
Nova Scotia



OVERVIEW

Responsibility for regulated child care was transferred to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (Early Years Branch) in 2013. Child care is delivered in non-profit and for-profit child care facilities. There is no publicly operated child care.

Nova Scotia has had full school-day kindergarten (Grade Primary) for all five year olds for a number of years. Full-day Grade Primary, like early elementary, is a shorter day than later elementary, covering a minimum of four hours a day.

In 2013 -14, four Early Years Centres opened in Nova Scotia and four more were planned for 2015. The centres are located in or near schools. At a minimum, each must offer three core components: family supports, regulated child care and an early learning program for four year olds in the year prior to entering school. Early Years Centres are partnerships with community organizations.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is developing an Early Years Framework. In 2015, a review of licensed child care in Nova Scotia was conducted and amendments to the Day Care Regulations were made regarding criminal record and child abuse registry checks, including expanding the criminal record check to include a Vulnerable Sector Check and to clarify existing provisions in a number of areas (e.g., programming, building and space requirements, types of incident and proper response procedures, training requirements for staff).

PROVINCIAL CONTEXT

Number of children 0-12 years (2014 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0	8,300
1	8,000
2	7,600
3	8,500
4	9,000
5	8,900
6	9,100
7	8,600
8	8,900
9	9,100
10	8,500
11	8,200
12	8,600
Total	111,100

Number of children 0-12 years (2014 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0-2	23,900
3-5	26,400
6-12	61,000
Total	111,100

Number of children 0-12 years with employed mothers (2014 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0	5,400
1	5,300
2	4,600
3	5,600
4	5,000
5	6,200
6	6,500
7	5,800
8	5,700
9	6,200
10	5,900
11	5,700
12	6,400
Total	74,600

Number of children 0-12 years with employed mothers (2014 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0-2	15,300
3-5	16,800
6-12	42,200
Total	74,600

Children 0-14 years identifying with an Aboriginal group (2011)

Age	First Nations	Metis	Inuit	Multiple	Other	Total
0-4	1,995	585	55	0	85	2,730
5-9	1,905	465	30	25	90	2,520
10-14	2,130	645	95	10	35	2,915
Total	6,025	1,695	185	50	210	8,165

Workforce participation of mothers by age of youngest child (2014 rounded estimate)

Age of youngest child	Number of mothers	Participation rate (%)
0-2	15,900	75.4
3-5	12,600	78.3
6-15	38,700	85.6

FAMILY-RELATED LEAVE**Maternity leave**

Seventeen weeks.

Parental leave

Both parents are entitled to 52 weeks which must be taken within 12 months of the child's birth. Thirty-five weeks for birth mothers who have taken pregnancy/ maternity leave.

Adoption leave

Fifty-two weeks.

Note: Paid maternity and parental leave provisions are divided between federal and provincial/territorial governments. All leave provisions are set under employment standards legislation by provinces/territories. The federal government benefit for these leaves pays for up to 15 weeks of maternity leave and 35 weeks of parental leave/ adoptive leave (either parent) for new parents eligible under Employment Insurance rules. In all jurisdictions except Quebec (which has its own approach), the benefit is paid at a rate of 55% of earned income to a maximum of \$524/week (2015).

KINDERGARTEN (GRADE PRIMARY)

PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR KINDERGARTEN

Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Brunswick Place
2021 Brunswick Street
P.O. Box 578
Halifax, NS, B3J 2S9
Telephone: (902) 424-5168
Website: <https://www.ednet.ns.ca>

LEGISLATION

Nova Scotia. Legislative Assembly. *Education Act and Regulation*. 1995-96, c. 1, s. 1. (Amended 1998; 2000; 2002; 2003; 2004; 2005; 2006; 2007; 2008; 2009; 2010).

Nova Scotia. Legislative Assembly. *Pre-primary Education Act* 2005, c. 44, s. 1. Proclaimed March 24, 2006.

AGE ELIGIBILITY

Five years old on or before December 31.

COMPULSORY

Grade Primary (kindergarten) is delivered in public and private schools and is compulsory. However, parents of children turning five on or before Dec. 31 can delay their child's participation.

HOURS

A minimum of four hours/day is required for Grade Primary to Grade 2; this is considered to be full time.

CLASS SIZE

25 students in Grade Primary to Grade 4 and 20 students in combined Grade Primary/Grade 1 classrooms.

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

A valid teaching certificate is required. An Initial Teacher's Certificate requires a minimum of five years of undergraduate education, three years of approved undergraduate content studies, two years of an approved program of professional studies including a practicum, and receipt of an approved Bachelor's degree from a recognized university.

Early childhood education training is not required for Grade Primary teachers.

CURRICULUM

[Learning Outcomes Framework Grades Primary](#)

SPENDING ON KINDERGARTEN

K-12 per pupil spending	\$12,031
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UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF PROVINCIAL SCHOOL BOARDS

EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS

Early Learning Programs are a component of the Early Years Centers and are offered to children four years of age prior to school entry (see OVERVIEW). Educators working in Early Learning Programs are required to hold a degree in early childhood education, a two year diploma in early Childhood education, or the equivalent of either. These programs are not licensed and fall under the authority of provincial school boards.

EARLY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Early Learning Opportunities (ELO) Programs are offered in 25 schools by seven school boards. ELO programs are available to children who turn four on or before December 31st and are voluntary and free of charge. The majority of programs are full day and five days a week.

REGULATED CHILD CARE

PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILD CARE

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Early Years Branch
Brunswick Place, 2021 Brunswick Street
P.O. Box 578
Halifax, NS, B3J 2S9
Phone: (902) 424-5168
Website: <http://www.ednet.ns.ca/earlyyears/>

LEGISLATION

Day Care Regulations made under Section 15 of the *Day Care Act* R.S.N.S. 1989, c. 120
O.I.C. 2010-456 (December 20, 2010, effective April 1, 2011), N.S. Reg. 193/2010 as amended to O.I.C. 2014-531 (Dec. 22, 2014, effective Feb. 1, 2015), N.S. Reg. 226/2014 and including O.I.C. 2014-531 (December 22, 2014), N.S. Reg. 227/2014

CHILD CARE SERVICES

UNREGULATED CHILD CARE

Unregulated family child care

Care for six or fewer children of any age, including the children of the person providing the care, or care for a maximum of eight school-age children, including the children of the person providing the care.

Family resource programs

Family Resource Programs provide community-based programs and services intended to support the healthy development and well-being of children and youth by strengthening and empowering families and communities. Programs and services delivered to children and their families focus on parent education and learning, family support, youth development and early learning and literacy. There are 25 programs in the province.

Before- and after-school programs

School board-operated before- and after-school programs are not required to be licensed. These programs are offered for children in grades Primary through 6 and operate with a 1:15 ratio. It is required that program staff have a minimum of one year child care experience for support staff, and three years minimum for head instructors.

REGULATED CHILD CARE

Child care centres

Care in a group setting for less than 24 hours/day for seven or more children from 0 –12 years. This includes full-day and part-day child care centres and programs for school-age children.

Family child care

Child care for up to six children of mixed ages including the provider's own children, or eight school-age children including the provider's own school-age children, in a care provider's private home that is approved, managed and monitored by a licensed family home day care agency.

CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

Curriculum framework is in development.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The Supported Child Care Grant (SCCG) assists regulated child care facilities to support delivery of inclusive early childhood environments. The intention of the SCCG is to enhance the overall inclusivity of the child care facility, rather than supports to individual children. Funding can be used for specialised training and professional development for early childhood educators, additional staff to enhance ratios for the delivery of a facility's inclusive program, and to purchase educational and resource materials directly related to inclusive programs. Families do not pay for the additional supports provided.

ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE

The mandate of the Nova Scotia Tripartite Social Working committee is for Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq, the Province of Nova Scotia and the Government of Canada to work in partnership to discuss issues, develop solutions and suggest actions with respect to social development for Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq. Currently, one of the goals of this committee is to clarify policy and jurisdictional issues related to on-reserve child care.

First Nations child care centres are not provincially licensed or funded but typically follow the Mi'kmaq Child Care Guidelines. There are currently 12 First Nations child care centres with a total of 249 spaces.

Each Aboriginal community in Nova Scotia offers a federally funded Aboriginal Head Start program. There are 13 programs in total.

SPACE STATISTICS (2014)

Number of regulated child care spaces			
<i>Centre-based</i>			
Age group	Full-day	Part-day	Total
Infants (0-17 months)	779	-	779
Toddler (18-35 months)	3,700	-	3,700
Preschool (36 months – 5 years)	6,403	1,980	8,383
School-age (6-12 years)	-	3,693	3,693
Total centre-based spaces	10,882	5,673	16,555
Total family child care spaces			1,344
Total number of regulated spaces			17,899
Children with special needs in regulated child care			
Number of centres receiving the Supported Child Care Grant (SCCG)			230
<i>Note: Information on individual children is not collected. The intention of the SCCG is to enhance the overall inclusivity of the child care facility rather than supports to individual children.</i>			
Children receiving fee subsidies			4,895
Number of child care programs			
<i>Centre-based</i>			
Full-day			276
Part-day nursery schools/preschools			114

School-based child care centres (2012)

For preschool-age children	35
For school-age children	18
With both preschool and school-age children (included in centre-based)	9

Family child care

Family child care agencies	14
Family child care homes	224

Sponsorship of regulated centre-based spaces

Non-profit	7,439
For-profit	9,116

Parent fees

Nova Scotia does not legislate parent fees.

Based on a national survey, the 2012 median monthly fees were:

<i>Age group</i>	<i>Median monthly fee</i>
Infant	\$825/month
Toddler	694/month
Preschool	685/month

In 2014, a national survey of child care fees in Canada's large cities included Halifax:

<i>Median monthly preschooler fee</i>	
Halifax	\$781

Note: See Table 3 in this document for age breakdowns.

STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

REGULATED CENTRES

Maximum facility size: not specified

Maximum room size: not specified

Maximum staff/child ratios and group sizes:

Age	Staff:child ratios	Max. group sizes
0 – 17 months	1:4	10
18 – 35 months	1:6	18
36 months – 5 years (full-day)	1:8	24
30 months – 5 years (part-day)	1:12	24
5 – 12 years (attending school)	1:15	30

Centre staff qualification requirements

A facility Director or Acting Director of a child care program licensed for all ages must hold a Level 2 or 3 Classification. The Director or Acting Director licensed for school-age children must hold a Level 2 or 3 classification, or School-Age Approval.

At least 2/3 of the staff working directly with children in a licensed full-day or part-day program must hold a Level 1, Level 2 or Level 3 classification granted by the Minister as per section 37 of the *Day Care Act* and Regulations.

Facility staff working directly with children who do not hold a Level 1, 2 or 3 classification must have completed the 'Orientation for Staff Working in Licensed Child Care Facilities' or post-secondary courses comparable to the orientation training.

In a licensed child care program for school-age children at least 2/3 of staff must have the above requirements or school-age training approval.

REGULATED FAMILY CHILD CARE

Model of organization

Agency model

Maximum capacity

Individuals who provide approved family home day care may care for a maximum of six children up to the age of 12, including their own children, and must not have any other children in their care, subject to the following restrictions: If a care provider is caring for four to six children, no more than three children may be under three years of age and of those three children no more than two children may be infants.

Persons who provide approved family home day care for school-age children may care only for a maximum of eight school-age children at a time including their own children and must not have any other children in their care.

Persons who provide approved family home day care for infants may care for a maximum of three infants at a time, including their own infant(s), and must not have any other children in their care.

Licensing, monitoring and enforcement

Family home day care agencies are licensed under the authority of the *Day Care Act* and Regulations to approve, manage and monitor care providers in their homes.

A family home day care agency must hire a family home day care consultant to provide services and support to family home day care providers. The family home day care consultant must have a two year diploma in early childhood education from a recognised training program approved by the director; at least two years' experience working in an early learning and child care program; and current first aid and infant cardio-pulmonary resuscitation training from a recognised program approved by the director.

Family child care provider qualification requirements

The care provider is required to have Family Home Day Care Training - Level 1 of the Canadian Child Care Federation (CCCCF) Family Home Day Care Training. Providers must be at least 18 years old, be screened through the Child Abuse Register, complete vulnerable sector check by the RCMP or local police, and have completed a first aid course including infant CPR.

Any person who is 13 years old or older who lives in a family day care home and has contact with children or the records of children must complete a Child Abuse Register Check. Any person who is 18 years old or older who lives in a family day care home and who has, or will have, contact with children or the records of children must complete a vulnerable sector check.

FUNDING

CHILD CARE SERVICES ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING

Funding is available to all licensed centres, both full-day and part-day and regulated family child care agencies. Both non-profit and for-profit facilities can apply for grants and/or funding.

TYPES OF FUNDING

Fee subsidies

Nova Scotia's Child Care Subsidy Program is intended to assist eligible families with the cost of licensed child care facilities or regulated family day care. Subsidies are provided directly to the child care facility or family home day care agency on behalf of the parent. The subsidy is portable and moves with the child.

Subsidies are available to all families that meet the required income, financial and social criteria. Subsidy per diem rates (see table below) do not cover full fees; a family eligible for subsidy is required to pay any centre fees that are above the approved government subsidy per diem. Subsidy per diems were revised in 2009.

<i>Age group</i>	<i>Per diem rate</i>
Infants	\$22.00
Toddlers	20.00
Preschool	19.00
School-age	17.70

One time funding

Family Home Day Care Start Up Grant (one-time)

If a new agency is approved for funding, they will receive a Family Home Day Care Start up Grant to offset expenses directly related to the startup costs for the agency.

The Start-Up Grant will provide a one-time fixed amount to be used by the agency to pay for advertising, equipment, and legal fees incurred to set up the agency.

Recurring funding

Early Childhood Enhancement Grants (ECEG)

The ECEG is intended to enhance the salary and benefits of early childhood staff who work directly with children in licensed child care centre facilities. All licensed child care facilities (full-time/part-time, for-profit/non-profit) are eligible to apply for the ECEG.

As per the ECEG Terms and Conditions, the grant is to be used as follows:

- ^a 80% Wages and benefits to early childhood staff working directly with children
- 15% Operational costs
- 5% Professional growth for educators

Family Home Daycare Operating Grant

The Family Home Day Care Operating Grant is an annual grant intended to support the agency in meeting the costs of salary and benefits to agency staff, transportation, education, program material, and fixed costs. Fixed costs include rent and utilities, insurance, phone, equipment, advertising and administration costs.

Supported Child Care Grant (SCCG)

The SCCG is not attached to a specific child but provides funding to licensed, full, part-day and school-age child care facilities to create or sustain inclusive child care programs. Funding provided through the Supported Child Care Grant can be used for wages for additional staff, approved professional development and training directly related to the delivery of an inclusive program, and approved educational and resource materials directly related to the delivery of an inclusive program.

PROVINCIAL ALLOCATIONS FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE

Fee subsidies	\$17,684,353
One time funding	not available
Recurring funding	
Early Childhood Enhancement Grant (ECEG)	\$18,808,604
Child Development Centre Grant	250,429
Family home day care	1,379,149
Supported Child Care	5,293,897
Total regulated child care funding	\$43,416,432

Other funding

Early Childhood Education Training Initiative (ECEAP)	\$879,972
Early Childhood Education Assistance Program (ECEAP)	251,274
Continuing Education	242,895
Early Years Centres	500,000
Nova Scotia Child Care Association	39,270