

KEY FINDINGS

Early childhood education and care in Canada 2016

APRIL 2018

This presents some of the key findings from *Early childhood education and care in Canada 2016*, the Childcare Resource and Research Unit's 11th cross-Canada data-based report on early childhood education and child care (ECEC). This report, together with previous editions, allows examinations of ECEC and related programs over the past 25 years.

INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF REGULATED CHILD CARE SPACES

- There was a relatively sizeable increase in spaces compared to much of the past decade.
- There were 1,349,827 regulated spaces for 0-12 year olds Canada-wide in 2016.
- Spaces include: 636,157 full and part day centre spaces for 0-5 year olds, 570,022 centre spaces for school-age children to 12 years; 143,647 0-12 year olds in regulated family (home) child care.
- The net increase in regulated child care spaces 2014-2016 was 148,819 spaces in centres and regulated home child care for 0-12 year olds.
- Although 2012-2014 had a more substantial increase (214,166 spaces), the 2014-2016 increase is notable when compared to the last 15 years.
- Between 2014 and 2016¹, centre spaces for 0-5 year olds² grew by 92,996 while the supply of school-age spaces (usually for children 6 to 12 years) grew by 57,489; regulated home child care decreased slightly, by 1,666.
- Spaces for 0-12 year olds increased in almost every province/territory, with Ontario accounting for 48% of the Canada-wide increase and Quebec accounting for 41%.

COVERAGE: PERCENT OF CHILDREN FOR WHOM THERE IS A REGULATED PART OR FULL DAY CHILD CARE CENTRE SPACE

- Coverage for 0-5 year olds increased in most provinces/territories between 2014 and 2016. For Canada as a whole, this increase was high compared to most previous years.
- There were enough centre spaces for 28.9% of 0-5 year olds in centres part and full day, 4.8% higher than the 24.1% coverage for the same age group in 2014.
- Coverage for 0-5 year olds in centre spaces ranged from a high of 39.4% in Prince Edward Island to a low of 13.7% in Saskatchewan.
- The relatively high increase in coverage between 2014 and 2016 can be attributed to the interplay between the relatively substantial increase in number of spaces and a modest reduction in the number of children aged 0-5 years. (a decrease of about 55,000 children).
- There were enough regulated spaces (including centres and home child care) to cover 27.2% of 0-12 year olds, with provincial/territorial variation ranging from 8.4% (Saskatchewan) to 55.1% (Quebec). Coverage for 0-12 year olds increased from 24.1% in 2014.

1 Figures for number of spaces in centres represents licensed capacity, not enrolment, which is not available.

2 Note that home child care is not included in the calculations for coverage for 0-5 year olds, as age break downs are not usually available in home child care.



KEY FINDINGS

NUMBER OF CHILDREN

- Canada-wide, there were 2,202,000 children 0-5 years of age, a drop of about 55,000 in that age cohort between the 2014 and 2016 editions of *ECEC in Canada* (rounded).
- The size of the 0-5 cohort dropped in almost all provinces/territories between the 2014 and 2016 editions (usually not substantially).

NUMBER OF CHILDREN WITH EMPLOYED MOTHERS

- There were 1,389,000 0-5 year olds and 1,848,000 6-12 year olds in Canada as a whole with employed mothers in the 2016 data (rounded).
- Although the number of children with employed mothers has fluctuated over the years, the 2016 numbers are quite similar to those in 1995.
- The number of children with employed mothers is a factor of both mothers' employment rate (which has increased over the years) and the number of children in each age cohort (which has fluctuated).

MOTHERS' EMPLOYMENT RATE

- In 2016, the employment rate of mothers with youngest children aged 0-2 was 71% and 77% for those with 3-5 year-olds, compared to 70% with 0-2 year-olds and 77% for 3-5 year olds in 2014.
- Looking back 20 years, in 1998, the employment rate of mothers was 65% for those whose youngest child was 0-2 and 71% for those with a 3-5 year old.



PARENT FEES

- Median parent fees for regulated child care (centres and regulated home child care combined) for Canada's largest cities ranged from a low of \$183/month in a number of Quebec cities (infant, toddler, preschooler) to a high of \$1,758/month (infant), \$1,354/month (toddler), \$1,212/month (preschooler) in Toronto in 2017.
- In 2017, with the exception of Quebec cities and Winnipeg, all cities included had parent fees higher than \$700/month for an infant.
- All cities except Charlottetown, Quebec cities, Winnipeg and Regina had toddler fees higher than \$700/month and all cities except Charlottetown, St. John, all Quebec cities, Winnipeg and Regina had preschool-age fees higher than \$700/month.
- Median parent fees generally went up between 2016 and 2017, although several cities showed small drops.
- Parent fees were substantially lower in cities in the three provinces that set parent fees provincially, most notably in Quebec but also Manitoba and Prince Edward Island.

AUSPICE IN REGULATED CHILD CARE

- In 2016, the percent of spaces operated on a for-profit basis remained at 30% Canada-wide, although the percent increased in some jurisdictions and dropped in others.
- Since 2006, the percent of centre child care spaces operated on a for-profit basis has been steadily increasing, reaching the all-time high of 30% in 2014.
- There is considerable variation among provinces/territories on this, ranging from a low of 0% of spaces operated for-profit to a high of 72% operated for-profit.
- In the seven jurisdictions in which data is broken down into part day and full day, the percent of full day spaces operated for-profit was considerably higher than the percent of part day spaces operated for-profit. The percent of total full day spaces that were operated for-profit ranged from 5% in Manitoba to 52% in Quebec to 79% of Newfoundland and Labrador's total full day spaces operated on a for-profit basis.

KEY FINDINGS

PUBLIC SPENDING ALLOCATIONS FOR CHILD CARE

- Total budget allocations for child care in Canada (provinces/territories total) reached \$4.6 billion in the 2015-2016 fiscal year. This represented a Canada-wide increase of \$323 million from 2013-2014 (in unadjusted dollars).
- Quebec's allocations continued to represent a substantial proportion of total Canada-wide child care dollars. Quebec's child care spending accounts for 56% of the Canada-wide total, while Quebec represents 23% of Canada's total population.
- Calculating public spending per regulated space shows the Canada-wide average to be essentially static, at \$3,461 per space in 2016 and \$3,558 per space in 2014. In most jurisdictions, there was little change in this except in Newfoundland and Labrador, where spending per space increased significantly. Note that this calculation is based on total provincial/territorial spending on regulated child care and total number of children, not actual public spending per space.

SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF KINDERGARTEN

- Eight provinces/territories provide full school-day kindergarten programs for all five year olds.
- In addition to Ontario's provision of full day kindergarten for all four year olds, Nova Scotia is phasing in full day kindergarten for all four year olds and Quebec is increasing provision of kindergarten for four year olds with a focus on those who are vulnerable, while other jurisdictions may provide some kindergarten for four year olds. Saskatchewan provides a pre-k program targeted to disadvantaged three and four year olds.

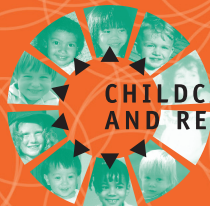
- Several provinces/territories now require early childhood specialization for kindergarten teachers: Prince Edward Island, Quebec, and Ontario (where a classroom team includes an early childhood educator). NWT accepts a two year early childhood diploma as a qualification for kindergarten teaching and Nova Scotia's new program for four year olds is staffed by early childhood educators.

SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF REGULATED CHILD CARE

- In nine jurisdictions, regulated child care is now under the aegis of an education department, with kindergarten in the same department.
- Most jurisdictions now have a curriculum framework for regulated child care; in all cases, this is a different curriculum framework from that used in kindergarten.
- All jurisdictions use a licensing approach to regulated child care. Several do not require part day programs (nursery schools or preschools) to be licensed; several exclude some other services from licensing requirements.
- All provinces/territories offer both centre-based child care for infants through school-age children up to age 12 and regulated family (home) child care.
- Home child care may be individually licensed or operate under an agency model.
- Centre directors are usually required to have at least a one or two year early childhood education diploma but several jurisdictions do not require training for centre directors.
- None of the jurisdictions requires all staff in child care centres to have post-secondary training in early childhood education. However, several jurisdictions increased required qualifications 2014 - 2016.
- By the spring of 2018, all provinces/territories except Quebec had completed negotiated agreements with the federal government based on the Multi-lateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework.

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The Childcare Resource and Research Unit (CRRU) is a policy research institute focused on early childhood education and child care (ECEC) and family policy. CRRU has a commitment to a universal, high quality, publicly-funded, inclusive ECEC system and collaborates with other researchers, NGOs, advocacy groups and government policy makers on ECEC and family policy. One of CRRU's basic operating premises is that public policy should be based on the best possible information about policy and practice available from multidisciplinary research and policy analysis.