prenatal and postnatal support for at-risk children and families; and
- \$15 million annually year in direct financial support to low-income families and children through the New Brunswick Child Tax Benefit and Working Income Supplement.

In addition, a \$13 million Early Learning and Child Care Trust Fund is providing one-time funding for the creation of new rural, infant, non-traditional and seasonal child care spaces; and for development and implementation of the new early learning and child care curriculum described above, including staff training.³⁴⁸

Program design

The provincial government licenses and regulates day care centers, family day care homes, pre-schools and after-school programs; only home-based child care settings with small numbers of children are not required to be licensed or regulated. In March 2008, there were 470 regulated child care facilities offering 15,506 regulated child care spaces. Regulated service-providers are covered by a 217-page manual of standards.

As in most jurisdictions in Canada, the delivery system is mixed: about two-thirds of regulated child care facilities are private businesses and one-third are not-for-profit organizations.

Human resources

The Government of New Brunswick recognizes the central role of staff:

To ensure children attending regulated child care facilities receive the best care possible, the child care workforce must be well trained. In fact, one of the key indicators of high quality

³⁴⁸ Private correspondence by email from Diane Lutes, Program Consultant, Early Childhood and School Based Services, Social Development New Brunswick, dated 27 May 2008.

relates to the need for child care staff to have a post-secondary credential in early childhood education. On-going professional development is essential so that child care staff are familiar with the latest early childhood research and best practices.³⁴⁹

Yet, of the 2,600 staff employed in regulated child care facilities, 30% have a one-year early childhood education (ECE) certificate, a Bachelor of Education or a university degree in child studies, while 70% do not have recognized ECE training. Government spends \$13 million annually in the *Quality Improvement Funding Support Program* for professional development and wage increases for child care service providers working in regulated child care facilities. Since this program was introduced in 2001,³⁵⁰ average wages for child care service providers have increased by 85% for staff with ECE training, from \$7.04 to \$13.07 an hour and by 50% for staff without recognized ECE training from \$7.04 to \$10.59 per hour.

In addition, the recent funding announcement included funding of up to \$3,000 will be for current child care workers or students training in ECE.

Parenting programs

A number of government programs are designed to help parents be better parents and/or to support them in the parenting role; these include the Early Childhood Initiatives Program, Excellence in Parenting, and the Infant Parent Attachment Program.³⁵¹

Newfoundland and Labrador

Responsible department(s)

Child care is the responsibility of the Ministry of Health and Community Services, with involvement for subsidies from the Ministry of Human Resources, Labour and Employment, through income support programs.

³⁴⁹ *Be Ready for Success*, p. 24.

³⁵⁰ Childcare Resource and Research Unit, *Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada • 2006, 2007*, p. 56.

³⁵¹ These programs and others are described on the New Brunswick Social Development Website. Accessed from <http://www.gnb.ca/0017/ELCC/index-e.asp> July 14, 2008.

Links with Education

Early childhood learning is based in a division within the Department of Education, which serves a Ministerial Council on Early Childhood Learning. This Council includes the Ministers of Education, who is also the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women; Health and Community Services; Human Resources, Labour and Employment; and Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs.³⁵²

Framework/strategy

The provincial Early Learning and Child Care Plan was introduced in May 2006, with improvements announced in November 2007. The plan encompasses improved affordability, an increase in trained child care workers, more spaces in rural and under-served areas, increased access for children with special needs, and improved quality.³⁵³ The November 2007 enhancements had the same goals.³⁵⁴

Access/inclusion

Affordability is addressed through child care subsidies, which may cover some or all of the fees associated with child care (including transportation costs in some cases) for low-income parents who are working or studying, or children whose development require such care.³⁵⁵ A campaign announced earlier this year is seeking to promote these subsidies, which were enhanced in November 2007.³⁵⁶ The enhancements increased the income threshold for subsidies by \$7,500, which could benefit as many as 420 children and their families.³⁵⁷

Newfoundland has also introduced a poverty reduction strategy, which would also address affordability barriers. Its specific goal to "strengthen the regulated early learning and child care system,"³⁵⁸

³⁵² Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL), "Early Childhood Learning." Retrieved from <http://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/early/ec.htm> 20 August 2008.

³⁵³ NL Health and Community Services, "New Provincial Campaign to Promote Child Care Subsidy Program," News release, 3 April 2008. Accessed from <http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2008/health/0403n09.htm> 21 August 2008.

³⁵⁴ NL Health and Community Services, "Province Enhances Early Learning and Child Care Plan," News Release, 30 November 2007. Accessed from <http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2007/health/1130n02.htm>, 21 August 2008.

³⁵⁵ NL Department of Health and Community Service, "Quality Child Care: Financial Help for Parents," p. 2. Accessed from http://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/childcare/early_learning/DH_childcare_Brochure_FinancialHelp.pdf 20 August 2008.

³⁵⁶ NL Department of Health and Community Services (2008).

³⁵⁷ Ibid.

³⁵⁸ NL Minister for Human Resources, Labour and Employment, *Reducing Poverty:*

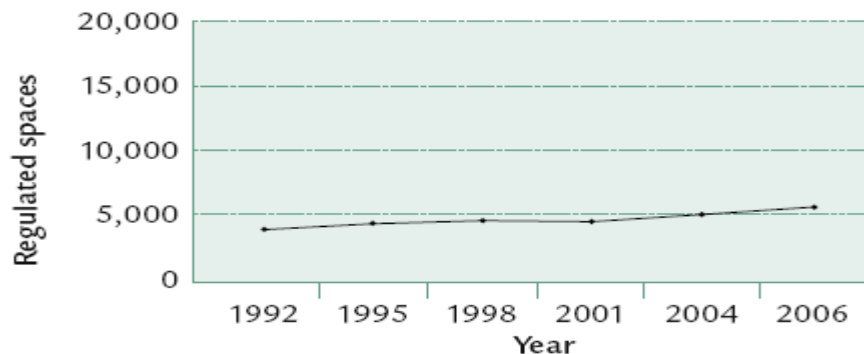
included proposed “inclusive measures” for children with special needs. This was to take the form of the development of training plans related to inclusionary practices, grants for special equipment in licensed care setting, and funding to support staff.³⁵⁹

Access for families of Francophone children has been provided through pre-kindergarten programs in five Francophone schools across the province, and a French-language child care program in St. John’s.³⁶⁰ Further, improved access to early childhood learning in French has been identified as a priority for the Office for French Services, as part of the federal-provincial agreement on French-language services for the period ending 2008-09.³⁶¹

Funding levels

While historical data on funding for early childhood learning have not been found, the following graph suggests that spending has been increasing, but slowly, at least on regulated child care spaces.

Figure 8 – Number of regulated spaces in NL. 1992–2006³⁶²



An Action Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador, June 2006, p. 21. Accessed from <http://www.hrle.gov.nl.ca/hrle/poverty/poverty-reduction-strategy.pdf> 21 August 2008.

³⁵⁹ NL Department of Health and Community Services, “Inclusion – Supporting Children with Special Needs,” 2006. Accessed from <http://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/childcare/pdffiles/inclusion.pdf> 21 August 2008.

³⁶⁰ Marie E. White, *Report of the Industrial Adjustment Services Committee on Child Care Workforce Recruitment and Retention - Strategic Directions*, NL Department of Health and Community Services, 6 September 2007, p. 23. Accessed from <http://www.aecenl.ca/images/pdfs/IAS/ias-stratdir-final-full.pdf> 21 August 2008

³⁶¹ Canadian Heritage, Official Languages Support Program, “Strategic plan: Canada – Newfoundland and Labrador Agreement on French-Language Services 2005-06 to 2008-09.” Accessed from http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/lo-ol/entente-agreement/services/nf/annexe-scheduleb_e.cfm 21 August 2008.

³⁶² CRRU (2007), “Newfoundland and Labrador,” p. 9.

Program design

Licensed, or regulated, care includes centre-based care and home-based care.³⁶³ Licensing, monitoring and enforcement of standards are the responsibility of Regional Integrated Health Authorities, which may license home-based providers to be supervised either directly by the local Authority, or by an agency licensed for that purpose.³⁶⁴

Human Resources

The NL Government undertook research on recruitment and retention issues within the child care sector, noting that in 2006, more than half of licensed providers described recruitment of new staff to be difficult or very difficult.³⁶⁵

At that time, income supplementation for child care workers included an income enhancement for centre-based educators with incomes less than \$25,000 (net) per annum (including any supplements payments, described below), with the benefit phasing out at approximately \$35,000, plus an annual payment of up to \$500 for entry-level providers in centre-based or home-based care actively engaged in upgrading their qualifications.³⁶⁶

The November 2007 enhancements to the provincial plan followed the recommendation resulting from the review,³⁶⁷ and included a streamlined application process for supplements for early childhood educators seeking further training, and increased amounts. The maximum levels of support with these increases ranged from \$3,330 to \$6,660, depending on the qualifications of the applicant. This followed the continuation of \$5,000 bursaries for graduates of two-year ECE programs working in regulated settings, conditional on returning to service in child care for at least two years.³⁶⁸

³⁶³ NL Department of Health and Community Services, *Quality Child Care: Helping You Choose*, p. 2. Accessed from http://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/childcare/early_learning/DH_childcare_Brochure_HelpingYouChoose.pdf 20 August 2008.

³⁶⁴ CRRU (2007), "Newfoundland and Labrador," p. 11.

³⁶⁵ Marie E. White, *Report of the Industrial Adjustment Services Committee on Child Care Workforce Recruitment and Retention - Strategic Directions*, NL Department of Health and Community Services, 6 September 2007, p. 2. Accessed from <http://www.aecenl.ca/images/pdfs/IAS/ias-stratdir-final-full.pdf> 21 August 2008.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

³⁶⁸ NL Department of Health and Community Services (2007).

Parenting programs

The provincial standards for supporting pregnancy, birth and early parenting include specific references to the need for early parenting programs, suggesting that they are delivered primarily through family resource centres.³⁶⁹ These centres are financed through agreements with the federal government, under the National Child Benefit, the Early Childhood Development, or the Public Health Agency's Community Action Program for Children³⁷⁰ (all described in more detail in the main body of this report.)

Parenting programs to build the capacity of parents are also identified as a priority within the standards for implementation of the *Family Services Act*, which otherwise focuses on child protection and safety.³⁷¹

Northwest Territories

Responsible department(s)

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment is responsible for "the development of direction, standards, support programs and curriculum for children from early childhood to the end of grade 12."³⁷²

Framework/strategy

In 2001, the Northwest Territories published a *Framework for Action – Early Childhood Development*,³⁷³ promoting integrated service delivery for early learning, by the two departments involved: Education, Culture and Employment and Health and Social Services.

³⁶⁹ NL Department of Health and Community Services, Education and Support Standards for Pregnancy, Birth and Early Parenting: Newfoundland and Labrador, 2005, pp. 5-8. Accessed from

http://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/publications/newliferieseries/pdf/edsup_en.pdf 21 August 2008.

³⁷⁰ CRRU (2007), "Newfoundland and Labrador," p. 13.

³⁷¹ NL Department of Health and Community Services, *Child, Youth and Family Services: Standards and Policy Manual*, 2007. Accessed from http://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/publications/pdf/child_youth_family_services_manual.pdf 21 August 2008.

³⁷² GNWT Department of Education, Culture and Employment, "Welcome to Early Childhood Services." Accessed from http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/Divisions/Early_Childhood/index.htm 29 July 2008.

³⁷³ Department of Education, Culture and Employment, and Health and Social Services, *Framework for Action – Early Childhood Development*, May 2001. Accessed from <http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/Publications/PDF%20Publications%20Files/Early%20Childhood/Framework%20for%20Action.pdf> 29 July 2008.

It created four action plans: health and wellness awareness and risk prevention; parent and family support; child development – care and learning; and community supports and capacity building.

Emphasis was placed on investment in children, healthy development, culture, quality experiences, social capacity, early intervention and accountability. The first principle refers to parents as the primary caregivers and teachers of their children. Equitable access to needed developmental opportunities for all northern children is seen as an important to the future of the North.

This framework, combined with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment's 10-year plan, continues to guide investments in early childhood programs. (More information on this plan is provided below.)

Access/inclusion

Affordability barriers are addressed in part through the Early Childhood Programme Contribution program which provides operating subsidies to providers and a Child Care User Subsidy to low-income parents who are either employed or full-time students.³⁷⁴ While operating support is provided only to licensed care-givers, fee subsidies are available to parents who elect to use unlicensed child care providers, emphasizing the commitment to parental choice.

In its 10-year plan, initiated in 2005, the ECE Department established, as its first objective, "a sound foundation for learning."³⁷⁵ Priority actions included: assistance to communities to develop or programs for children from infancy to pre-school; increased subsidies to parents and licensed providers; improved monitoring of the quality of early learning programs; expansion of affordable licensed programs and spaces; guidelines for developing and implementing a variety of early childhood development programs; improved program coordination, and supported integration and inclusion of children who require additional assistance in early childhood programs.³⁷⁶

³⁷⁴ GNWT Department of Education, Culture and Employment, *Breaking Down the Barriers of Poverty and Promoting Self Reliance*, July 2007, p. 29. Accessed from http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/NEW_Items/Income%20Security%20-%20Breaking%20Down%20the%20Barriers%20of%20Poverty%20Promoting%20Self%20Reliance.pdf 29 July 2008.

³⁷⁵ GNWT Department of Education, Culture and Employment, *Building on Our Success: Strategic Plan 2005– 2015*, p.2 8. Accessed from http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/PDF_File/Buildingonoursuccesses.pdf 29 July 2008

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

In the same year, the Government of the Northwest Territories reported that the Healthy Child Initiative, a program begun in 1997, was a joint initiative of the Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment “to provide funding to communities to enhance existing programs and services for children 0-6 years of age and their families and/or provide services to individual children requiring intensive support to assist children with integration into a centre based early childhood program.”³⁷⁷ The government also reported that it offered first-language programming in eight First Nation languages in 2003-2004.

Funding levels

Through the Early Childhood Development Initiative, the federal government committed to transferring funds for several purposes, including strengthening early learning. The per-capita allocation, as anticipated in 2004, to NWT is indicated in the table below.

Table 10 – Federal funding to NWT under the Early Childhood Development Initiative³⁷⁸

Year	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	Total
Funding	\$413,000	\$556,000	\$700,000	\$705,000	\$713,000	\$3.086 mil

Under the Multilateral Framework Agreement, signed in 2003, federal funds were transferred on a bilateral per-capita basis to provincial and territorial governments for regulated early childhood learning and care programs and services. In 2004, the GNWT anticipated transfers as outlined in the table below.

Table 11 – Federal funding to NWT under the Multilateral Framework Agreement³⁷⁹

Year	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	Total
Funding	\$30,000	\$100,000	\$200,000	\$400,000	\$500,000	\$1.230 mil

³⁷⁷ GNWT, *Early Childhood Development Report for 2004/05*, 2006 p. 16. Accessed from http://www.hlthss.gov.nt.ca/pdf/reports/children_and_youth/2006/english/2004_05_ecd_report_part_4.pdf 29 July 2008.

³⁷⁸ GNWT, *Annual Reports 2003-2004: Early Childhood Development, Early Learning and Child Care, Indicators of Young Children's Well Being, Activities and Expenditures*, p. 13. Accessed from http://www.hlthss.gov.nt.ca/pdf/reports/children_and_youth/2004/english/ecd_initiative_annual_reports_2003_2004.pdf 30 July 2008.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

Spending by the territorial government was reported as follows: the budget for early childhood programs was increased to \$1.5 million in April 2002;³⁸⁰ support committed to families and child care was reported to be \$2 million in 2004,³⁸¹ and increased to \$2.5 million in the following year.³⁸² Further, a \$1 million increase was announced in the 2008 budget for the 2008-09 fiscal year.³⁸³ (More details on how the increase was to be allocated are provided below.) The growth in the number of licensed providers and spaces grew is outlined below.

The most recent territorial budget announced an addition \$1 million in spending in this fiscal year, to “improve the quality of early childhood programs,”³⁸⁴ including through increasing staff and expanding the first-language programs for First Nations children.

Table 12 – Growth in number of child care providers and spaces³⁸⁵

Year	2001	2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
# of providers	76	80	81	99	103	110	117
# of spaces	1252	1269	1219	1403	1525	1703	1768

Program design

Child care is provided by non-profit organizations in centres, and through home-based providers. Any provider caring for more than 4 children, including her own, must be licensed. As noted above, start-up and on-going operating funds are provided only to licensed (non-profit) providers, but subsidies are available for fees associated with unregulated care as well.

Human resources

Spending on training has been through Aurora College to support its Early Childhood Education Certificate program, where enrolment has

³⁸⁰ *Annual Reports 2003-2004*, p. 3.

³⁸¹ *Development Report for 2004/05*, p. 13.

³⁸² GNWT, *Early Childhood Development Report: 2005/2006*, p.14. Accessed from <http://www.hlthss.gov.nt.ca/english/publications/pubresult.asp?ID=177> 30 July 2008.

³⁸³ GNWT, *Budget Address 2008-2009*, p. 8. Accessed from <http://www.fin.gov.nt.ca/ViewDocument.aspx?FormId=216> 29 July 2008.

³⁸⁴ *Budget Address 2008-2009*, p. 8.

³⁸⁵ Data are taken from annual reports on early childhood development, available from <http://www.hlthss.gov.nt.ca/english/publications/reports.asp> except data from 2003, 2006-07 and 2007-08, which were from private correspondence from Gillian Moir, Child Care Consultant, GNWT, dated 29 July 2008.

been increasing. The 10-year plan for Education, Culture and Employment, within its objective for foundations for learning, has identified many actions with respect to recruitment, training and retention of child care staff. A priority is to “increase the skills of early childhood educators,” through actions such as offering staff development and training to early learning and childcare educators through its college certificate program; increasing certification requirements for early learning and child care workers; and providing professional development to frontline staff by visiting program experts.³⁸⁶

Parenting programs

Support to parents is provided in part through the home visitation as part of the Healthy Family program, and in part through literacy programming aimed at both increasing intergenerational literacy and building parenting skills.

Data/research

The Department’s 10-year plan calls for improved monitoring and an evaluation framework for early learning programs.³⁸⁷ Specific proposed indicators include the Early Development Index.³⁸⁸

Nova Scotia

Responsible department(s)

The Community Services Department has primary responsibility for early child development. A new section, Family and Youth Services, was created in 2007 to lead a cross-departmental initiative described in greater detail below.³⁸⁹ In addition to Education Department initiatives outlined below, the Department of Health Promotion and Protection has appointed an Early Childhood Development Co-ordinator.

³⁸⁶ *Building on Our Success*, pp. 32-33.

³⁸⁷ *Building on Our Success*, p. 32.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

³⁸⁹ Information on Nova Scotia [NS] is taken from “Nova Scotia [NS]: Recent Developments in Child Care and Other Early Childhood Education and Care Services - 2006/07 & 2007/08,” attached to an email from Kerry Deagle, Senior Policy Analyst, Federal Provincial Social Initiatives Unit, Nova Scotia Department of Community Services, dated 27 May 2008, unless otherwise cited.

Links with education

In 2008, a position of Early Learning Coordinator was created within the Department of Education, specifically to act as a link with other departments serving young children. The creation of this position was also an “expression of the Department’s interest in linking school-based and community-based programming for young children and their families.”³⁹⁰

Curriculum

Nova Scotia does not have a province-wide curriculum for early childhood learning. The Department of Education approves the curriculum for post-secondary programs including ECE educator training.

Framework/strategy

Nova Scotia’s 10-year Nova Scotia’s Early Learning and Child Care Plan was approved in 2006, with a stated goal to spend \$130 million, create 1,000 more full-day licensed child care spaces, and to increase the number of portable subsidies to make child care available to 550 more low-income parents.³⁹¹ More recent announcements have put the spending associated with the plan at \$200 million,³⁹² and 500 of the 1,000 spaces were expected to be in operation by the end of 2008.

In *Our Kids Are Worth It: Strategy for Children and Youth*, released in December 2007, the Government of Nova Scotia committed to building a strong foundation for children and youth, including a poverty reduction strategy, an early learning and child care plan (already in place, as noted above), and family resource centres.³⁹³

In December 2007, the Government appointed a Poverty Reduction Strategy Working Group, which reported in June 2008. This report included four recommendations to the provincial government directly related to early childhood development and learning: increase supports to families during early years and to enhance child development; flexible child care options with portable spaces and

³⁹⁰ Ibid.

³⁹¹ NS Department of Community Services, *Early Learning & Child Care Plan*, May 2006. Accessed from http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/families/provider/documents/ELCC_Plan.pdf 6 August 2008.

³⁹² NS Department of Community Services, “Education Funding for Nova Scotia Child Care Workers,” News Releases, 8 July 2008. Accessed from <http://www.gov.ns.ca/news/details.asp?id=20080708002> 6 August 2008.

³⁹³ Government of NS, *Our Kids Are Worth It: Strategy for Children and Youth*, 2007, p. 7.

services that meet the needs of shift and seasonal workers; continued creation of spaces for infants and children with special needs; and provincial government advocacy for a National Child Care Strategy, with recognition of the need for “quality, universal, accessible, developmentally appropriate child care.”³⁹⁴ The government’s Poverty Reduction Strategy interdepartmental committee began meeting in July to develop a poverty reduction strategy in response to the Working Group’s recommendations, which is expected in 2009.

Access/inclusion

Affordability has been addressed with enhancements to the Child Care Subsidy Program on 1 April 2008, which lowered fees paid by parents, increased asset limits for families claiming subsidies, and expanding income eligibility ranges, thereby increasing access. Approximately 3,350 subsidies are provided for children to participate in licensed child care programs. The government planned to add subsidies for 300 more spaces over the next two years.

A new Supported Child Care Grant was launched in April 2008, to provide “a stable source of funding to assist in the creation of new; or the enhancement of existing, inclusive child care programs for children with special needs.”³⁹⁵ This program is available to all licensed providers – whether in centres or within family homes. Approximately \$3.1million was allocated for these grants in 2008-09.

The government also offers an Early Intervention Program that delivers “family centred services to children with special needs, from birth to when they enter school.”³⁹⁶ The programs provide consultation, information, support and services designed to meet the individual needs of the child and family, with the goal of creative positive outcomes for children with special needs.

The Nova Scotia government is also a partner in a Tri-Partite Forum, along with the federal government, and the Mi'kmaq; its Education Committee included the promotion of early childhood development in

³⁹⁴ Poverty Reduction Strategy Working Group, “Report of the Poverty Reduction Working Group,” 30 June 2008, p. 36. Accessed from http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/specials/poverty/documents/Poverty_Reduction_Working_Group_Report.pdf 6 August 2008.

³⁹⁵ Deagle (2008).

³⁹⁶ NS Department of Community Services, “Early Intervention Program Information.” Accessed from <http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/families/childcare/EarlyInterventionPrograms.html> 6 August 2008.

Mi'kmaq communities among its 2007-08 work plan goals.³⁹⁷ The Forum also has a Child Care Facilities and Licensing Agreement Sub-Committee responsible for the development of on-reserve child care as part of the federal First Nations/Inuit Child Care Initiative.³⁹⁸ As of 2006, there were 13 on-reserve child care centres, which provided 248 spaces.

Francophone families and service providers benefit from a French-language early childhood development support site, one of several across the province that have become the central providers of resources and tools for service providers, families and other stakeholders.

Funding levels

As noted above, Nova Scotia's 10-year plan included the intention to add 1,000 new licensed child care spaces.

Funding to licensed providers in 2007-08 in centres and in family homes included one-time grants to create or enhance outdoor play space (consistent with one of the OECD's recommendations). In addition, licensed centres were eligible in 2007-08 for a one-time grant to enhance or improve their existing programs.

All licensed providers were eligible for two different loans: expansion loans to expand their capacity or replace their facilities, and repair and renovation loans. Finally, an ongoing Child Care Operating Grant also covers some general operating costs.

Program design

Licensed care is provided in child care centres. Centres may provide full- or part-day services, and cater to infants, toddlers, and pre-schoolers, and school aged children to age 12.

The Family Home Day Care Program gives parents access to monitored services in a home setting. It is a voluntary program offered to in-home care providers to reduce their isolation, provide them with professional support and help them enhance their services. The program is designed to provide healthy, safe and appropriate environments for young children who are being cared for in private homes across Nova Scotia. Family Home Day Care agencies, licensed

³⁹⁷ Mi'kmaq - Nova Scotia - Canada Tripartite Forum, "Education Committee." Accessed from <http://www.tripartiteforum.com/education.htm> 6 August 2008.

³⁹⁸ Martha Friendly, Jane Beach, Carolyn Ferns, Michelle Turiano, *ECE in Canada 2006*, 7th edition, Childcare Resource and Research Unit (CRRU), June 2007, p. 37.

by the province, approve, manage and support individual providers offering child care in their own homes. Each agency must hire a family home consultant, whose responsibility is to visit and work with individual providers, "to promote safe environments for children and promote early childhood development." Home-based care is expected to provide flexible hours and to increase the availability of child care in rural areas.

In addition, private home-based care can be provided without being licensed for groups of fewer than six children aged 5 or less, or groups of eight children of school-age, including the caregiver's own children.

"Grade Primary" is for children who turn 5 before the end of the calendar year in which they enter.

Human resources

A two-year recruitment and retention strategy launched in 2008 is intended to "develop and implement strategies to encourage people to enter the child care workforce; and to develop and implement strategies to retain current staff of the child care workforce."³⁹⁹

Under this strategy, the Early Childhood Education Assistance Program was launched in April 2008 "to enhance the ability of child care centres to recruit and retain staff by providing financial support to individuals interested in pursuing a career in ECE."⁴⁰⁰ Approximately \$500,000 has been allocated for this program in 2008-09, to provide up to \$5,000 per year to repay student loans in return for work in a licensed child care facility.

Also under this strategy, the government recently announced a continuing education program, to reimburse full-time staff in licensed centres or family home agencies for courses taken as a part-time student in appropriate courses.⁴⁰¹

Further, the Early Childhood Education Training Initiative, launched in 2002, has provided grants to educational and associated institutions "for in-service or professional development training of early childhood education staff currently working in the fields of child care, early

³⁹⁹ NS Department of Community Services, "Recruitment & Retention of Child Care Staff." Accessed from <http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/families/provider/RecruitmentRetention.html> 6 August 2008.

⁴⁰⁰ Deagle (2008).

⁴⁰¹ NS Department of Community Services (2008), "Education Funding."

intervention, family home child care, family resource centres and other related fields."⁴⁰² This initiative has also funded the development of an on-line version of the ECE diploma program and bursaries to complete education in ECE.

Funding through the Stabilization Grant, a wage-enhancement grant provided to child care staff employed in licensed full day child care facilities, was increased in 2007-2008. The increase provided a salary increment of \$500 for staff with an ECE diploma or degree, \$200 for staff considered equivalent to trained; and \$100 for staff with minimal or no training. The funding for the Stabilization Grant in 2007-2008 was \$4.5 million.

In addition, the Child Care Operating Grant cited above is intended in part to support salaries and benefits and encourage people to become and remain child-care staff in licensed centres.

Parenting programs

Three pilot projects are included in the strategy for children and youth: the Parenting Journey program, a pilot to extend home visits to families needing additional support until a child reaches 16 years of age; a Wrap-Around pilot providing integrated services to families drawing on expertise and services from the Education, Justice, Mental Health, and Community Services departments; and A Place to Belong pilot providing "intervention-based after-school programs for vulnerable children and youth."⁴⁰³

In addition, the government supports more than 40 family resource centres which offer more than 750 programs across the province. Their services include parent and caregiver education.⁴⁰⁴

The Department of Health Promotion and Protection operates the Healthy Beginnings Enhanced Home Visiting program. Funding transferred under the federal Early Childhood Development Initiative has been used by Public Health Services to offer home visiting support to families facing challenges for the first three years of their child's life. According to a government brochure, the program "promotes healthy

⁴⁰² NS Department of Community Services, *Nova Scotia's Early Childhood Development Initiative & Multilateral Framework on Early Learning & Child Care Annual Report 2003 - 2004*, February 2005, p. 26. Accessed from http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/families/documents/ECD_Annual_Report.pdf 6 August 2008.

⁴⁰³ Deagle (2008).

⁴⁰⁴ Government of Nova Scotia (2007), p. 21.

child development, builds parenting skills and capacity, enhances parent-child interaction, and connects the family to community resources by identifying families facing challenges early on and providing intense, focused home visiting for the first three years of their child's life."⁴⁰⁵ The program is offered in all Nova Scotia communities of Nova Scotia, with almost 600 families enrolled in the program in May 2008.

Nunavut

Responsible department(s)

The Department of Education has primary responsibility for early childhood learning in Nunavut.

Links with education

In addition to its responsibility for early childhood learning, the Department of Education supports Nunavut's Promise to Children and Youth, which links the four departments with a children and youth mandate – Education; Health and Social Services; Justice; and Culture, Language, Elders and Youth. Its goals are to "streamline policies, programs and services for children and youth across government."⁴⁰⁶ Among four priorities established for 2005-2006 by this committee was parenting and early childhood development.

A recent report prepared for Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) identified the integration of education and child care as a "current trend,"

Framework/strategy

Nunavut is working towards an integrated delivery system, with the following five priorities: The following strategic priorities were identified as integral to the development of a system-wide approach to early childhood development in Nunavut: a comprehensive home visiting program; stable and improved child care system; increased parenting and family supports, especially parents of children with special needs; a coordinated system of programs that focus on Inuit cultural and language including through language nests and Head Start

⁴⁰⁵ Government of Nova Scotia, "Programs and Services for Children Youth, and Families," June 2007. Accessed from http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/families/documents/cyf_resources.pdf 6 August 2008.

⁴⁰⁶ Canadian School Health Knowledge Network, "School Nutrition Policies," *Knowledge Matters*, Volume 1, No 10, 2007. Accessed from http://www.safehealthyschools.org/shreport_apr9.pdf 29 July 2008.

programs; and early screening, identification and intervention with respect to developmental issues.⁴⁰⁷

As part of its Promise to Children and Youth, the government has developed a work plan that “focuses on a five-year strategy for children and youth aimed at assessing what exists, identifying needs, identifying funding sources and looking at the gaps and barriers and taking action to facilitate effective community-based programs.”⁴⁰⁸

Curriculum

An Elders’ Committee has been involved in the development of a curriculum for kindergarten, to ensure that the curriculum reflects traditional learning and teaching and addresses the need for a strong language and cultural component that is based on Inuit values and beliefs.⁴⁰⁹

Access/inclusion

Financial access is assisted by Daycare Subsidies for parents aged 18 years or older who are employed or studying; these subsidies, in 2005, ranged from \$500 monthly for unlicensed care, to \$600 monthly for licensed family care, and \$700 monthly for licensed centre-based care.⁴¹⁰ For parents aged 17 or younger, a subsidy may be provided through the Young Parents Stay Learning program.

Access for children with special needs is provided through Supportive Child Services, which provides funding for individual children who need intensive support or assistance; this can include supported child care, and supports to allow children to attend centre-based child care programs. This is funded through the Healthy Children initiative, described in more detail below.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁷ Nunavut Department of Education, *Nunavut 2004-2007 Early Childhood Development Update Report/Early Learning & Child Care Update Report, 2007* Accessed from <http://www.gov.nu.ca/education/eng/pubdoc/2004-2007%20-%20English%20-%20ECD%20Update%20Report.pdf> 15 August 2008.

⁴⁰⁸ Nunavut Department of Education and Department of Health and Social Services, *Early Childhood Development Update Report and Early Learning & Child Care Update Report 2003/2004, 2004*, pp. 9-10. Accessed from http://www.gov.nu.ca/education/eng/pubdoc/ECD_UpRep_0304.pdf 15 August 2008.

⁴⁰⁹ Nunavut Department of Education (2007), p. 20.

⁴¹⁰ Nunavut Department of Education, “Daycare Subsidy Program,” 2005, p. 2. Accessed from http://www.gov.nu.ca/education/eng/is/D_Care_Sub_bro_Aug05.pdf 29 July 2008.

⁴¹¹ Nunavut Department of Education, “Early Childhood Program.” Accessed from <http://www.gov.nu.ca/education/eng/echild/index.htm> 15 August 2008.

Access to child care for young parents who wish to complete their high school education is available through Young Parents Stay Learning, a parental subsidy available to parents under the age of 18 who place their children in licensed care.⁴¹²

Funding levels

The Department of Education provides start-up and annual operating funding to non-profit licensed childcare facilities and family day homes. An Inuit-specific accord with respect to the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy was signed in November 2007. At that time, HRSDC Minister Monte Solberg, committed to "the creation and maintenance of child care spaces under the First Nation and Inuit Child Care Initiative."⁴¹³

The Nunavut government also funds a Healthy Children Initiative, with its vision of "healthy children born to healthy parents, growing up in strong and supportive families in caring communities." It provides funds for community initiatives, for "for the enhancement or development of early childhood intervention programs and services for children 0 to 6 years of age and their families."⁴¹⁴

Parenting programs

Among four priorities established for 2005-2006 by the interdepartmental committee described above was parenting and early childhood development.⁴¹⁵ This was consistent with emphasis placed on parenting skills and programs by Inuit women, in policy documents focusing on strengthening Inuit families.⁴¹⁶

If a parent seeks support from Nunavut's Department of Health and Social Services, a child protection worker can assess the needs of a

⁴¹² Nunavut Department of Education (2005), p. 1.

⁴¹³ "Minister Solberg speaks with Ms. Mary Simon, President of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami after the signing the Inuit Accord on Human Resources Development," November 26, 2007. Accessed from <http://www.montesolberg.ca/EN/3101/63541> 15 August 2008.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.

⁴¹⁵ Nunavut Department of Education (2007), pp. 19-20.

⁴¹⁶ Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, "Strengthening Families - Midwifery, ECD, FASD," Issue paper prepared for National Aboriginal Women's Summit - Strong Women, Strong Communities, June 2007. Accessed from <http://www.laa.gov.nl.ca/laa/naws/pdf/NAWSIssuePaperFamilies.pdf> 15 August 2008.

child and family, and enter into a voluntary agreement to provide services including parenting programs.⁴¹⁷

Ontario

Responsible department(s)

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services was created in 2003 to bring together “programs for children and youth from across the Ministries of Community and Social Services, Health and Long-Term Care, and Community Safety and Correctional Services.”⁴¹⁸ The services funded or provided by the department include early identification and intervention services for young children and their families; licensed child care; and interventions and supports to children with special needs, including autism.⁴¹⁹

Links with education

The Government of Ontario has two major strategies in place supporting the best possible potential of children and youth. The Ministry of Education is a “key partner” in one of these, the Best Start Initiative, as well as being a partner on the Expert Panel that developed the new Early Learning Framework.⁴²⁰ Both the initiative and the framework are described in more detail below.

In addition, Ontario’s Best Start plan builds on a long-term provincial practice of locating child care in schools.⁴²¹ Over 22,000 child care spaces were developed under the strategy. A capital program continues to dedicate space for child care and other family support programs in newly built schools. The Ontario government made good on an election commitment in November 2007 by appointing an early

⁴¹⁷ Pamela Gough, “Nunavut’s child welfare system,” *Centres of Excellence for Child Well-Being: Child Welfare*, 2007, p. 6. Accessed from <http://www.cecw-cepb.ca/files/file/en/NUchildwelfaresystem55E.pdf> 15 August 2008.

⁴¹⁸ Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS), *Realizing Potential: Our Children, Our Youth, Our Future -- Ministry of Children and Youth Services Strategic Framework 2008-2012*, 2008., p. 2. Accessed from <http://www.gov.on.ca/children/english/ministry/strategic/index.html> 6 August 2008.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

⁴²⁰ Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada (CCAAC), “Pedagogy, Policy, and Quality: A Vision for Early Learning and Child Care in Canada,” 2007, p. 18.

⁴²¹ Ontario MCYS, “Schools First Policy and Best Start,” p.1. Accessed from <http://www.region.peel.on.ca/childcar/best-start/pdfs/req-infracstructure/app-c-schools-first-policy.pdf> 7 July 2008.

learning advisor and allocating funding for full day learning for 4- and 5-year olds, starting in 2010.⁴²²

Framework/Strategy

As noted above, there are two strategies that include elements related to early childhood development and care (ECEC): a four-year strategic framework for the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS), launched in spring of 2008, and a Best Start Initiative, with a 10-year strategy that began in 2004.

Best Start was launched as a government-wide priority, as “a comprehensive and ambitious early learning and care strategy that requires different ministries to work together to address the factors that put young children at risk, and to create communities that support healthy child development and learning.”⁴²³ It focused on early learning and child care services and healthy development for newborns and young children,⁴²⁴ and involves community partners, including school boards, public health units, municipalities, and child care and children's services providers.⁴²⁵

The Ministry's strategic plan is based on core principles for services that are: child- and family-centred, community-driven and situated; strength-based; integrated and collaborative, developmentally appropriate and individualized, socially inclusive, evidence-based, outcomes-based, and broad-based.⁴²⁶ Several of these overlap with principles and recommendations from the OECD.

Curriculum

In 2006, an Expert Panel on Early Learning, appointed by the Ontario MCYS, published *Early Learning for Every Child Today: A framework for Ontario early childhood settings*. This document is intended to be “a guide for curriculum in Ontario's early childhood settings,” including child care centres, regulated home child care, nursery schools,

⁴²² Ontario Office of the Premier, “McGuinty Government Moves Forward on Full-day Learning for Four- and Five-Year-Olds,” News Release, November 27, 2007. Accessed from

www.premier.gov.on.ca/news/Product.asp?ProductID=1782&Lang=EN July 15, 2008.

⁴²³ Ontario MCYS, “Introduction”. Accessed from <http://webdox.msdsb.net/dox/Program%20Specific%20Information/Childrens%20Services/Best%20Start/What%20is%20Best%20Start.pdf> 7 July 2008.

⁴²⁴ Ontario MCYS, “About Ontario's Best Start.” Accessed from <http://www.gov.on.ca/children/english/programs/beststart/index.html> 6 August 2008.

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

⁴²⁶ Ontario MCYS (2008), p. 3.

kindergarten, family resource programs, parenting centres, and virtually all facilities and programs related to early child development. The curriculum is not mandatory.⁴²⁷

Based on broad research by experts, it was based on principles that include:

- early child development as the foundation for lifelong learning, behaviour and health;
- the importance of partnerships with families and communities;
- demonstrated respect for diversity, equity and inclusion;
- a planned curriculum to support early learning;
- play as a means to early learning; and
- knowledgeable and responsive early childhood practitioners.⁴²⁸

Access/inclusion

Of 35,000 spaces added from 2003-2004 to 2006-2007,⁴²⁹ 325 culturally-appropriate spaces for Aboriginal children living off-reserve⁴³⁰ were created in 14 communities.⁴³¹

In July 2008, the Ontario government announced that it would help with the costs of child care for some 3,000 additional children, with a new \$25 million investment. Of that, \$23 million will take the form of financial assistance for subsidies in licensed care. Eligibility for the assistance is based on net family income, with families with net income below \$20,000 receiving full child care assistance, while families with a net income of \$40,000 will receive subsidies that will reduce their costs to \$8 per day.

The remaining \$2 million investment was to create new child care spaces in French-language schools.⁴³²

⁴²⁷ Best Start Expert Panel on Early Learning, *Early Learning for Every Child Today: A framework for Ontario early childhood settings*, 2006. Accessed from http://www.gov.on.ca/children/graphics/stel02_183342.pdf 6 August 2008.

⁴²⁸ Ibid., pp. 8-18.

⁴²⁹ Ontario MCYS, *Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Service Results-based Plan Briefing Book 2008-09*, p.17. Accessed from <http://www.gov.on.ca/children/graphics/247796.pdf> July 15, 2008.

⁴³⁰ Ibid.

⁴³¹ Ibid., p. 31.

⁴³² Ontario MCYS, "Increasing access to high quality child care", News Release, 9 July 2008. Accessed from <http://www.gov.on.ca/children/static/247853.html> July 15, 2008.

Funding levels

More than 35,000 licensed child care spaces were added from 2003-2004 to 2006-2007.⁴³³ In July 2007, the provincial government announced funding for 7,000 licensed child care spaces.⁴³⁴

Program design

In Ontario, all child care providers, including those in family homes, must be licensed if they provide care for more than five unrelated children under the age of 10.⁴³⁵ Licensed child care includes child care centres, nursery schools, full-day and extended-day care, and before- and after-school programs.⁴³⁶

Child care is administered, and partly funded, by local governments in Ontario. Created in 2000, 47 Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) and District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs) have been "service system managers for child care." They have planned and managed child care services locally, and have been expected to provide 20% of some costs associated with child care, including fee subsidies, wage subsidies, special needs funding and resource centres, and half of associated administrative costs. At the same time, they have been expected to comply with the laws, regulations, and policies of the provincial government.⁴³⁷ In addition, they have been required to develop and submit a child care service plan,⁴³⁸ developed in collaboration with parents and other community stakeholders.⁴³⁹

On 27 November 2007, Premier McGuinty announced the appointment of Dr. Charles Pascal as Special Advisor on Early Learning to the

⁴³³ Ontario MCYS, *Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Service Results-based Plan Briefing Book 2008-09*, p. 17. Accessed from

<http://www.gov.on.ca/children/graphics/247796.pdf> July 15, 2008.

⁴³⁴ Ontario MCYS, "McGuinty Government Strengthens Ontario's Child Care System," News release, 5 July 2007. Accessed from <http://ogov.newswire.ca/ontario/GPOE/2007/07/05/c3977.html?lmatch=&lang=e.html> July 15, 2008.

⁴³⁵ Ontario MCYS, "About child care in Ontario." Accessed from <http://www.premier.gov.on.ca/news/Product.asp?ProductID=1782&Lang=EN> 15 July 2008.

⁴³⁶ Ibid.

⁴³⁷ Government of Ontario, *Ontario's Investments in Early Childhood Development Early Learning and Child Care: 2005/2006 Annual Report*, p. 25.

⁴³⁸ City of Toronto, "2005 - 2009 Child Care Service Plan," 2005, p. 1. Accessed from <http://www.toronto.ca/children/pdf/splan05.pdf> 15 July 2008.

⁴³⁹ Rianne Mahon and Jane Jenson, *Learning From Each Other: Early Learning and Child Care Experiences in Canadian Cities*, City of Toronto, 2006, p.21. Accessed from <http://www.toronto.ca/children/pdf/elresearchreport.pdf> 3 July 2008.

Premier. Dr. Pascal is widely recognized as a leading expert in early childhood education. He is expected to report back to the Premier in the spring of 2009 with recommendations on how to implement full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds.⁴⁴⁰

Human resources

In 2007, the Ontario government announced the creation of a "first-of-its-kind in Canada regulatory College of Early Childhood Educators," to "maintain professional standards of practice among child care practitioners."⁴⁴¹ Among its activities would be setting standards of professional practice and ethics "that demonstrate respect for diversity and sensitivity to multiculturalism," the establishment of requirements for professional qualifications, and the creation of a public complaints process.⁴⁴² Additional support would include support for upgrading qualifications toward a diploma through grants for tuition and associated costs.⁴⁴³

In 2007-2008, the Ontario government also provided \$24.8 million for an average wage increase of approximately 3% for more than 30,000 child care workers,⁴⁴⁴ and \$2 million for improved access to training for supervisors and directors.⁴⁴⁵

Parenting programs

One of the priority reforms in the department's strategic plan is to "build family capacity to foster better outcomes."⁴⁴⁶ More specifically,

⁴⁴⁰ Ontario Office of the Premier, "McGuinty Government Moves Forward on Full-day Learning for Four- and Five-Year-Olds," *News Release*, 27 November 2008. Accessed from <http://www.premier.gov.on.ca/news/Product.asp?ProductID=1782&Lang=EN> 17 September 2008.

⁴⁴¹ Ontario MCYS, "McGuinty Government Strengthens Ontario's Child Care System," News release, 5 July 2007. Accessed from <http://ogov.newswire.ca/ontario/GPOE/2007/07/05/c3977.html?lmatch=&lang=e.html> 15 July 2008.

⁴⁴² Ontario MCYS, "College of Early Childhood Educators." Accessed from http://www.gov.on.ca/children/english/news/facts/STEL02_186781.html 15 July 2008.

⁴⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁴ Ontario MCYS, *Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Service Results-based Plan Briefing Book 2008-09*, p.31. Accessed from <http://www.gov.on.ca/children/graphics/247796.pdf> 15 July 2008.

⁴⁴⁵ Ontario MCYS, "Ontario's Best Start Plan", Backgrounder, July 5, 2007. Accessed from http://www.gov.on.ca/children/english/news/backgrounders/STEL02_184667.html 15 July 2008.

⁴⁴⁶ Ontario MCYS, *Realizing Potential: Our Children, Our Youth, Our Future -- Ministry of Children and Youth Services Strategic Framework 2008-2012*, 2008, p. 11. Accessed from

the department recognizes that contribution of parents and families to resilience in children, which requires building skills to “provide nurturing, developmentally optimal environments; and successfully respond to key challenges.”⁴⁴⁷

Parents of young children can already access supports, often in the same location as child care services, in Ontario Early Years Centres. The programs, offered without charge to parents and caregivers of young children, include early learning and literacy programs for parents and children, programs to help parents and caregivers in all aspects of early child development, programs on pregnancy and parenting, links to other early years programs in the community, and outreach activities so all parents can get involved with their local Ontario Early Years Centre.⁴⁴⁸ Local services are provided in more than 103 centres across the province.⁴⁴⁹

Young parents, aged 16 to 21, who receive benefits through Ontario Works are eligible to participate in the “Learning Earning and Parenting (LEAP) program.”⁴⁵⁰ Participation is mandatory for parents aged 16 and 17, and voluntary for parents aged 18 to 21 who have not completed high school. Its goals are to help young parents complete their education, improve parenting skills, and search for jobs.

Research/data

An initiative on outcome measures for children up to age 6 in Ontario has a particular focus on their readiness to learn as they enter first grade.

In 2005-2006, the Ontario government funded the Offord Centre for Child Studies at McMaster University for on-going development and

<http://www.gov.on.ca/children/english/ministry/strategic/index.html> 15 July 2008.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁸ “What is an Ontario Early Years Centre?” from Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services website. Accessed from

http://www.gov.on.ca/children/oeyc/en/questions/STEL02_167710.html 15 July 2008.

⁴⁴⁹ Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, *Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Service Results-based Plan Briefing Book 2008-09*, p. 8. Accessed from <http://www.gov.on.ca/children/graphics/247796.pdf> 15 July 2008.

⁴⁵⁰ Information about this program is taken from Government of Ontario, *Ontario’s Investments in Early Childhood Development Early Learning and Child Care: 2005/2006 Annual Report*, p. 14.

analysis of the Early Development Instrument (EDI)⁴⁵¹ and support to communities. More than 46,000 Senior Kindergarten children participated in EDI data collection. In addition, in that year, the provincial government supported training staff in analysis and use of these data in planning children's services.⁴⁵²

Prince Edward Island

Responsible department

The Early Childhood Services Unit and all associated staff have been moved into the new Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, as announced in the Throne Speech, in April 2008.⁴⁵³

A Healthy Child Development Strategy was released by the Province of PEI in November 2000 with a focus on children of prenatal period to early school years. The goals of the strategy are to improve outcomes for children in the areas of good health, safety and security, success at learning, and social engagement and responsibility.

In November 2000, the Premier's Council on Healthy Child Development was also established. The Council's role is to advise the Premier on issues affecting young children in PEI, host an annual Think Tank on children's issues, monitor the implementation and progress of the Healthy Child Development Strategy, and participate in and promote public education on the importance of the early years.

A broad, inter-sectoral group, the Children's Secretariat, was also formed at this time, and includes community and government representatives. It works as a collective voice to improve outcomes for PEI children.

The lead Department for the Healthy Child Development Strategy is the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, and involves other departments, including Social Services and Seniors; Office of the Attorney General; Communities, Cultural Affairs and Labour; Environment, Energy and Forestry; and Health.

⁴⁵¹ More information on EDI is provided in the research/data section of the main report.

⁴⁵² Government of Ontario, *Ontario's Investments in Early Childhood Development Early Learning and Child Care: 2005/2006 Annual Report*, p. 22.

⁴⁵³ Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island (PEI), "Speech from the Throne," 4 April 2008, Accessed from <http://www.assembly.pe.ca/index.php3?number=1013956> 18 August 2008.

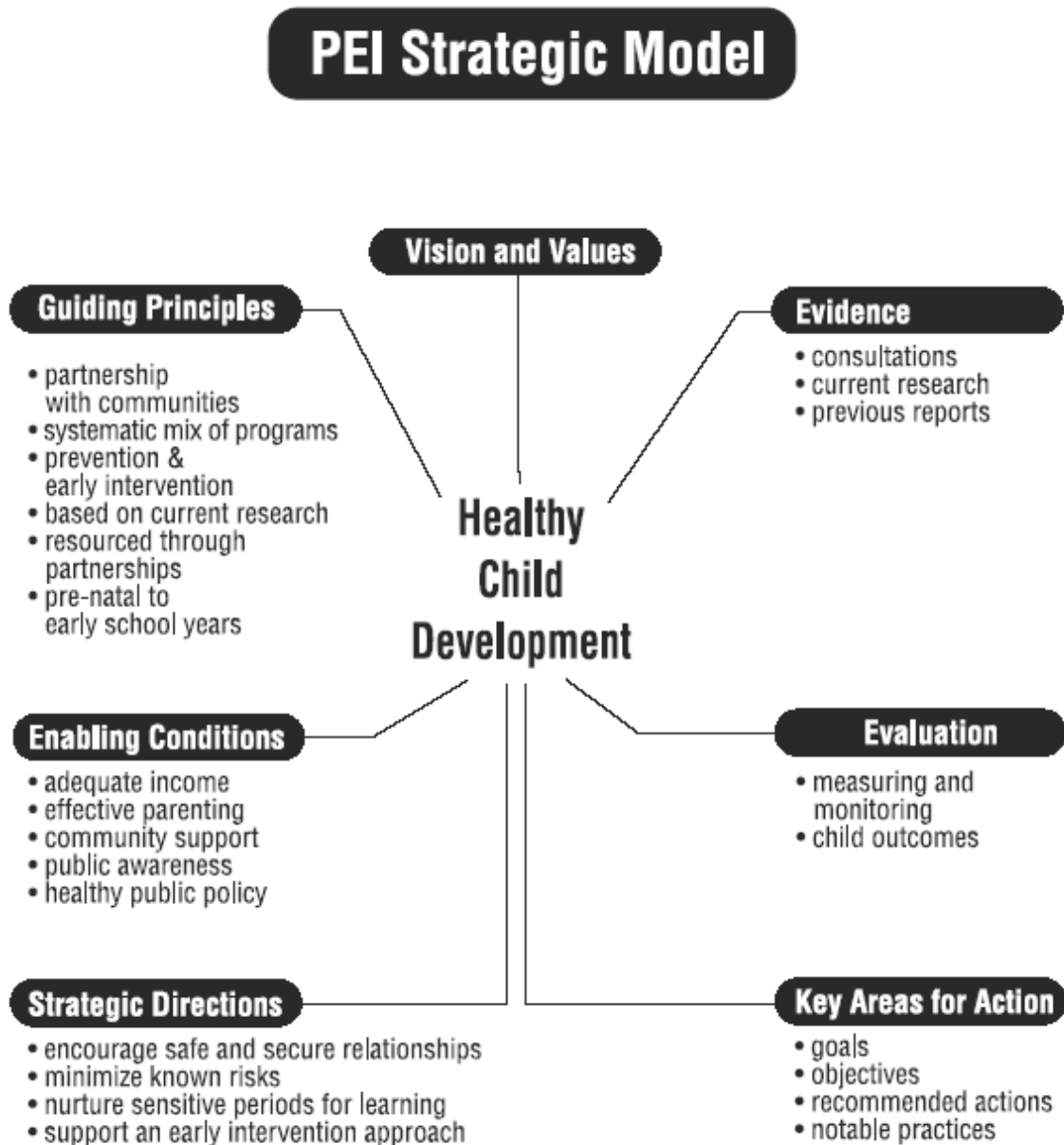
Links with education

As noted above, ECEC is based in a department that combines early learning and education.

Framework/strategy

Starting in 2000, the PEI government brought together several departments and outside experts to develop a Healthy Child Development Strategy, represented graphically below.

Figure 9 – PEI Strategic Model



Access/inclusion⁴⁵⁴

Six Francophone early childhood centres are located across the province to provide early learning and child care opportunities for Francophone children and families.

An Aboriginal Head Start Program opened in Spring 2008 in Charlottetown, to provide early childhood development programming for Aboriginal children off reserve.

Affordability is addressed through a child care subsidy program, designed to assist low and middle income families with the cost of child care. This program is delivered by the Department of Social Services and Seniors. Subsidy is available when a family demonstrates a need for child care services. It pays for all or part of the cost based on a family's annual net income and family size using income thresholds. As outlined in the table below, the income thresholds were increased in April 2007, to allow more families to qualify for subsidy.

In 2006-2007, child care subsidy was provided for over 2,200 children and 1,400 families.⁴⁵⁵ 36% of children in licensed child care programs in PEI are accessing the Child Care Subsidy Program to pay for their fees.

Figure 10 – PEI child care subsidy thresholds⁴⁵⁶

	Old income thresholds	New income thresholds, 1 April 2007
One parent, one child	\$13,400 - \$25,440	\$15,400 - \$27,440
Two parents, two children	\$19,200 - \$51,040	\$21,200 - \$53,040

Special Needs Grants are provided by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to licensed early childhood centres to support children with various special needs (children with medical needs, developmental delays, in care of province, family violence situations, severe behavioural issues, etc.) to attend early childhood centres, with specialized guidance/support.

⁴⁵⁴ Information on PEI programs was provided by Shauna Sullivan Curley, Q.C., Deputy Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, attached to electronic correspondence, 15 September 2008, unless otherwise indicated.

⁴⁵⁵ PEI Premier's Office, "Prince Edward Island Invests in Early Learning for Preschool Children and Families," *Backgrounder*, 15 February 2007. Accessed from <http://www.gov.pe.ca/news/getrelease.php3?number=5032> 19 August 2008.

⁴⁵⁶ PEI Early Childhood Development Association, "Child Care Subsidy Program." Accessed from http://www.ecda.pe.ca/subsidy_information.cfm 19 August 2008.

Finally, the department has an early childhood resource team that works with early childhood development centres across PEI to assist in professional development, program development, inclusion of children with special needs, and to achieve high standards of excellence in meeting childcare requirements. An Early Literacy Specialist is being added to the resource team.

Funding levels

In February 2007, the PEI government announced a multi-year "strategic investment" in early learning, with four components: improved access and affordability for child care programs, quality child care and early learning environments, an information campaign targeted to parents, and research and evaluation.

Better access and affordability included the increase in thresholds for subsidies, described above and an enhanced grant for centres that provided infant care. In December 2005, licensed centres providing care for infants received grants that increased from an annual \$250 per centre, to an annual contribution of \$500 per infant space per centre. Since that time, the number of infants in licensed care has increased by 140%.

Others – a public information campaign and research funding – are described in more detail below. One, however, committed government to supporting greater stability in licensed care, through "predictable, on-going funding."⁴⁵⁷

Direct funding took four forms: maintenance grants available to licensed full-day centres; a flat-rate grants to licensed part-day programs, home-based care and school-age centres; incentive grants to licensed centres that provide spaces for infants up to 22 months of age, described above; and the special needs grants described above to integrate children with special needs.

In February 2007, maintenance grants were extended to all regulated centres that had been operational for at least six months, increasing funding from 36 to 76 centres, at a cost of \$1 million.

⁴⁵⁷ PEI Premier's Office, "Prince Edward Island Invests in Early Learning for Preschool Children and Families," *News Release*, 15 February 2007. Accessed from <http://www.gov.pe.ca/news/getrelease.php?number=5032> 19 August 2008.

The purpose of the Direct Funding Program is to provide licensed child care facilities with financial support in order to enhance and maintain the quality of the program being offered.

PEI's 2008 budget announcement included funds to expand coverage of the province wide Best Start Home Visiting Program (described in more detail below) to children aged 18 to 24 months.⁴⁵⁸

Program design

PEI has two different classes of licensed facilities. The first, early childhood centres, are centres with a primary focus on early childhood development, "emphasizing age-appropriate activities." These include full- and part-time care for mixed age groups and half-day kindergarten for children aged 5.

The second includes home-based care (located in a private residence, intended to provide less formal care, usually full-day for a mixed age group) and a child care centre for school-aged children (which operates outside school hours), and offers a less structured program of recreation and supervision when schools are not in session.⁴⁵⁹

Parenting programs

There are seven Family Resource Centres (FRC) in PEI, two of which have provincial mandates to provide services to particular populations: Francophones and off-reserve Mi'Kmaq, respectively. These centres are funded through Community Action Program for Children (CAPC), \$1.2 million, and Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP), \$535,000. Current contribution agreements expire March 2009.

Best Start Home Visiting Program is a province-wide initiative, involving screening and assessment of families of newborns by Public Health Nursing, and subsequent voluntary participation (recently expanded from 18 months up to 24 months) in a home visiting program by Best Start paraprofessionals employed by the Family Resource Centers.

In addition, funds announced in 2007 were to include a public information campaign highlighting the importance of early years and the role that parents and other care-givers could play in promoting this

⁴⁵⁸ Legislative Assembly of PEI (2008).

⁴⁵⁹ PEI Department of Social Services and Seniors, Parent's Guide to Early Childhood Programs, Revised 2007, p. 5. Accessed from http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/sss_parentguide.pdf 19 August 2008.

development.⁴⁶⁰ Launched in April 2008, the goal of this “made in PEI” social marketing program known as “Take 30 for the Family” is to equip parents and employers with the information and tools they need to help children and families succeed in spending more quality time playing and learning together.

Research/data

As one of five “Understanding the Early Years” sites in the late 1990s, Prince Edward Island had implemented the Early Development Index.⁴⁶¹ The final report on this project was published in 2005, after which funding for this project was discontinued.

In the 2007 multi-year investment strategy announcement, funding was committed to “collect and report data to measure how well our children are doing in areas of development and learning.”⁴⁶² The Early Development Instrument was completed in kindergarten programs across PEI in February and March 2008. As well, the Centre of Education Research at the University of Prince Edward Island is working with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to develop a framework for research and evaluation on early childhood development in Prince Edward Island, host a research forum to bring together the research community, government, the early childhood development community, and build capacity for expertise, and resource support to extend the research, assessment and evaluation agenda for the early years.

Quebec

Responsible department(s)

Children aged 0 to 4 years are the responsibility of the Ministère de la Famille et des Aînés (MFA).

Links with education

As in other provinces, the Education Ministry is responsible for kindergarten and the subsequent years; however, in Quebec, the Education Ministry is also responsible for after-school care of children up to the age of 12 years.

⁴⁶⁰ PEI Premier’s Office (2007), News release.

⁴⁶¹ PEI Early Childhood Development Association, “Understanding the Early Years (UEY) - A Community Research Project.” Accessed from <http://www.ecda.pe.ca/uey.cfm> 19 August 2008.

⁴⁶² PEI Office of the Premier (2007), News release.

Curriculum

The Quebec government recently updated its 10-year-old curriculum for early childhood education, outlining the four goals of early childhood learning:

ensure that children receive quality services, serve as a reference for staff in the childcare services, ensure that all educational childcare services apply an adequate program, ensure the consistency of interventions.⁴⁶³

Framework/strategy

Early childhood learning has been a cornerstone of Quebec's Family Policy, introduced in 1997. At that time, Quebec revised its family policy away from sizeable payments to parents on the birth of children, to a multi-pronged approach including a child allowance, maternity/parental leave for employed and self-employed parents, and low-cost child care. This broad policy framework has continued to guide investment.

A new more specific policy framework for families from conception to the time the child reaches 1 year of age has been put in place by the Ministry of Health and Social Services.⁴⁶⁴ This policy document is prescriptive, calling, for example, for every new mother to receive a telephone call within 24 hours of release from hospital, and an in-person visit by a perinatal nurse within 72 hours of her discharge.⁴⁶⁵

In addition, Quebec is the only provincial government to have legislated a poverty-reduction strategy. Passed in 2002, it is "a framework law that includes a *National Strategy to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion*, a fund to support social initiatives, an "Observatory," and an Advisory Committee on the Prevention of Poverty and Social Exclusion."⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶³ Quebec, Ministère de la Famille et des Aînés, *Accueillir la petite enfance : Le programme éducatif des services de garde du Québec – Mise à jour, 2007*, p. 7-9. Accessed from http://www.mfa.gouv.qc.ca/publications/pdf/programme_educatif.pdf July 31, 2008.

⁴⁶⁴ Le ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux du Québec, *Politique de périnatalité : Un projet porteur de vie 2008-2018 – Synthèse, 2008*. Accessed from <http://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/acrobat/f/documentation/2008/08-918-02.pdf> July 31, 2008.

⁴⁶⁵ *Politique de périnatalité*, p. 20.

⁴⁶⁶ Alain Noël, "A Law Against Poverty: Quebec's New Approach to Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion," Background paper, Canadian Policy Research Networks, 2002, p. 1.

Access/inclusion

One analyst described on-going affordability issues, despite the large investments made by the Government, as late as 2006:

the rapid expansion of regulated child care programs maintains inequities between low income and more affluent families in accessing regulated child care spaces. A higher percentage of middle and upper income families are using \$7/day spaces than poorer families. However, the overall rapid expansion has increased access for all income groups - therefore, a higher percentage of children are attending regulated child care programs than were attending previous to the child care funding reforms in the late 1990s.⁴⁶⁷

As noted by this analyst, reduced-rate spaces are not targeted to low-income families, nor are they restricted to parents who are employed or enrolled as students,⁴⁶⁸ as is the case in most provinces.

Children with special needs are accommodated within CPEs, who receive additional one-time funding for equipment, and an on-going supplement to account for additional costs to accommodate these children.⁴⁶⁹ This may have been funded under the 2004-2007 government program entitled *Mesure exceptionnelle de soutien à l'intégration dans les services de garde pour les enfants handicapés ayant d'importants besoins*. This program was seen as a "last resort" to increase equity and to encourage the integration of Quebec children with special needs into mainstream child care services.⁴⁷⁰

The Quebec Government's 10-year perinatal plan includes specific reference to accommodating the cultural differences of recent arrivals

⁴⁶⁷ Gordon Cleveland, et al., "A Review of the State of the Field of Early Childhood Learning and Development in Child Care, Kindergarten and Family Support Programs," University of Toronto, 2006, p. 35.

⁴⁶⁸ Jocelyne Tougas, "Reforming Quebec's Early Childhood Care and Education," Child Care Resources and Research Unit, 2002, p. 8. Accessed from <http://eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED465458> July 31, 2008.

⁴⁶⁹ City of Toronto, "The Quebec Child Care Model in Ontario Context," staff report prepared for Community Services Committee, 21 October 2005, p. 4. Accessed from http://www.toronto.ca/children/pdf/quebec_model.pdf July 31, 2008.

⁴⁷⁰ Ministère de l'Emploi, de la Solidarité sociale et de la Famille, et ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, *Mesure exceptionnelle de soutien à l'intégration dans les services de garde pour les enfants handicapés ayant d'importants besoins : Cadre de référence*, December 2004, p. 1. Accessed from http://www.mfa.gouv.qc.ca/telecharger.asp?fichier=/publications/pdf/SG_enfants_handicapés_cadre_reference_2004-2007.pdf July 31, 2008.

to Canada in the planning and delivery of perinatal services,⁴⁷¹ and calls for collaboration with Inuit and First Nations organizations in the design and delivery of services in the James Bay area, and Nunavik in particular.⁴⁷²

The Kativik Regional Government takes full responsibility for child care for 14 Inuit communities in Nunavik, including “funding, licensing and supporting” its 17 child care centres.⁴⁷³ The program combines child care and Head Start, with full time and part-time spaces. Funds come from the Government of Quebec, the First Nations Inuit Child Care Initiative, Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities, parent fees at \$7 per day.⁴⁷⁴ Provincial funding flows through a 23-year block fund from the province to the regional government.⁴⁷⁵ This is under an agreement concerning the Kativik Regional Government overall funding, that came into effect April 1st, 2004 and runs until 2027.⁴⁷⁶ Federal funds flow through usual departmental channels.

Funding levels

Budget 2008 had two commitments directly relevant to early childhood development and learning. The first, a concrete “upstream commitment” addressing child poverty, recommended by the OECD, was the announcement of “a \$400-million fund over 10 years to foster the development of children under age 5 living in poverty, in partnership with the Fondation Lucie et André Chagnon.”⁴⁷⁷ This fund will focus on children under the age of 5, and is intended to work with local communities to “increase early and sustained intervention with children to positively influence their life course from infancy; improve support for parents in various forms and equip them to foster the development of their children.”⁴⁷⁸

The second was a commitment to add 18,000 new subsidized spaces by 2012. Since the budget, the Government has indicated that its first call for proposals, expected to elicit plans for 9,000 units, resulted in proposals for double that number; consequently, the Government has

⁴⁷¹ *Politique de périnatalité*, p. 23.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.* p. 25.

⁴⁷³ Tagataga Inc., *Inuit Early Childhood Education and Care: Present Successes – Promising Directions*, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, April 2008, p. 12.

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁴⁷⁶ Information obtained from officers of the Ministère de la Famille et des Aînés du Québec (e-mail dated September 4, 2008).

⁴⁷⁷ Government of Quebec, “Supporting the Family and the Wellbeing of Quebecers,” *2008-2009 Budget: Budget Plan*, March 2008, p. E-3.

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. E-6.

indicated it will have 18,000 spaces in place by 2010, that is two years ahead of its commitment.⁴⁷⁹ More precisely, the government has announced 9,000 new spaces at the time of the budget and 9,000 other new spaces in July.

In addition, the budget raised the child care expense deduction for parents who did not use the regulated, subsidized, with the stated goal of increasing choices available to parents.

The Quebec government announced that its spending on families had increased by 42% since 2003, with a total annual allocation of \$5.1 billion in 2008-09.⁴⁸⁰ In 2007 alone, the Government said, \$2.1 billion was invested to support more than 870,000 families.⁴⁸¹ For "childhood education services", which includes child care and kindergarten, the increase was from \$ 1.8 million in 2003 to \$2.26 million in 2008.⁴⁸²

Program design

Children between birth and 4 years old are served by Centres de la petite enfance, or CPEs and Service de garde en milieu familial or family child care⁴⁸³ as well as subsidized daycares.⁴⁸⁴ CPEs offer group care and are operated by community boards; at least two-thirds must be parent users or future users.

Family care takes place in the private homes of contractors who may care for a maximum of six children. If the provider is assisted by another adult, nine children are permitted. Until June 2006, family child care providers were part of CPEs. As of June 2006, coordinating offices accredited by the Ministry took over to license, provide support

⁴⁷⁹ Quebec, Ministère de la Famille et des Aînés, "Objectif 2010: 20 000 places". Accessed from <http://www.mfa.gouv.qc.ca/services-de-garde/operation/presentation/> July 31, 2008.

⁴⁸⁰ Quebec, Ministère de la Famille et des Aînés, "La Ministre Michelle Courchesne souligne le dépôt du projet de loi instituant le Fonds pour le développement des jeunes enfants, " Communiqué, June 17, 2008. Accessed from <http://www.mfa.gouv.qc.ca/ministere/ministre-de-la-famille/galerie-de-photos/communiqués/index.asp?f=juin2008/17.htm> July 31, 2008.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid.

⁴⁸² "Supporting the Family and the Wellbeing of Quebecers," p. E-16.

⁴⁸³ Quebec, Ministère de la Famille et des Aînés, *Accueillir la petite enfance : Le Programme éducatif des services de garde du Québec – Mise à jour, 2007*, p. 5. Accessed from http://www.mfa.gouv.qc.ca/publications/pdf/programme_educatif.pdf July 31, 2008.

⁴⁸⁴ Information obtained from officers of the Ministère de la Famille et des Aînés du Québec (e-mail dated September 4, 2008).

and monitor the application of the standards.⁴⁸⁵ Most home child care coordinating offices were CPEs; some were new free-standing non-profit organizations. There were 165, as of September 2008.⁴⁸⁶

The government's prediction for the 392,000 children under the age of 5 in 2008, was that approximately three-fifths would attend subsidized centre-based care; about one-fifth would be at home in the care of a parent; and the remainder would be in "regular rate" services.⁴⁸⁷

Human resources

The early expansion of the system was hampered by a shortage of qualified educators. The province responded with an aggressive recruitment campaign, innovative in-service staff training, and, new funding for training institutions. Pushed by the unions, the province followed up with pensions, benefits, a substantial wage boost and a province-wide salary scale that has kept the Quebec plan on track.⁴⁸⁸

The 2008-08 Budget added to prior initiatives with an annual 2% increase in the salaries of child care staff.

Parenting programs

The first important program for parents is the province's parental leave program. Quebec's parental benefits include self-employed parents and provide higher levels of income replacements than offered in the rest of Canada. Starting in 2006 parents were offered two payment options: 70% of their average weekly earnings for the first 25 weeks and 55% for the remaining 25 weeks; or 75% of average weekly earnings for a maximum of 40 weeks. The earning threshold is \$52,500, compared to \$39,000 under the federal Employment Insurance program, making maximum payments in Quebec \$757 weekly compared to the \$413 maximum provided elsewhere.

The perinatal 10-year framework includes the following direction for service delivery: "Put in place means to reinforce parents' ability to be proper parents and accompany them every step of their child's

⁴⁸⁵ Rianne Mahon and Jane Jenson, *Learning From Each Other: Early Learning and Child Care Experiences in Canadian Cities*, City of Toronto, 2006, p.18. Accessed from <http://www.toronto.ca/children/pdf/elresearchreport.pdf> July 3, 2008.

⁴⁸⁶ Information obtained from officers of the Ministère de la Famille et des Aînés du Québec (e-mail dated September 4, 2008).

⁴⁸⁷ "Supporting the Family and the Wellbeing of Quebecers," p. E-8.

⁴⁸⁸ Beach et al. (2004).

development."⁴⁸⁹ As this plan was put in place earlier in 2008, information about implementation is not yet available.

In addition, a program of support to young parents, entitled Services intégrés en périnatalité et pour la petite enfance à l'intention des familles vivant en contexte de vulnérabilité, offers intensive support to "young parents with a history of social adjustment problems" from pregnancy through to entry into elementary school. This support includes parenting skills, as well as encouraging further education of young parents.⁴⁹⁰

Saskatchewan⁴⁹¹

Responsible department(s)

The Ministry of Education has responsibility for early learning and child care, pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and early childhood development.

Links with education

Early learning and K to 12 are in different branches within the same department: child care, pre-kindergarten and early childhood development are in the Early Learning and Child Care Branch, while kindergarten is part of the Curriculum and E-Learning Branch.

Curriculum

A new document, *Play and Exploration: Early Learning Program Guide*,⁴⁹² was released in April 2008 for programs serving 3- and 4-year-olds. While this document is not a mandatory curriculum, it is

⁴⁸⁹ *Politique de périnatalité*, p. 21.

⁴⁹⁰ "Programs for Children and Young Parents", Quebec Health Services and Social Services Website. Accessed from http://www.mfa.gouv.qc.ca/services-en-ligne/guide-programmes-services/fiches/19_4.asp?lang=en&chapitre=19&fiche=4#ProgramofSupporttoYoungParents July 7, 2008.

⁴⁹¹ Information on Saskatchewan's programs and policies is taken from a document attached to private correspondence from Kathy Abernethy, Director, Early Childhood Education, in Early Learning and Child Care, Government of Saskatchewan, dated 5 June 2008.

⁴⁹² Caroline Krentz, *Play and Exploration: Early Learning Program Guide*, Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2008. Accessed from <http://www.learning.gov.sk.ca/adx/asp/adxGetMedia.aspx?DocID=1716,213,136,107,81,1,Documents&MediaID=3548&Filename=Complete+ELPG+in+colour.pdf> July 7, 2008.

intended to guide early learning educators.⁴⁹³ A renewed Kindergarten resource will be released in September of 2008.

Access/inclusion

According to a recent assessment by the Canadian Labour Congress, more than three-quarters of mothers are in the labour force, but regulated spaces are available for only 6% of children.⁴⁹⁴

For vulnerable children aged 3 to 4, the Ministry of Education funds pre-kindergarten programs with a qualified teacher who provides programming for children for at least 12 hours weekly. This program began in 1966, in collaboration with school boards with 26 programs; by March 2008, government was supporting 155 such programs.⁴⁹⁵

In addition, the Child Care Inclusion Program⁴⁹⁶ supports families and licensed child care centres, with grants, to include children with diverse or exceptional high special needs. Funding for these programs was increased in 2007-2008.

The program is based on the following principles:

- Every child has the right to be included in a program that is developmentally appropriate.
- When support services and program planning are provided early, they contribute to the optimum development of the child.
- Children benefit when families, child care providers and referring professionals work as a team.
- Families require child care services that meet their unique needs.
- In order to respond to the needs of families of children with diverse needs, child care facilities require support.
- Parents have the right and the responsibility to choose the child care program that is right for their child.

The program provides grants to individuals of up to \$300 per month, with an additional maximum of \$1,500 per month if needed for extensive or one-on-one caregiving is required and the parent is either employed or studying full-time. It also provides grants to child care facilities of up to \$600 per year (or \$1,200 in exceptional

⁴⁹³ Ibid., p. iii.

⁴⁹⁴ "Child Care Report Card: Saskatchewan", Canadian Labour Congress, 2008.

⁴⁹⁵ "Pre Kindergarten Program," Saskatchewan Ministry of Education Website.

Accessed from <http://www.learning.gov.sk.ca/PreK> July 7, 2008.

⁴⁹⁶ "The Child Care Inclusion Program," Saskatchewan Ministry of Education website. Accessed from <http://www.learning.gov.sk.ca/Default.aspx?DN=a6fdb606-d24d-4d2a-97d1-d0c1d93b9fa3> July 14, 2008.

circumstances) to assist with the cost of adapted or specialized equipment necessary; and with the cost of training and the resources necessary at \$100 per year, or \$200 in exceptional circumstances.

In addition, the government funds a Community Solutions Program, to support community organizations for projects "... that promote and support inclusion of children and families with special needs, that support labour force attachment, that are workplace sponsored or that meet the needs of rural or northern communities. Projects must have an attachment to a regulated child care service."⁴⁹⁷

As well, Early Childhood Community Developers across the province work with Aboriginal organizations to support vulnerable families and to facilitate early childhood development for Aboriginal children.

Funding levels

Enhanced resources were allocated to add 36 new pre-kindergarten programs in 2007-2008, and 38 new programs in 2008-09. By September 2008 the Ministry of Education will support a total of 193 programs serving approximately 3,000 children and their families.

In 2007-2008, resources were allocated for new Early Learning and Child Care program initiatives including 1,050 new licensed child care spaces (with 500 more to be funded in 2008-2009); capital funding of \$3,000 per space for new space developments (to be continued in 2008-09); family child care home supports including nutrition grants, increased start-up funding and support for alternate care programs; and one-time Early Learning Environment Grants for purchasing high quality resources to enhance learning for children.

Public funding per regulated space was \$2,614 in 2005, increased from \$2,483 in 2003.⁴⁹⁸

Program design

Saskatchewan regulates child care services offered in centres and in family homes (if more than an established maximum of children including those of the caregiver are cared for). As of March 2006, Saskatchewan regulated 8,712 spaces, of which 6,317 were located in

⁴⁹⁷ Childcare Resource and Research Unit, *Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada • 2006, 2007*, p. 123.

⁴⁹⁸ "Child Care Report Card: Saskatchewan", Canadian Labour Congress, 2008.

child care centres. Of the centre-based spaces, only 25 were for-profit centres, while the others were offered in not-for-profit-run centres.⁴⁹⁹

Human resources

The Saskatchewan government has recognized the importance of qualified staff:

A stable, well-supported workforce has been identified by research as a key component of quality early learning and child care services; since 1996, funding [for child care] has included increasing wage enhancements for child care centre staff... Funding increases to the ECS Grant since 2005 have included a mandatory wage lift requirement.⁵⁰⁰

Earnings for child care staff have increased from an average of \$10.95 per hour in 2001, to \$13.95 per hour for an early childhood educator with a two-year diploma by September 2005.⁵⁰¹ As noted above, further increases have occurred since; a 3% wage lift for workers in centres is being paid in 2007-08, with another 4% increased scheduled for 2008-09.

Half of staff in regulated centres are required to have a one-year certificate in ECE or equivalent.⁵⁰² Education Support Grants were provided in 2007-2008 to assist early childhood educators in licensed child care centres and family child care homes to upgrade their formal early childhood education qualifications. As well, tuition reimbursement increased from \$70 to \$150 per class for students in early childhood education.

Parenting programs

In addition to supports provided through family services and health programs for mothers and children, Saskatchewan funds KidsFirst, "a voluntary program that helps vulnerable families to become the best parents they can be and to have the healthiest children possible. The

⁴⁹⁹ Childcare Resource and Research Unit, *Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada* • 2006, 2007, p. 119.

⁵⁰⁰ "Child Care Centre Wage Support Information", Saskatchewan Department of Education, p. 1. Accessed from <http://www.learning.gov.sk.ca/adx/asp/adxGetMedia.aspx?DocID=1727,219,212,136,107,81,1,Documents&MediaID=2914&Filename=Wage+Support+Information+-+Final.pdf> July 14, 2008.

⁵⁰¹ "Child Care Report Card: Saskatchewan", Canadian Labour Congress, 2008.

⁵⁰² Childcare Resource and Research Unit, *Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada* • 2006, 2007, p. 119.

program enhances knowledge, provides support and builds on family strengths.”⁵⁰³

This program supports families with a home visitor to provide guidance to parents and connections to the community, including childcare, parent support groups, and early learning opportunities for children. It can also provide help with literacy, nutrition, transportation and specialized counseling services. The program is for parents and their children under 5 who live off-reserve in targeted areas. Eligibility is determined by in-home assessment that looks at family strengths and whether a family can benefit from KidsFirst services.

Outside the targeted areas, families of babies found in screening to be facing challenges may be eligible for KidsFirst program receive public health services to connect them to alternative services and programs.

This program is a joint initiative of the Ministries of Education, Health, Social Services, and First Nations and Métis Relations and numerous community agencies.

Research/data

The Early Development Instrument will be implemented on a province-wide basis, beginning in 2008-2009. The Universal Birth Questionnaire data snapshots will be analyzed to provide an ongoing analysis of the profile of physical and social determinants of health of children born in the province.

Yukon

Responsible department(s)

The Department of Health and Social Services is responsible for child care throughout the territory. It does so through its Child Care Services Unit, which is responsible for seven services, including child care subsidies direct operating grants to licensed child facilities.⁵⁰⁴

Links with education

⁵⁰³ All information on KidsFirst is taken from “KidsFirst,” Saskatchewan Ministry of Education Website unless otherwise specified. Accessed from <http://www.learning.gov.sk.ca/KidsFirst> July 7, 2008.

⁵⁰⁴ Yukon Health and Social Services, “Child Care Services Unit.” Accessed from http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca/programs/family_children/childcare_unit/ 28 July 2008.

While responsibility for early learning and child care is specific to the Department of Health and Social Services, the Department of Education is involved through its financial and program support to the Child Development Centre and in its 4-year-old Kindergarten program,⁵⁰⁵ offered in some school districts.⁵⁰⁶ (More information about these centres is provided below.)

Further, Education Department policy supports after-school use of school property, and has a policy specifically spelling out how school-based after-school care can be implemented.⁵⁰⁷

Finally, in December 2007, an education reform project, with an executive committee of the Minister of Education, the Chair of Yukon Chiefs Council on Education, and the Chief of Liard Nation, reported with many recommendations, including with respect to early learning. One of these recommendations was:

Yukon and First Nations governments and practitioners in the fields of education and early childhood care and learning must work more cooperatively. Greater contact is needed between early childhood learning programs and schools in order to enhance communication and transitions.⁵⁰⁸

Framework/strategy

In the fall of 2003, the Yukon Child Care Working Group (put in place earlier that year by the Minister of Health and Social Services) released a four-year strategic plan for child care,⁵⁰⁹ which outlined a mission and vision statement, and detailed values. It is not clear whether this plan was implemented, though it has been cited in other publications, nor is there any indication that it has been renewed or replaced.

⁵⁰⁵ Canadian Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, *Minding Our P's and Q's : Pedagogy, Policy & Quality*, May 2007, p. 39. Accessed from http://www.ccaac.ca/projects/background_docs/Ps_and_Qs_Final_Report.pdf 28 July 2008.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 15.

⁵⁰⁷ Yukon Education, "After-School Child Care Operations in Schools," Policy 1022, January 2005. Accessed from http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/pdf/policy_child_care.pdf 28 July 2008.

⁵⁰⁸ Yukon Education and Council of Yukon First Nations, *Education Reform Project: Final Report*, 2007, p. 3.14. Accessed from http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/pdf/ed_reform_report.pdf 28 July 2008.

⁵⁰⁹ Yukon Child Care Working Group, "Strategic Planning Document: A Four-Year Plan for Yukon Early Childhood Education and Care," 2003. Accessed from <http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca/downloads/eccplan.pdf> 28 July 2008.

Curriculum

While no information was available on existing or planned curriculum for early learning, the Education Reform project report, cited above, also contained a recommendation calling for First Nations curricula “to be integrated into early childhood learning programs to support connections to traditional culture.”⁵¹⁰

Access/inclusion⁵¹¹

Affordability barriers are addressed with child care subsidies, with increases introduced in December 2007. At that time, subsidy rates increased by an average of 25%: subsidies for infants and children with special needs increased from \$500 to \$625 monthly, while subsidies for toddler care increased from \$450 to \$565. A change was also made to the reduction in assistance applied to incomes above the level eligible for the full subsidy. An example of the impact is that a child care subsidy is now available to families with incomes up to \$51,928, increased from \$32,304, for a single parent with an infant in child care. The thresholds for full subsidy have also increased, by 8%, to keep pace with increases in the cost of living since the last increase (in 2000).

For children with special needs, a supported child care program provides additional support in child care settings. This support, through funding, could include extra staffing, staff development and programming, or assistance with materials, fees, and transportation where needed.⁵¹²

In addition, in May 2007, the Yukon Government established the Child Care Capital Fund with \$1.3 million received from the Government of Canada through the Early Learning and Child Care Initiative. The funds objectives are to increase the number of child care spaces, especially for infants and children with special needs; and to create or enhance spaces “that will result in the provision of a child care system that better serves the education and cultural needs of parents and their children in all Yukon communities.”⁵¹³

⁵¹⁰ “Education Reform Project: Final Report,” p. 3.14.

⁵¹¹ Information about access and inclusion is taken from private correspondence by email from Brad Bell, Manager, Special Projects Early Childhood, Yukon Health and Social Services, dated 2 May 2008.

⁵¹² Yukon Health and Social Services, “Child Care Subsidy Program.” Accessed from http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca/programs/family_children/early_childhood/childcare_subsidy/ 28 July 2008.

⁵¹³ Private correspondence by email from Brad Bell.

To meet the needs of Francophones, a Yukon Francophone School Board has identified the need to strengthen its child care curriculum, to contribute to life-long learning from Francophones.⁵¹⁴ For First Nations children, the Education Reform program recommended the incorporation of language nests and immersion into early childhood learning programs “where appropriate.”⁵¹⁵

Funding levels

Overall, funding in child care increased by \$1 million, beginning in 2007-2008, and will increase by an equal amount for this and the subsequent three fiscal years, resulting in a \$5 million increase over five years.

In August 2007, a new unit funding model for child care centres and family day homes that combined enrolment, building expenses, hot meal program and set up spaces into a single allocation for each centre. Funding was to be based on total approved spaces and staffing levels to support them, rather than on enrolment, which can fluctuate from month to month.

Program design

While any family home providing care to four or more children must be licensed, staff-to-child ratios and a training plan toward certification of child care workers are required only in centre-based care.

Data from 2007 indicated that just over half of 1,295 regulated spaces, centre-based and home-based, were non-profit; of all licensed spaces, 250 were in home-based care.⁵¹⁶

Human resources

The Yukon Government has introduced several measures to support the recruitment and retention of qualified staff to early childhood learning programs. In August 2007, a 30% increase was announced “to the wage portion of the Direct Operating Program paid to child care programs, retroactive to April 1,”⁵¹⁷ followed by a further 6% increase

⁵¹⁴ Yukon Education, *2006 - 2007 Yukon Department of Education Annual Report*, p. 34. Accessed from http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/psb/pdf/2006-2007_yukon_education_annual_report.pdf 28 July 2008.

⁵¹⁵ Education Reform Project: Final Report, p. 3.14.

⁵¹⁶ Childcare Resource and Research Unit, *Child Care Space Statistics 2007*, 2007, p. 13. Accessed from <http://www.childcarecanada.org/pubs/other/spaces/ccspacestatistics07.pdf> 28 July 2008.

⁵¹⁷ Private correspondence by email from Brad Bell.

in October 2007. The government recently announced a further 40% increase, retroactive to 1 April 2008.⁵¹⁸

The Education Reform report cited above, released in December 2007, had several recommendations with respect to staffing early childhood learning programs. These included the provision of long-term funding by federal, territorial and First Nations governments for training; accessibility and affordability for training; the implementation of a Yukon Child Care Training Fund; targeted funding by Yukon and First Nation governments for staff to support their meeting certification levels required by regulation; and increased financial contributions to operating funds and subsidies to “ensure adequate compensation levels for staff.”⁵¹⁹

Innovative efforts to offer training opportunities to a geographically dispersed population of child care staff are provided by Partners for Children, through workshops, training and support to parents, caregivers and other professionals. The workshops focus on “the health and development of children aged prenatal to 6 years old, their families and communities.”⁵²⁰ Such workshops include Yukon Early Childhood Educators Forum, offered by videoconference at local campuses of Yukon College; these forums can be used toward Early Childhood Education credits.⁵²¹ This program is funded through Community Action Program for Children, described in the main body of this report.

Parenting programs

Supported by reinvestments from the Canada Child Benefit, the Yukon government provides a Healthy Families program, which “delivers a culturally appropriate intensive home based family support service to overburdened families, prenatally and/or at birth through school age.”⁵²² The Partners for Children initiative described above also supports parents in their role as parents.

⁵¹⁸ Yukon Health & Social Services, “Childcare Operators Receive Second Increase for Wages,” News Release, 23 July 2008. Accessed from http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca/news/2008/id_132/ 29 July 2008.

⁵¹⁹ Education Reform Project: Final Report, p. 3.14.

⁵²⁰ Partners for Children, “About Us”. Accessed from <http://dl1.yukoncollege.yk.ca/PFC/aboutus> 28 July 2008.

⁵²¹ Partners for Children, *Newsletter*, Fall 2007, p. 7. Accessed from <http://ycdl4.yukoncollege.yk.ca/frontier/files/PFC/pfcNewsletterFall07www.pdf> 28 July 2008.

⁵²² Yukon Health & Social Services, “Early Childhood.” Accessed from http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca/programs/family_children/early_childhood/.

APPENDIX 4

OVERVIEW OF EARLY LEARNING POLICIES AND PROGRAMS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

Australia

In 2007, the Australian Government identified high-quality, accessible and affordable integrated early childhood education and care (ECEC) as one of its main priorities,⁵²³ and created a number of new initiatives to address the key challenges with respect to ECEC services. As in Canada, the provision of ECEC in Australia is fragmented: jurisdiction is shared between federal and state governments, while non-profit and for-profit agencies are the main service providers, with the exception of pre-schools. The OECD has praised Australia for coming up with innovative and integrated programs to meet the ECEC needs of its rural and remote, as well as culturally diverse populations.⁵²⁴

Policy development and implementation

Federal and state/territorial governments share responsibility for policy development and implementation in ECEC. At the federal level, in 2007, the government created the Office of Early Childhood Education within the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR).⁵²⁵ The Office is responsible for both funding and quality assurance mechanisms for child care, as well as developing national policy initiatives in ECEC. This marked a key change in Australia's approach to ECEC, as child care and early childhood education had previously been considered separate policy areas falling under different government portfolios.⁵²⁶

State and territorial governments are responsible for direct delivery, funding and policies of early childhood education in pre-schools and

⁵²³ Government of Australia, "Early Childhood Education and Care," http://www.oceccc.gov.au/new_agenda.htm (accessed 15 July, 2008)

⁵²⁴ *OECD Country Note: Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Australia*, November 2001, p. 30.

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵²⁶ Previously, policies relating to child care were the responsibility of the Department of Family and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, reflecting the view that child care is means to support families, as well as female participation in the labour force. Meanwhile, pre-school fell under the Department of Education, Science and Training. This separation of childcare and education was criticized by the OECD: *OECD, Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care*, 2006, p. 266.

schools.⁵²⁷ However, the federal government provides some additional funding for pre-schools for indigenous populations.⁵²⁸ Some provincial and territorial governments also elect to contribute financially to outside-school-hours care, play groups, long-day care and other children's services. Regulations governing ECEC services are formulated and administered at the state/territorial level and generally fall under the auspices of either education and/or community services departments.

Curriculum

Curriculum and pedagogical approaches vary depending upon the setting.⁵²⁹ There is no prescribed curriculum for child care settings participating in the national accreditation system. However, some states have a curriculum framework that is mandatory in centre-based care facilities. In pre-school and kindergarten settings, states and territories have separate curriculum frameworks and guidelines that focus on the socio-emotional, physical, cultural, cognitive and linguistic areas of development and especially on early literacy and numeracy development. Play-based pedagogy is the most common recommended approach.

Program design

ECEC services are delivered predominantly by non-profit, non-governmental organizations and by for-profit organizations, in contrast to pre-school and school, which are provided directly by state and territorial governments. As described by the OECD, ECEC services offered in Australia are:

- family day care, home-based care for children aged 0 to 12 years, provided by registered caregivers within the carer's home;
- long-day care centres, for children from birth to school age, open for at least eight hours a day, five days a week and 48 weeks per year;
- occasional care centres, also for children from birth to school age, but providing short-term care on a regular or irregular basis;
- outside-school-hours care, providing activities for children aged 5 to 12 years old, before and after school hours and during school vacations; and

⁵²⁷ Commonwealth Government of Australia, *OECD Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care Policy: Australian Background Report*, p. 23.

⁵²⁸ Marilyn Harrington, "Background Note: Preschool education in Australia," www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/bn/2007-08/PreschoolEdAustralia.htm (accessed 9 May 2008).

⁵²⁹ Unless otherwise noted, this section is drawn from: OCED, *Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care*, 2006, p. 271.

- pre-schools, for children between the ages of 3 and 5, usually open only during school terms, between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., and offered on a half-day or full-day basis.⁵³⁰

Funding levels

The federal government provides both direct and indirect funding to ECEC. The federal government funds early childhood education indirectly by providing families with income-tested fee subsidies (discussed below) through the Child Care Benefit (CCB), and a non-income-tested child care tax rebate for parents or guardians who are working, training or studying, to offset the costs of child care.

In addition, the federal government funds ECEC directly by providing subsidies for the establishment of new programs or centres. For example, in its 2008-2009 budget, the government planned to invest \$114.5 million over four years to build 38 additional Early Learning and Care Centres, which included six autism-specific centres.⁵³¹

State and territorial governments are primarily responsible for funding pre-school in Australia. In 2006-2007, the total government expenditure on pre-school education was AUS\$0.5 billion, with state and territory governments providing 99.34% of the funding.⁵³²

Access/inclusion

In 2008, the Government of Australia estimated that between 13 and 20% of all 4-year-olds in Australia did not attend pre-school or any other form of ECEC.⁵³³ For indigenous populations, this number rose to half. Rising costs for services have been cited most frequently⁵³⁴ as a barrier to access to ECEC. As noted above, affordability barriers are addressed through the Child Care Benefit (CCB), which is income-tested and varies with the level of income; this benefit can be used only in government-approved high-quality ECEC services.⁵³⁵ The OECD

⁵³⁰ OECD, *OECD Country Note: Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Australia*, November 2001, p. 7.

⁵³¹ Government of Australia, "Early Childhood Education and Care," http://www.oceccc.gov.au/new_agenda.htm (accessed 15 July, 2008).

⁵³² Marilyn Harrington, "Background Note: Preschool education in Australia," www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/bn/2007-08/PreschoolEdAustralia.htm (accessed 9 May 2008).

⁵³³ Australian Government, *Universal Access to Early Childhood Education: Guidelines 2007-08*, March 2008, p. 1.

⁵³⁴ Commonwealth Government of Australia, *OECD Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care Policy: Australian Background Report*, p. 33.

⁵³⁵ Approved high quality ECEC services include those listed in the above service provision section. Australian Government, *Fact Sheet 2: What is the Childcare*

noted that the introduction of this benefit had improved access to ECEC for children of low- to middle-income families.⁵³⁶

Given the large land mass and sparsely distributed population, Australia's geography continues to be an ongoing challenge to access to ECEC. To address this problem, in 2007, the Government of Australia established its goal of ensuring that all children have access to 15 hours of Government-funded, play-based early childhood education, for a minimum of 40 weeks per year, delivered by degree-qualified early childhood teachers in public, private and community-based pre-schools and child care in the year prior to formal schooling; this goal is to be achieved by 2013.⁵³⁷ The 2008-09 Budget included an investment of AUS\$10 million through the states and territories for innovative projects aimed at improving access to early childhood education.

In addition to funding measures, Australia has developed innovative policy approaches to overcoming cultural and geographic barriers to ECEC services. The federal government has worked with state and territorial governments to develop integrated, community specific and culturally appropriate models of ECEC service delivery.

For example, *Mobile Children's Services* are traveling resource units that cater to families in rural and remote areas. They offer a range of services including child care and pre-school, as well as activities for older children, playgroups and toy libraries. Similarly, *Multi-functional Children's Services* co-locate different types of care and education services according to the needs of a particular community or population group. In its review, the OECD saw these special programs as particularly effective in increasing access in remote and rural locations.⁵³⁸

Improving quality

The quality of ECEC is assessed at both the state and territorial and the federal levels. State and territorial governments determine licence requirements, staff-to-child ratios, and requirements for staff

Benefit, <http://www.oceccc.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/7BC0E145-54BA-45AE-B4BC-1A8C6B7EF6C5/20723/OECECCFactSheet2.pdf> (accessed 16 July 2008)

⁵³⁶ : OECD, (2001), p. 44.

⁵³⁷ Australian Government, "Universal Access to Early Childhood Education," <http://www.oceccc.gov.au/education/default.htm> (accessed 16 July 2008).

⁵³⁸ OECD (2001), p. 30.

qualifications.⁵³⁹ At the same time, the federal government has established a quality accreditation system (QIAS) directly tied to the provision of funding through the Child Care Benefit. Every two-and-a-half years, the QIAS evaluates the learning experiences of children, the relationships between children, parents and their carers, as well as the types and quality of programs offered.⁵⁴⁰ In 2008, the Government of Australia announced that its plan to introduce a new five-category rating system within the QIAS to provide further information to parents and improve quality standards.⁵⁴¹

Human resources

For child care services, staff members require vocational certification in ECEC, obtained through programs offered at state- and territorially funded Technical and Further Education institutions (TAFE). This training consists of nationally endorsed programs, which set out the relevant competencies to be attained. In contrast, pre-school staff must have university teaching degrees with a specialization in early childhood education. University teaching degrees are academically based, and their content is determined by the individual universities, which are funded by the federal government. There are significant disparities in incomes, wages and conditions between teachers working in childcare settings and those working in pre-schools, with the former significantly overburdened and experiencing low wage levels.⁵⁴²

Data/research

The amalgamation of the Colleges of Advanced Education with the universities in 1989 resulted in linking ECEC institutions with university research centres, which has generated a more vibrant research community in the area of ECEC in the last 15 years.⁵⁴³ The federal government has also created the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI), a population-based measure of child development, which enables communities to assess how children are developing by the time they reach school age.⁵⁴⁴ In 2008, the Government announced

⁵³⁹ Australian Government, *Fact Sheet 15: Information for Families using Child Care*, <http://www.oceccc.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/C97009D1-F6F6-4D1C-90EC-E7568DD3DF00/20736/OECECCFactSheet15.pdf> (accessed 16 July 2008).

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁴¹ Australian Government, "Strong quality standards in child care and preschool." Accessed from http://www.oceccc.gov.au/strong_quality_standards.htm 16 July 2008.

⁵⁴² Commonwealth Government of Australia, *OECD Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care Policy: Australian Background Report*, p. 45.

⁵⁴³ Commonwealth Government of Australia, *OECD Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care Policy: Australian Background Report*, p. 55.

⁵⁴⁴ Government of Australia, "Early Childhood Education and Care," http://www.oceccc.gov.au/new_agenda.htm (accessed 15 July, 2008).

that the AEDI will be adapted to measure the outcomes of indigenous children and will be made available to communities nationwide.⁵⁴⁵

Cuba

Despite its few economic resources, Cuba's achievements in early childhood education and care (ECEC) have been considerable. Cuba was one of 47 countries in the world to have achieved UNESCO's six Education for All goals, which include, for example, universal primary education, gender parity and quality of education.⁵⁴⁶ The goal of Cuba's ECEC system is to ensure that each child is able to develop to its fullest potential. Cuba offers universally accessible institutional and non-institutional child care settings that are coordinated and delivered by the government.

Policy development and implementation⁵⁴⁷

Cuba has one lead department responsible for the coordination and implementation of Early Childhood Education and Care, the Pre-school Education Bureau of the Ministry of Education. This bureau coordinates the work of all government agencies and organizations involved in ECEC through national technical groups. The other agencies and departments involved in ECEC and in these national technical groups include the ministries of Public Health, Culture and Sports, the Federation of Cuban Women, the National Association of Small Farmers, student organizations, trade unions, Committees for the Defence of the Revolution and the media. These coordinating groups are found at the provincial, municipal and community levels of government.

Curriculum

Cuba has a national curriculum that applies to both its institutional and non-institutional ECEC settings.⁵⁴⁸ The overall goal of the curriculum is to optimize each child's integrated development and prepare them in

⁵⁴⁵ Government of Australia, "Early Childhood Education and Care," http://www.oceccc.gov.au/new_agenda.htm (accessed 15 July, 2008).

⁵⁴⁶ UNESCO, *Strong Foundations: Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2007*, Paris, 2006, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/0014/001477/147794E.pdf> p. 64.

⁵⁴⁷ Unless otherwise noted, this section is drawn from Subcommittee on Population Health of the Standing Senate Committee of Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Maternal Health and Early Childhood Development in Cuba: Second Report of the Subcommittee on Population Health of the Standing Senate Committee of Social Affairs, Science and Technology*, February 2008, p. 17-18.

⁵⁴⁸ Ana Maria Siverio Gómez, Ministry of Education, Republic of Cuba, "Educational assistance to childhood aged 0 to 6 in Cuba," p. 8.

the best way possible for school learning.⁵⁴⁹ The curriculum focuses on six areas: socio-moral development, motor development, knowledge of the social and natural world, mother tongue, artistic expression, music and corporal expression, and play.

The curriculum organizes the educational process into three different types of activities. Programmed activities are designed for different areas of development, which are targeted to a particular age group. Independent activities are based upon the children's interests, tastes and needs. Complementary activities are used to supplement the regular program to address gaps, or other needs.

In Cuba, ECEC pedagogy is organized around different life development cycles:⁵⁵⁰ the first is from birth to 12 months, the second cycle from 1 to 3 years of age, the third from 3 to 5 years, and the fourth from 5 to 6 years.

Program design⁵⁵¹

The Cuban Government is responsible for the delivery of both institutional and non-institutional forms of early childhood education and care for children aged 0 to 6. The three different types of ECEC services are outlined below.

- Child care centres known as *Circuitos infantiles* are for children aged between 6 months and 5 years, whose mothers are working. The centres are open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. with a staggered time-table for teachers and other workers. There are three types of *Circuitos infantiles*, each serving a particular group of children: children with working parents, children with disabilities, and children with social problems.
- A pre-school preparatory grade for 5-year-olds is open to all children, regardless of whether their parents are working or not. Sometimes, this preparatory grade is offered in the child care centres.
- *Educa a Tu Hijo* (Educate Your Child) program, a non-institutional pre-school education program for children who do not attend child care centres, is sponsored by the United Nations Educational,

⁵⁴⁹ UNESCO, *Cuba: Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programmes*, Country Profile prepared for the Education for All 2007 Global Monitoring Report, 2006.

⁵⁵⁰ Siverio Gómez, pp. 11-12.

⁵⁵¹ Unless otherwise noted, this section is drawn from Subcommittee on Population Health of the Standing Senate Committee of Social Affairs, Science and Technology (2008), pp. 14-18.

Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Children under 2 years of age and their families receive individual home visits once or twice a week and are guided through games, conversations and other activities aimed at enhancing development. Meanwhile, children aged 2 to 4 and their families participate in weekly group outings to parks, cultural facilities and sports centres with councillors trained in child development and family participation.

Funding levels

The Cuban Government is the source of all funding for ECEC in the country.⁵⁵² However, as noted above, UNESCO provided support for the development of the Educate Your Child program.

Current funding levels of ECEC in Cuba are not available. However, in 1997-1998, Cuba spent 10% of its Gross National Product on its education system; 8% of that amount was spent on ECEC.⁵⁵³

Access/inclusion

Coverage for children aged 0 to 6 in Cuba is almost universal, reaching 99.5% of children in 2005.⁵⁵⁴ In order to achieve universal accessibility in ECEC, Cuba has adapted its programs to meet the needs of its children with special needs, including those living in rural and remote areas. Cuba has adapted its early childhood education model to rural and mountainous settings by creating small schools that use the same staff and resources cater to different ages and school levels, but to smaller groups of children. In 2001, there were 27 pre-primary schools (*Circulos infantiles*) in mountainous areas that cater to as few as four children.⁵⁵⁵

For children with special needs in the Educate Your Child Program, the Ministry of Education provides program specialists.⁵⁵⁶ Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education has also developed special schools for children with disabilities. For example, Cuba has opened two schools that

⁵⁵² UNESCO, *Cuba: Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programmes*, Country Profile prepared for the Education for All 2007 Global Monitoring Report, 2006. Accessed from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001480/148099e.pdf> 21 August 2008.

⁵⁵³ Lavinia Gasperini, "The Cuban Education System: Lessons and Dilemmas," *Country Studies: Education Reform and Management Publication Series*, vol.1, no.5, July 2000, p. 28.

⁵⁵⁴ UNESCO (2006).

⁵⁵⁵ Gasperini (2000), p. 14.

⁵⁵⁶ Unless otherwise noted, this section is drawn from Subcommittee on Population Health of the Standing Senate Committee of Social Affairs, Science and Technology (2008), p. 19.

specialize in autism, which serve children aged 2 to 18 and provide one-on-one therapy.

Data/research⁵⁵⁷

The quality of ECEC services in Cuba is assessed through data collection, research and monitoring. In Cuba, children in institutional and non-institutional early childhood education and care programs are systematically monitored and evaluated. Every two months, children are assessed based upon developmental achievements and the objectives established for that year, or life cycle, with a final evaluation or development assessment at the end of each school level. At the end of the pre-school stage, children are given a schedule of diagnostic tasks, which are used to prepare individual profiles for each child in order to custom-design the early part of the first grade.

Human resources

In institutional care settings, educators and teaching assistants are responsible for care and education, while the Educate Your Child program is staffed by family doctors, nurses, teachers and volunteers.⁵⁵⁸ Child care and primary school teachers have the same level of education at the university level and receive the same pay.⁵⁵⁹ Teachers are licensed for either pre-school (from birth to age 5) or primary (ages 6 to 12) and must undergo five years of theoretical and practical training.

France

France remains a leader in ensuring universal access to early childhood education and care. In 1989, a law was passed guaranteeing all children aged 3 to 5 a right to pre-school. In 2007, the French Government announced that by 2012 all children will also have a legal right to attend child care.

However, early childhood education and child care remain completely separate in France with different goals and administrative structures. Pre-school is predominantly state run and scholastic in its orientation. Conversely, child care is focused on the health, well-being and the

⁵⁵⁷ Unless otherwise noted, this section is drawn from Subcommittee on Population Health of the Standing Senate Committee of Social Affairs, Science and Technology, (2008), p. 20.

⁵⁵⁸ UNESCO, (2006).

⁵⁵⁹ Subcommittee on Population Health of the Standing Senate Committee of Social Affairs, Science and Technology (2008), p. 18.

development of the child, but its provision is based upon meeting economic needs, including encouraging female participation in the labour force.

The OECD identified quality assurance, training and adapting pedagogical approaches to the individual needs of the child, as well as the diversity of France's population, as key concerns.

Policy development and implementation⁵⁶⁰

In France, pre-school and child care are separate government portfolios. France is a unitary state with three levels of decentralised government, each with elected officials and different legal and financial obligations: *régions*, *départements*, and *communes* (local authorities). Pre-schools or *école maternelle* are part of the national education system, the responsibility for which is shared by the State through the *Ministère d'Éducation Nationale*, and the *communes* or local authorities. The Ministry is responsible for education policies and delivery, including curriculum and programming, financing, and the recruitment and training of teachers, while the local authorities are responsible for maintaining the physical school plant structures.⁵⁶¹

In contrast, the administration of childcare and non-school early childhood education in France is decentralized. At the State level, childcare policy falls under the auspices of the *Ministère du Travail, des Relations Sociales, de la Famille, et de la Solidarité*. This department, in conjunction with the national public agency, the *Caisse Nationale des Allocations Familiales* (CNAF) is responsible for regulating different forms of non-school early childhood education and care and establishing the goals and resources of the regional family allowance funds over a four-year period. The CNAF is governed by representatives of social partners and family associations under the auspices of the state.

At the *département* level, the *Caisse d'Allocation Familiales* (CAF) are responsible for implementing the social policies established by the State and the CNAF, as well as delivering ECEC funding. The CAFs work in conjunction with the local authorities or *communes* to develop forms of ECEC that meet local needs. At this level of government, the

⁵⁶⁰ Information on administration and policy formation is taken from OECD, *OECD Country Note: Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in France*, February 2004, unless otherwise noted.

⁵⁶¹ Government of France, "Les domaines de compétences. Accessed from <http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid219/les-domaines-de-competences.html> 20 July 2008.

president of the *Conseil Général*, the regional elected assembly, is responsible for authorizing funding decisions, regulating individual and group forms of childcare, as well as supervising and monitoring services.

Program design⁵⁶²

In France, non-pre-school ECEC services are provided by many different types of actors and agencies, including municipal governments, non-profit and for-profit agencies, and parent-owned cooperatives. According to the OECD, non-profit organizations represent 40% of service providers and are responsible for the expansion of different types of ECEC services in France over the past 20 years. While the government is the main provider of pre-school in France, about 20% of students attend private pre-schools, the majority of which are run by religious institutions. The different types of ECEC services in France are outlined below.

- *Écoles Maternelles* are free and operated with the same administration, guiding principles and opening hours, as elementary schools. They are for children aged 3 to 5. Since 1989, every 3-year-old child is guaranteed a spot in pre-school.
- *Assistantes Maternelles* are the most common family day care providers in France. They are individuals, who are licensed to care for children under 6 in their homes.
- *Halte-garderie* provide short term or occasional child care services for children under the age of 6.
- *Crèches* are the most preferred form of child care services.⁵⁶³ They are childcare centres that provide long term services to children under the age of 6. Services are provided by a team of child nurses, a doctor and early childhood educators.
- *Jardins d'Enfants* are kindergartens for children aged 3 to 6. They are staffed by early childhood educators and serve as a transitional setting from childcare to pre-school.
- *Établissements "multi-accueil"* provide both short-term as well as long term or regular childcare services for children. They provide individualized services aimed at meeting the needs of the individual child, as well as accommodate the work schedule of the parent.

Funding levels

According to the OECD, France spent 1% of its GDP on ECEC services in 2004, placing it just below the high-ranking Scandinavian

⁵⁶² Information on service provision is taken from OECD (2003), unless otherwise noted.

⁵⁶³ Government of France, *Éducation et Accueil des Jeunes Enfants: Rapport préalable à la visite des experts en France*, May 2003, p. 82.

countries.⁵⁶⁴ The French state provides both direct and indirect funding to ECEC. The full costs of pre-school are born by the French government through the Ministry of National Education, the funds for which are raised through taxes and social contributions.⁵⁶⁵

The state also provides two different subsidies to parents for non-pre-school early childhood education and care. The *Complement de libre choix du mode de garde* provides a subsidy for parents, who place their children under the age of 6 in the care of an *assistante maternelle* or a child care centre.⁵⁶⁶ The CAF also provides a more short-term subsidy, the *Complement de libre choix d'activite* (Clca), for parents who choose not to work in order to take care of their children. The subsidy varies depending upon the number of children.⁵⁶⁷ Finally, the CAF provides subsidies to local governments to increase the supply of ECEC services, as well as to develop innovative projects.⁵⁶⁸

Access/inclusion

The OECD praised France for ensuring that all 3- to 5-year-olds had guaranteed access to pre-school by law.⁵⁶⁹ France has also focused on increasing access to pre-school for 2-year-olds, particularly in socially and economically disadvantaged areas, as well as for immigrant children, where early intervention is seen as a means of improving outcomes for children.⁵⁷⁰

However, access to non-pre-school early childhood education and care services in France is not universal with 10% of children under the age of 3 lacking access to child care and 82% of women aged 24 to 29 having to drop out of the work force to care for their young children.⁵⁷¹

⁵⁶⁴ OECD, *Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care*, 2004, p. 105.

⁵⁶⁵ OECD (2004), *Country Note :France*, p. 29.

⁵⁶⁶ CAF, « Prestation d'accueil du jeune enfant, » Accessed from <http://www.caf.fr/wps/portal/particuliers/catalogue/metropole/paje> 22 July 2008.

⁵⁶⁷ CAF, "Prestation D'Accueil du Jeune Enfant: Complement de Libre Choix D'Activite. » Accessed from <http://www.caf.fr/wps/portal/particuliers/catalogue/metropole/paje> 22 July 2008.

⁵⁶⁸ OECD (2004), *Country Note:France*, p. 29.

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 33.

⁵⁷⁰ The benefits of preschool for 2-year-olds is still subject to much debate in the literature in France. Ibid, p. 13.

⁵⁷¹ Government of France, "Plan petite enfance: 9 mesures sur 5 ans." Accessed from <http://www.travail.gouv.fr/espaces/famille/grands-dossiers/plan-petite-enfance/> 21 July 2008.

Children in rural areas are particularly disadvantaged in terms of access. In response to this problem, the French Government is aiming to make access to child care a legal right in the next five years, as well as create 350,000 more spaces through an investment of €1 billion.⁵⁷² Additional measures include increasing the recruitment of early childhood education and care professionals, as well as making efforts to consolidate the profession.

Quality

France has a long-standing tradition of monitoring the quality of its pre-schools through the *inspecteur d'académie*, who defines educational policies for *écoles maternelles*, as well as evaluates teachers.⁵⁷³ The quality of non-pre-school early childhood education and care services is monitored by the president of the *Conseil Général* at the department level of government. Quality assurance underwent significant reform through a decree passed in 2000. The decree required that all child care settings meet the same staff qualification requirements: half of the staff in early childhood education and care settings must have a diploma in early childhood education, management, social work or health. Other quality assurance mechanisms include licensing requirements for *assistantes maternelles*, which require potential candidates to guarantee that they can care for children under conditions that assure their physical, intellectual and socio-emotional development.⁵⁷⁴

Curriculum

Pedagogical approaches in pre-school and child care settings remain distinct. All pre-schools in France follow the same curriculum that focuses on five areas: oral language and introduction to writing; learning to work together; acting and expressing emotions and thoughts with one's body; discovering the world; and imagining fleeing and creating.⁵⁷⁵ Though the OECD noted an increased focus on play based learning, they saw the curriculum as mainly geared towards the attainment of educational goals, rather than the overall well-being of the child.⁵⁷⁶

Child care settings are not required to have a set curriculum, but do have to submit a *project d'établissement*, which outlines educational

⁵⁷² Government of France, "Rééquilibrer la politique de la famille." Accessed from http://www.premier-ministre.gouv.fr/chantiers/famille_1056/ accessed 22 July 2008.

⁵⁷³ OECD (2004), *Country Note: France*, p. 26.

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 27.

⁵⁷⁵ OECD (2004), *Starting Strong II*, p. 330.

⁵⁷⁶ OECD, (2004), *Country Note: France*, p.4 2.

and social projects for the children. Within these projects, the health, safety, well-being, as well as the development of the child are the main goals. However, due to the separation between pre-school and child care in France, learning outcomes for the child are not examined or stressed.⁵⁷⁷ The OECD also noted that child care programs tended to prioritize the work schedules of the parents, rather than the needs of the individual child.⁵⁷⁸

Human resources

Pre-schools are staffed with teachers who have a university degree and 18 months of teacher training. In their review, the OECD found that pre-school teachers received very little training in and had very little knowledge of early childhood development.⁵⁷⁹ Child care settings are staffed by a range of early childhood professionals working in interdisciplinary teams, including *puéricultrices* (child nurses), child nursing assistants, early childhood educators, doctors and psychologists. Child nurses are nurses or midwives who have completed a year of specialisation in children's development, health and wellbeing, while assistant child nurses have completed a professional diploma approved by the regional prefect. Early childhood educators have completed a two year diploma program that focuses on both theoretical and practical training in early childhood education.

The OECD was critical of the fact that *assistantes maternelles* were not required to have any training to obtain their licences, but only had to complete 60 hours of training within five years of receiving their licences.⁵⁸⁰

Data/research

The OECD praised the French government for conducting large-scale surveys, as well as adapting their census to gather information in child care for children age 6 and under.⁵⁸¹ They articulated that research conducted by the government on the availability, take up and effects of different parental leave measures were useful in determining future policy directions, while the CNAF's attempts to map the supply and demand for ECEC facilitated decision-making with regards to the allocation of resources.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid., p.33.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid., p.41.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid., p.40.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid., p.44.

Germany

Germany has made a unique contribution to the field of early childhood education and care through its concept of social pedagogy, a holistic approach to child rearing, education and development that has become the foundation of the ECEC profession in many European countries. However, Germany's system of ECEC service delivery is complex, as it is a federal state that relies on the principle of subsidiarity. Driven by the need to improve economic performance and educational outcomes, Germany is moving towards universal access for children under the age of 3. However, the OECD noted that Germany still had a long way to go in terms of improving access for children of migrant or low income backgrounds.⁵⁸²

Policy development and implementation⁵⁸³

Germany is a federal country that operates on the principle of subsidiarity. Responsibility for early childhood education and care is therefore shared between different levels of government. Under Germany's *Basic Law*, the Federal Government is responsible for legislating in the area of ECEC, as it is considered part of the national child and youth welfare system. Other responsibilities under its jurisdiction include: ensuring that all children between the age of 3 and 6 have a part-time place in ECEC services; providing support to districts and towns in the provision of ECEC facilities for children under 3; protecting children through regulation; and initiating and funding pilot schemes in the area of ECEC. However, the federal government is not responsible for funding ECEC services. At the federal level, responsibility for ECEC belongs to the Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.

The German provinces or *Laender* are responsible for the implementation of the federal law in the area of ECEC provision. This includes providing the funding to ECEC services, as well as supplementing federal legislation with regulations in the areas of safety, quality standards etc. Following the principle of subsidiarity, municipal governments are responsible for the delivery of ECEC services, using their own tax revenue in addition to funds received from the *Laender*.

⁵⁸² OECD Country Note *Early Childhood education and care policy in the Federal Republic of Germany*, 26 November 2004, p.58.

⁵⁸³ Unless otherwise noted, this section is drawn from OECD, (2004), *Country Note: Germany*, p. 15.

In Germany, the education system, including compulsory pre-school for children aged 6, is under the sole jurisdiction of the *Laender*. The OECD therefore notes that the integration of education and child care would result in the federal government losing its capacity in this area.

Curriculum

The German provinces have begun to develop education plans for ECEC services within a national framework that was developed through provincial ministerial conferences. Though the education plans vary from province to province, they all focus on the following areas: linguistic education and promotion, mathematics, natural science and technical education, musical education and child raising, aesthetic, visual and cultural education and child-raising, promotion of movement and sport, health and child-raising.⁵⁸⁴

Germany is unique in the fact that it developed its own approach to early childhood education and care that has become the foundation of child pedagogy in many European countries.⁵⁸⁵ Developed in the 19th century, the concept of *Sozialpaedagogik* or social pedagogy is both a theory and practice for working with children. It is a holistic approach that focuses on the body, mind, emotions, creativity, history and social identity of the child, rather than scholastic outcomes. The approach sees learning, care and upbringing as intrinsically linked. As such, the OECD notes that despite the formal separation between education and child care in Germany, Germany's pedagogical approach brings them back together.

Delivery system

As Germans have historically considered the provision ECEC services as a social welfare matter, the traditional services providers of ECEC services in the country are churches, charities, social groups and associations.⁵⁸⁶ As such, the system is largely non-profit. However, there are a few for-profit organizations delivering ECEC services in Germany. Under Germany's ECEC laws both are treated equally in terms of funding and regulation.⁵⁸⁷ The different types of ECEC services offered in Germany are outlined below.

- *Krippen* are child care centres for children under 3 years of age.

⁵⁸⁴ Bundesministerium fuer Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, *OECD Early Childhood Policy Review 2002-2004 Background Report Germany*, 2004, p. 55.

⁵⁸⁵ Unless otherwise noted, this paragraph is drawn from OECD (2004) *Country Note: Germany*, p. 19.

⁵⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁵⁸⁷ Bundesministerium fuer Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, *OECD Early Childhood Policy Review 2002-2004 Background Report Germany*, 2004, p. 34.

- *Kindergartens* are child care centred for children aged 3 until transfer to school (age 6), but are now moving towards providing services for children under 3. Kindergartens offer half-day and full-day sessions.
- *Hort* are child care centres that provide services for school-aged children.
- Family day care services are those provided by a caregiver (*Tagesmuetter*) in their own home.

Funding levels

According to the OECD, Germany spent 0.53 % of its GDP on ECEC services in 2004.⁵⁸⁸ In Germany, the costs of ECEC services are divided between the provincial governments (75 to 80%), parents (14%) and services providers (the remainder).⁵⁸⁹ Parental fees however are related to income. Therefore, low-income families and those from immigrant backgrounds are granted government subsidized spots and pay less for those services.

As noted, the federal government cannot provide direct funding for ECEC services. However, it can provide funding for special initiatives. In conjunction with the provinces, the federal government passed a law (*Kinderfoerderungsgesetz*) in 2007 to promote the provision and financing of child care in the country. The aim of this law is to provide enough financing so that one child in three under 3 years of age in Germany will have access to child care by 2013, in line with European Union standards.⁵⁹⁰ To achieve this objective, the federal government has committed €4 billion.

Accessibility/inclusion

Accessibility to ECEC services varies quite widely in Germany. Due to the universal state provision of ECEC services in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR), provinces formerly belonging to the GDR have a large supply of ECEC services. They are therefore able to achieve universal access for children aged 3 to 6 and access rates of 40% for children under 3.⁵⁹¹ However, provinces in western Germany have less access to ECEC services: 88% of children age 3 to 6 have access to ECEC and 2.7% of children under 3 have access to ECEC

⁵⁸⁸ OECD, (2004), *Starting Strong II*, p. 333.

⁵⁸⁹ OECD, (2004), *Country Note: Germany*, p. 29.

⁵⁹⁰ Bundesministerium fuer Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, "Ursula von derLeyen: "Der Weg zum Ausbau der Kinderbetreuung ist frei." Accessed from <http://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/generator/Politikbereiche/Familie/kinderbetreuung.html> 5 August 2008.

⁵⁹¹ OECD, (2004), *Country Note: Germany*, p. 27.

services. This is because prior to unification, West Germans strongly believed that raising children at home was better than sending children to child care and therefore fewer child care centres are available.

The Government's recent move towards granting access to one-third of children under 3 indicates that traditions in ECEC provision in East and West Germany are merging. However, more concretely, the policy shift towards universal access reflects Germany's desire to improve labour market participation rates.⁵⁹² It is also motivated by a desire to improve children's educational outcomes, as Germany fared quite poorly in the OECD's 2001 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA).⁵⁹³

In terms of equitable access, the OECD noted that Germany was below average, with 25% of foreign-born children aged 3 to 6 not attending kindergarten at all.⁵⁹⁴ Similarly, 36% of children from low socio-economic backgrounds also do not attend kindergarten, despite free or subsidized spaces.⁵⁹⁵ Despite Government policy to integrate children with disabilities into regular ECEC services, the OECD review team noted that no children with special needs were seen, nor were figures given on take-up rates.⁵⁹⁶

Improving quality

The OECD noted that Germany has begun a *National Quality Initiative* to develop projects to help identify quality indicators, as well as develop and test methods of self and external evaluation for ECEC services. In addition to these measures, the Government announced in May 2008 that it will not only increase the supply of child care spaces but will also invest in improving the quality of ECEC services by increasing the number of qualified staff working in the field.⁵⁹⁷

Human resources

The OECD noted that training levels for ECEC staff in Germany were low in comparison with international standards.⁵⁹⁸ The main child care

⁵⁹² Ibid., p. 22.

⁵⁹³ OECD (2004) *Starting Strong II*, p. 336.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁶ OECD (2004), *Country Note: Germany*, p. 39.

⁵⁹⁷ Bundesministerium fuer Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, *Ausbau und Qualitaet der Kinderbetreuung*. Accessed from http://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/generator/RedaktionBMFSFJ/Broschuerenstelle/Pdf-Anlagen/ausbau-und-qualit_C3_A4t-der-kinderbetreuung-flyer_property=pdf,bereich=,sprache=de,rwb=true.pdf 13 August 2008.

⁵⁹⁸ OECD (2004), *Country Note: Germany*, 26 November 2004, p. 49.

workers in Germany are called *Erzieherinnen*. After graduating from a technical high school, they receive four years of training in a technical college specializing in social pedagogy that involves both practical and theoretical training. This stands in contrast to primary teachers, who graduate from high school with university entrance qualifications (the German *Abitur*) and must complete a six-year teaching degree.

Data/research

The OECD noted that because the training for ECEC is located at the technical college level, there is very little academic research going on in the area at German universities.⁵⁹⁹ Existing projects are small, policy driven and highly dependent upon government grants. Finally, the OECD also noted that statistics available at the national level were also quite poor with no comparable data collected on the use of ECEC services across the country.⁶⁰⁰

New Zealand

New Zealand is a world leader in developing an integrated ECEC system. The country has developed a bicultural national curriculum that links the heritage of its European settlers with that of its indigenous population. The Government of New Zealand has also outlined a 10-year strategic plan to foster the development of ECEC services until 2012. ECEC in New Zealand is provided solely by non-profit and for-profit organizations. Meanwhile, the Government provides targeted grants to ensure equitable access to ECEC for children with special needs, as well as those with different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

Policy development and implementation

New Zealand has integrated ECEC under the Ministry of Education. The Ministry is responsible for the development of the national curriculum, regulating service providers to meet minimum quality standards, and providing support for the provision of quality early childhood education services through funding and a range of other initiatives.⁶⁰¹ In 2002, the Government of New Zealand developed a 10-year strategic plan for early childhood education, entitled *Pathways to the Future: Ngā*

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 52.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁰¹ Ministry of Education, Government of New Zealand, "New Zealand Education System: An Overview." Accessed from http://www.minedu.govt.nz/sitecore/content/minedu/home/educationSectors/InternationalEducation/ForInternationalStudentsAndParents/NewZealandEducationSystemAnOverview/Early_Childhood_Education.aspx 18 August 2008.

Huarahi.⁶⁰² The plan focuses on increasing participation in ECEC services, improving the quality of those services, as well as promoting collaborative relationships within the sector. It also seeks to improve the implement of the nationally developed ECEC curriculum, the *Te Whāriki*.

The quality of ECEC services is monitored through the government agency, the Education Review Office, which carries out reviews of early childhood education centres and other services every three years.⁶⁰³ Work and Income, a branch of the Ministry of Social Development, also plays a role in ECEC in New Zealand. It is responsible for the organization and delivery of New Zealand's Childcare Subsidy to parents.

Curriculum

New Zealand has developed a national curriculum for early childhood education and care that integrates the culture of its indigenous population with that of its European settlers. The curriculum is called *Te Whāriki*, a Maori term that means "woven mat".⁶⁰⁴ The goal of the curriculum is to ensure that children, "grow up as competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body, and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society."⁶⁰⁵ The curriculum is based upon four main principles:

- empowering the child to learn and grow;
- the wider world of family and community are integral to a child's development;
- the holistic development of children; and
- the importance of relationships to a child's learning process.

It also has five main outcomes or goals for children:

- well-being, including health, safety and emotions;

⁶⁰² Government of New Zealand, *Pathways to the Future: Nga Huarahi: A 10 year Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Education*, September 2002.

⁶⁰³ Ministry of Education, Government of New Zealand, "New Zealand Education System: An Overview," http://www.minedu.govt.nz/sitecore/content/minedu/home/educationSectors/InternationalEducation/ForInternationalStudentsAndParents/NewZealandEducationSystemAnOverview/Early_Childhood_Education.aspx (accessed 18 August, 2008)

⁶⁰⁴ Original Report, p. 36.

⁶⁰⁵ Ministry of Education, "*Te Whāriki*," <http://www.educate.ece.govt.nz/learning/curriculumAndLearning/TeWhaariki.aspx> (accessed 11 August, 2008).

- belonging, where children and their families know that they have a place in society, a connection to the outside world, and know the limits of social norms and behaviours;
- contributions of individual children are recognized, validated and encouraged. All children are given equal opportunity to contribute;
- development of verbal and non-verbal modes of communication, knowledge of other languages and cultures and creative modes of expression; and
- children actively explore their world, through play, gaining control over and confidence in their bodies, developing theories about the world around them and learning strategies for thinking and reasoning.

Program design

Early childhood education and care services are delivered by for-profit and not-for profit organizations, which are overseen by local community management boards. The Government of New Zealand does not play any role in the management, or delivery of ECEC services.⁶⁰⁶ There are a variety of types of ECEC services in New Zealand, which are outlined below.⁶⁰⁷

- Education and Care Centres provide either all-day or flexible-hours programs for children from birth to school age. They may be privately owned, non-profits, or community-based services, or operated in adjunct to a business. These centres include a small but increasing number of specific Māori immersion education and care centres, and Pacific Island centres.
- Home-based services are a network of home-based caregivers that operate under the supervision of a co-ordinator.
- Kindergartens operate sessional early childhood education for children between the ages of 3 and 5.
- Kōhanga Reo are Māori immersion programs for Māori children aged 0 to 6.
- Licence-exempt playgroups are community based groups of parents and children, who meet from birth to school age.
- Parent support and development programs aim to improve health, social and educational outcomes of children by helping build parenting capability.
- Play centres are collectively supervised and managed by parents for children up to the age of 5.

⁶⁰⁶ Ministry of Education, Government of New Zealand, "New Zealand Education System: An Overview".

⁶⁰⁷ Unless otherwise noted, this section is taken directly from: Government of New Zealand, (2002), p. 5.

- The correspondence school provides distance ECEC services for children aged 3 to 5, who are unable to attend a regular ECEC service due to isolation, illness, or other special needs.

Funding levels

In 2005, education accounted for 15.5% of public expenditure in New Zealand with 6% of this amount being allocated to pre-primary education, including all early childhood education and care services.⁶⁰⁸ The Government of New Zealand provides funding to chartered profit and non-profit early childhood education and care services in a variety of ways.

- A child care subsidy helps parents cover the costs of ECEC for children aged 5 years or younger. The amount is based upon parental income and is available to parents who are working, studying, or seriously ill or disabled.⁶⁰⁹
- In 2007, the Government of New Zealand introduced a policy of offering 20 hours of free ECEC per week for children aged 3 and 4 enrolled in services. Parents decide the exact hours and type of service, while the service providers are responsible for reclaiming the costs from the Government.⁶¹⁰ The remaining 30 hours a week of ECEC hours are to be covered by the *Childcare Subsidy*.
- Early Childhood Discretionary Grants Scheme (DGS) funds community-based groups for a variety of purposes, such as start up costs, increasing spaces, improving the health and safety of buildings, etc.⁶¹¹
- Establishment Funding helps community-based groups meet the licensing requirements for ECEC services.⁶¹²
- Equity Grants to chartered community ECEC service providers help them provide equitable services to children from low-socio-

⁶⁰⁸ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, "UIS Statistics in Brief." Accessed from http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=121&IF_Language=eng&BR_Country=5540&BR_Region=40515 12 August 2008.

⁶⁰⁹ Government of New Zealand, "Financial Support." Accessed from <http://www.teamup.co.nz/earlyyears/about/Financial+support.htm> 12 August 2008.

⁶¹⁰ Ministry of Education, "2-4 Funding Conditions." Accessed from <http://www.lead.ece.govt.nz/Funding/FundingHandbook/Chapter4/2FundingConditions.htm> 21 August 2008.

⁶¹¹ Ministry of Education, "Introduction to the Early Childhood Education Discretionary Grants Scheme," <http://www.lead.ece.govt.nz/Funding/DiscretionaryGrantsScheme/default.htm> (accessed 12 August, 2008).

⁶¹² Ministry of Education, "Establishment Funding: Frequently Asked Questions." Accessed from http://www.lead.ece.govt.nz/Funding/EstablishmentFunding/Frequentlyaskedquestions.htm#what_is_establishment_funding 12 August 2008.

economic backgrounds, special needs and non-English speaking backgrounds. Equity grants are not given to private for-profit organizations.

Access/inclusion

As reflected in the above section, the Government of New Zealand provides a variety of grants and funding schemes to ensure universal access to ECEC services. The Government introduced 20 free hours of services, because it felt that though ECEC coverage rates were universal, children were not necessarily receiving enough hours of ECEC to improve educational outcomes.⁶¹³

In addition to providing grants to improve access for indigenous populations, children with special needs, and those from poor socio-economic backgrounds, the Government of New Zealand has incorporated specific initiatives within its 10-year strategic plan to improve ECEC services for Māori and Pasifika population groups. Specific initiatives under the plan include: conducting studies to identify barriers to access, providing targeted grants, as well as increasing consultations with the local communities.⁶¹⁴

Improving quality

The quality of ECEC services in New Zealand is monitored and reported on by the Education Review Office (ERO) every three years. In their review, the ERO evaluates the effectiveness of management, quality of educators, professional leadership, quality of programs, the environment, and the interaction between children and staff.⁶¹⁵ The ERO also examines the outcomes for children that are based upon the goals of the national curriculum: well-being, belonging, contribution, communication, and active exploration.

Human resources

As of 31 December 2007, the New Zealand Government required that 50% of staff working in teacher-led early childhood education and care centres have teaching qualifications, recognized by the New Zealand

⁶¹³ Ministry of Education, "Free early childhood education- Summary reports on uptake," <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/> (accessed 12 August, 2008).

⁶¹⁴ Government of New Zealand (2002), p. 10.

⁶¹⁵ Education Review Office, *Evaluation Indicators for Education Reviews in Early Childhood Services*, 2004. Accessed from <http://www.ero.govt.nz/EdRevInfo/ECedrevs/ECE%20Eval%20Indicators.pdf> 12 August 2008.

Teaching Council.⁶¹⁶ The Government's goal is that 80% of all staff in education and care centres would be certified teachers by 2010. To be certified, pre-primary teachers require a three-year university level Diploma of Teaching.⁶¹⁷ However, pre-primary teachers have yet to achieve complete pay parity with primary school teachers.

Data/Research

New Zealand's 10-year strategy identified research in support of ECEC policy development as a key priority.⁶¹⁸ The areas of research to be supported include: quality and regulation, barriers to access, teacher supply and work force issues. The Government would also like to conduct a longitudinal research project evaluating the impact of its strategies.

Sweden

Access to early childhood education and child care (ECEC) services is a fundamental pillar of the Swedish welfare state. ECEC services are seen as means of both promoting the well-being and development of the child, as well as facilitating parental labour market participation.⁶¹⁹ As a result, the Swedish Government has been committed to the ongoing expansion and improvement of ECEC services for the past 40 years, including integrating its services, providing innovative multicultural programs, as well as increasing access for the children of unemployed parents. Despite recent economic challenges, 43% of one year olds attend ECEC, 87% of 3-year-olds and 92% of 5-year-olds.⁶²⁰ For these reasons, the OECD has declared the Swedish model of ECEC to be "outstanding."⁶²¹

⁶¹⁶ Ministry of Education, "Qualification/registration targets," <http://www.lead.ece.govt.nz/Staffing/QualificationRegistrationTargets/default.htm> (accessed 12 August, 2008).

⁶¹⁷ UNESCO, Early Childhood Education Policy Co-ordination under the Auspices of the Department/Ministry of Education: A Case Study of New Zealand, *UNESCO Early Childhood and Family Policy Series*, no. 1, March 2002, p. 19.

⁶¹⁸ Government of New Zealand (2002), p. 19.

⁶¹⁹ Barbara Martin Korpi, *The Politics of Pre-School-intentions and decisions underlying the emergence and growth of the Swedish pre-school*, 15 October 2007, p. 26.

⁶²⁰ Swedish National Agency for School Improvement, "Some facts about Swedish ECEC." Accessed from http://www.skolutveckling.se/in_english/children_first/some_facts_about_swedish_ecec/ 28 July 2008.

⁶²¹ OECD, *OECD Country Note: Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Sweden*, December 1999, p. 38.

Administration and Policy Formation⁶²²

Responsibility for ECEC in Sweden is shared by the state and the local municipal authorities. The state sets the goals and guidelines, as well as determines the financial framework for early childhood education and care through the Ministry of Education and Research. However, municipalities are responsible for the direct delivery of pre-school and child care.

Therefore, they decide how the national goals are fulfilled and how best to allocate state funding to reflect the needs of the municipality. Meanwhile, the Swedish National Agency for School Improvement is responsible for ensuring that national goals are met through monitoring, evaluation and research.⁶²³

Program design

Municipal governments are the main service providers of ECEC in Sweden. However, in the 1990s, there were increased demands for choice in services and as a result, private persons, religious groups or associations were granted the right to establish early childhood education and care centres, subject to receiving a licence from the local government. Consequently, by 2006, 17% of pre-school children were registered in privately run early childhood education and care centres.⁶²⁴

Though there are different types of early childhood education and care in Sweden, all now referred to as "pre-school" as a result of a change in the *Education Act* in 1998, which integrated all forms of child care into the education system.⁶²⁵ The change in the *Act* also marked the introduction of a pre-school class into the Swedish school system to extend the education system, as well as complement existing forms of early childhood education and care. Details regarding the types of early childhood education and care, including the pre-school class, are outlined below.⁶²⁶

- *Pre-school class* is a voluntary service offered for all children 6 years of age, usually for a half-day period. It is provided as part of the national school system and is based upon a national curriculum that is in line with the goals of the main school curriculum.

⁶²² Unless otherwise noted, this section is drawn from OECD (1999), p. 26.

⁶²³ Swedish National Agency for School Improvement, "About the Agency," http://www.skolutveckling.se/in_english/about/ (accessed 28 July 2008)

⁶²⁴ Korpi, p. 55.

⁶²⁵ Ibid., p.63.

⁶²⁶ Outlines of the various forms of ECEC in Sweden are drawn from: OECD (1999), p. 15.

- *Family Day Care Homes* provide full-time care for pre-school-aged children in the home of a licensed family child minder. They offer flexible hours, including evenings and weekends.
- *Open pre-schools* offer part-time activities for children not enrolled in other forms of care. They require that the child be accompanied by a parent or other care giver and offer an informal setting in which parents can get together.
- *Pre-school* (formerly day care centre) offers full-time care for pre-school-aged children. Pre-schools are open throughout the year and their hours are adjusted to meet the needs of working parents. This is the traditional form of government-provided ECEC in Sweden.
- *Leisure-time centres* offer part-time activities for children from 6 to 12 years of age. These services are offered in school buildings and the national curriculum has been amended to incorporate the leisure centres.

Funding levels

According to the OECD, Sweden spent 1.7% of its GDP on early childhood education and care in 2004, ranking second to Denmark in the countries examined.⁶²⁷ The majority of funding for ECEC comes from the state and municipal governments through taxes. The state transfers blocks of funding to the municipality, which are then supplemented by the municipality with revenue generated through local taxes.⁶²⁸ The municipalities then decide how to allocate the funding.

Though the funding from the state is not specifically earmarked for ECEC, the state provides, in addition to its block funding, specific grants to achieve particular policy goals in the area of ECEC. For example, the state has provided special grant money to support multiculturalism and gender equality in ECEC services.⁶²⁹

Prior to 1990, the state covered 45% of the ECEC costs, while the municipal government also covered 45% and parents paid the remaining 10 % through fees.⁶³⁰

However, the economic crisis experienced by Sweden in the 1990s, resulted in decreased government funding and a subsequent transfer of costs to parents, such that they were paying 16.5% of ECEC

⁶²⁷ OECD (2004), *Starting Strong II*, p.105.

⁶²⁸ OECD, (1999), p. 16.

⁶²⁹ Korpi, p. 55.

⁶³⁰ Ibid.

costs.⁶³¹ After much debate, a maximum fee for parents was introduced in 2002 in response to this dramatic increase in fees for parents. The fee now covers approximately 17% of operating costs.⁶³²

Access/inclusion

In the 1970s, access to early childhood education and care services became a cornerstone of the Swedish welfare state, as it was seen as a means of both ensuring the well-being and development of the child, as well as facilitating parental participation in the labour market.⁶³³

The 1975 *Pre-school Act* granted 525 hours of a year of pre-schooling for 6-year-olds free of charge, whose parents were working, studying or in need of special support. However, by the 1990s, the demand for child care and education services was outstripping supply. Consequently, new legislation was introduced in 1995, requiring that not only must the municipality guarantee the supply of child care, but they must also become the providers of ECEC to ensure increased access.

Yet, as the provision of ECEC in Sweden was dependent upon the employment of parents, it meant that children whose parents were unemployed were denied access. This discriminated against an increasingly larger section of the population in the 1990s, as more and more parents were out of work due to the economic crisis. Similarly, Sweden's growing immigrant population had less access to ECEC as they were more likely to be unemployed. As a result, in June 2001, children aged 4 and 5 of unemployed parents received the right to pre-schooling both in terms of obtaining a place, as well as retaining the place they already had.⁶³⁴

Improving quality

Quality in the pre-school class is monitored by the Swedish National Agency for School Improvement, while other ECEC services are monitored by the municipality, often by school directors. Both the OECD and the Government of Sweden have noted that the quality of ECEC services declined during the 1990s due to cost-cutting measures, which resulted in an increase in child to staff ratios.⁶³⁵ During this period, Sweden has sought to maintain quality levels through its highly

⁶³¹ Ibid., p. 17.

⁶³² Clearing House on International Developments in Child, Youth and Family Policies, "Sweden" <http://www.childpolicyintl.org/>

⁶³³ Korpi, p. 26.

⁶³⁴ Ibid., p. 70.

⁶³⁵ OECD (1999), p. 31.

trained qualified staff: 60% of staff are university-trained pre-school teachers, while the remainder are qualified childminders.⁶³⁶

However, since then, the Government of Sweden has introduced other measures to restore ECEC child to staff ratios. In 2004, a bill was passed in the Riksdag (the Swedish Parliament) allowing for a special state grant to be allocated to the municipalities to increase the number of staff in pre-schools by 10%.⁶³⁷

Curriculum

When child care and early childhood education were integrated under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Research, the Swedish Government also decided to develop a national curriculum that articulated common pedagogical goals and guidelines. However, the means by which the goals were to be achieved were left to the municipalities. The national pre-school curriculum focuses on five areas: norms and values; development and learning; influence of the child; pre-school and home; co-operation between pre-schools and the pre-school class, the school, and the leisure time centres.⁶³⁸

The pedagogical approach in the curriculum includes elements of the traditional Swedish view of early childhood education, as well as aspects of the Reggio Emilia approach.⁶³⁹ The curriculum focuses on the child as a competent learner, active thinker and involved doer. Key values include: continuous learning and development, play and theme oriented ways of working, linkages with the child's own experiences, the pedagogical importance of care, and development in groups.

Human resources⁶⁴⁰

ECEC personnel in Sweden are quite well educated. Both pre-schools and the pre-school class are staffed by pre-school teachers, who have a university-level education specializing in theoretical and practical aspects of early childhood development, and child minders, who receive training in child minding and developmental psychology in secondary school. Leisure-time centres are staffed by pedagogues who have equivalent education and training to pre-school teachers. Meanwhile, family day care providers are not required to complete any training, but it is recommended that they complete the child minder training course offered at the secondary schools.

⁶³⁶ Ibid., p. 32.

⁶³⁷ Martin Korpi, p. 72.

⁶³⁸ OECD (1999), p. 18.

⁶³⁹ Ibid., p. 19.

⁶⁴⁰ Unless other wise noted, this information was drawn from OECD (1999), p. 19.

Research and evaluation

In their background report to the OECD, the Swedish Government articulated that the National Agency for Education⁶⁴¹ is responsible for generating research and information in the area of ECEC that leads to program evaluation and policy development.⁶⁴² The Agency gathers statistics in the area of ECEC, as well as conducts studies evaluating ECEC services in Sweden.

In their evaluation of Sweden, the OECD noted that high quality research was being produced in the area of early childhood development in Swedish universities, but it expressed concern as to whether this research was linked to policy development.⁶⁴³ The OECD also pointed out that the majority of independent research was self-funded, rather than supported by government grants.

⁶⁴¹ The above-mentioned Swedish National Agency for School Improvement used to be part of this organization, but now constitutes a separate branch.

⁶⁴² Government of Sweden, *Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Sweden: Background report prepared for the OECD Thematic Review*, December 1999, p. 64.

⁶⁴³ OECD (1999), p. 37.

