



OVERVIEW

In Alberta, responsibility for early childhood education and care (ECEC) falls under two Ministries; Alberta Education and Alberta Children’s Services. Responsibility for licensed and approved child care was under Alberta Human Services for part of the time period covered in this report but moved to the newly created Ministry of Children’s Services as of January 2017.

Responsibility for Early Childhood Services (ECS) including kindergarten and other educational programming for children prior to Grade 1 is under the Education Supports Sector of Alberta Education.

Regional Child and Family Services at the local level are responsible for licensing, monitoring and issuing enforcement actions for licensed child care programs.

There are five categories of licensed child care (often referred to as ECEC programs) defined under Alberta’s *Child Care Licensing Act*. Each operates with the primary purpose of providing child care to seven or more children. Licensed ECEC in Alberta includes: 1) day care programs for preschool-aged children (under seven years); 2) part day preschool programs; 3) out-of-school programs for kindergarten and school-aged children; 4) group family child care; and 5) innovative child care programs designed to meet the unique child care needs of the community in which they are provided, as approved by the director.

Another child care option available to parents in Alberta is referred to as the Approved Family Day Home (FDH) program. Contracted family day home agencies and approved providers are required to operate according to ministry standards.

Somewhat more than half of Alberta’s licensed full and part day centre-based child care programs (58%) and nearly half of approved family day home agencies (46%) are for-profit. The others are not-for-profit, which includes a small number of municipally operated or supported centres.

In April 2018, the Alberta and federal governments signed the [Canada-Alberta Early Learning and Child Care Agreement](#). The federal government will transfer \$136 million over three years to Alberta to increase accessibility, affordability and quality, address gaps and flexibility and provide an evaluation.

PROVINCIAL CONTEXT

Please note that some of the following figures are rounded, while totals are based on exact figures and may therefore not equal the sum of the rounded figures shown here.

Number of children 0-12 (2016 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0	52,700
1	52,700
2	50,700
3	53,200
4	56,300
5	51,400
6	56,700
7	53,100
8	58,100
9	50,600
10	49,500
11	48,700
12	47,600
Total	681,100

Number of children 0-12 years (aggregated) (2016 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0-2	156,100
3-5	160,900
6-12	364,300
Total	681,300

Number of children 0-12 years with employed mothers (2016 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0	28,400
1	30,800
2	27,300
3	30,000
4	33,900
5	30,100
6	34,400
7	31,500
8	33,800
9	30,700
10	31,300
11	31,800
12	30,100
Total	404,200

Number of children 0-12 with employed mothers (aggregated) (2016 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0-2	86,500
3-5	94,000
6-12	223,600
Total	404,200

Number of children 0-14 identifying with an Indigenous group (2016)

Age	First Nations	Métis	Inuk (Inuit)	Multiple	Other
0-4	14,300	9,215	250	390	240
5-9	15,865	10,120	285	245	240
10-14	13,790	9,555	230	285	170

Workforce participation of mothers by age of youngest child (2016 rounded estimate)

Age of youngest child	Number of mothers	Participation rate (%)
0-2	89,900	62.9
3-5	69,000	72.9
6-15	167,800	82.1

Living arrangements by age of child by number of parents (2016)

Age	Living with two parents	Living with one parent	Lone mother	Lone father
0-4	228,685	31,915	26,450	5,465
5-9	219,010	45,330	36,260	9,075
10-14	188,085	46,755	36,645	10,110

Language spoken most often in home by age of child (2016)

Age	English	French	Non-official	Multiple
0-4	215,860	2,015	35,610	12,520
5-9	226,640	2,015	27,690	14,120
10-14	202,910	1,615	23,805	13,220
Total	645,405	5,645	87,105	39,865

Median after-tax income among families with children aged 0-5 years (2015) (\$)

Two parent families	Lone parent families	Male lone-parent families	Female lone-parent families
92,890	31,264	40,636	30,240

FAMILY RELATED LEAVE

Maternity leave

Fifteen weeks.

Available to the birth mother only.

Parental leave

Thirty-seven weeks may be taken by one parent or shared between two parents; the total combined leave cannot exceed 37 weeks. The provincial legislation stipulates that there is no requirement to grant parental leave to more than one parent at a time if both parents of a child work for the same employer.

Adoption leave

Parental leave only. Thirty-seven weeks may be taken by one parent or shared between two parents but the total combined leave cannot exceed 37 weeks.

Benefits

Maternity and parental leave provisions in Canada, outside Quebec, are divided between federal and provincial/territorial governments. Benefits are paid by the federal government under the Employment Insurance program (EI), while provincial /territorial provisions for job-protected leave are established in each jurisdiction's employment standards legislation.

EI is a contributory program; both employees and employers contribute. Under EI, the federal benefit covers 15 weeks of maternity leave for eligible employees who are birth mothers. Until December 3, 2017, there was only one option for parental leave benefits: 35 weeks of payment was available to cover parental leave for either eligible parent including adoptive parents.

As of December 3, 2017, this has been amended by the federal government to offer two options for new parents: a Standard Parental Benefit (35 weeks of parental benefits for a total of 50 weeks total including 15 weeks of maternity benefits) and an Extended Parental Benefit (15 weeks of maternity benefits and 61 weeks of parental leave benefits totalling 76 weeks). Maternity and the Standard Parental Benefit are paid at 55% of wages up to a ceiling of \$543 a week (2017); the Extended Parental Benefit is paid at 33% of wages up to a ceiling of \$326 a week.

For further details about the EI federal benefit, Quebec benefits and leave provisions, and provincial/territorial provisions for job-protected leave, see the FAMILY LEAVES AND BENEFITS section of this publication. Provincial/territorial provisions are up-to-date in this document up to December 31 2017.

KINDERGARTEN (EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES)

PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR KINDERGAREN

Alberta Education
Education Supports Sector
8th Floor – 44 Capital Boulevard
10044-108 Street
Edmonton, AB, T5J 5E6
Telephone: (780) 427-4919
[Website](#)

LEGISLATION

Government of Alberta. Legislative Assembly. *School Act*. 2000.
Early Childhood Services Regulation 31/2002.
Private Schools Regulation 190/2000.

EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES ENROLLMENT (2016-2017)

Kindergarten enrolment not available

66,000 funded students (includes kindergarten and children with severe disability/delay younger than kindergarten age in Early Childhood Services programs)

KINDERGARTEN SERVICES

Alberta Education is responsible for providing Early Childhood Services (ECS) under the *School Act*.

Kindergarten, as part of ECS programming, is intended for children in the year prior to entry into Grade 1 and may be offered by local school boards and/or private non-profit ECS operators. It is usually part day (minimum of 475 hours/year) but some local authorities provide a full day option.

ECS provides educational services in a variety of early learning settings in addition to kindergarten. Children with special needs may be included starting as early as two-and-a-half years of age.

Funding for kindergarten and other ECS programs may be accessed by all school authorities, which include: school jurisdictions (public, separate, Francophone school boards), accredited private schools, charter schools, and approved private, non-profit ECS operators.

AGE ELIGIBILITY (FOR KINDERGARTEN)

To enter kindergarten, children must be four-years and six months of age on or before September 1st of the relevant school year.

COMPLUSORY

Attendance in kindergarten is not compulsory but most five-year-olds attend (an estimated 98% of age-eligible children).

HOURS

475 hours throughout the school year. Kindergarten is usually part day, every day.

CLASS SIZE

The provincial government does not set a class size limit in kindergarten.

Alberta Education has for some years provided funding to school jurisdictions to support smaller class sizes in K-3 with the expectation that school boards use these funds to achieve targeted lower class sizes for the younger grades, including kindergarten. Boards are required to participate in the annual class size survey and report class size averages annually.

The provincial class size average for K-3 was 20.4 in the 2016/2017 school year.

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Qualification requirements: Early Childhood Services teachers in Alberta must hold a valid Alberta teaching certificate based on a four year university degree that includes a basic teacher preparation program (B.Ed.), or a bachelor's degree supplemented with a teacher preparation program (two year post-degree for teacher course work and practicum).

There is no specific requirement for early childhood training.

CURRICULUM

[Alberta Kindergarten Curriculum](#) (2008)
[Kindergarten Program Statement](#) (2008)
[My Child's Learning: A Parent's Resource](#)

SPENDING ON KINDERGARTEN

Kindergarten spending is not available.

More than \$330 million operational funding is spent annually for approximately 66,000 children in ECS not including capital expenditures. In addition, \$270 million is spent for ECS children with mild/moderate and severe disability/delay and children with gifted and talented learning needs.

K-12 per pupil spending (2014-2015) \$13,115

REGULATED CHILD CARE

PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILD CARE

Ministry of Children's Services
Early Childhood Development Branch
6th Floor Sterling Place
9940 - 106th Street
Edmonton, AB, T5K 2N2
Telephone: (780) 422-1119
[Website](#)

LEGISLATION

Alberta. Legislative Assembly. *Child Care Licensing Act*.
Alberta. Legislative Assembly. Child Care Licensing
Regulation, 143/2008.

CHILD CARE SERVICES

UNREGULATED CHILD CARE

Unlicensed family child care

In Alberta, the maximum number of children permitted in an unlicensed family child care setting is six under the age of 13, not including the caregiver's own children.

REGULATED CHILD CARE

Under Alberta's *Child Care Licensing Act*, there are six types of regulated child care and early childhood education and care (ECEC) programs. Five program types are licensed and one program type is approved.

Alberta's [Child Care Licensing Act](#) states that anyone caring for seven or more children must be licensed by the Government of Alberta. The following five programs, required to be licensed, are all subject to Alberta's [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#).

Note that approved family day home agencies are approved, not licensed.

Day care program

A child care program provided to seven or more infants, preschool and kindergarten children for four or more consecutive hours in each day that the program is provided.

Preschool program

A child care program provided to preschool and kindergarten children for less than four hours per child in each day that the program is provided.

Innovative program

A child care program approved by the director that is designed to meet the unique child care needs of the community in which it is provided.

Out-of-school care program

A child care program provided to kindergarten-aged and school-aged children (under age 13) in any or all of the following periods: before-and after-school; during the lunch hour; when schools are closed.

Group family child care program

A child care program provided in the private residence of the licence holder to a maximum of 10 children, including infants, preschool, kindergarten and school-aged children. Group family child care programs must have two providers on record and both must be on the premises when seven or more children are in attendance. As a licensed program, group family child care is subject to the Child Care Licensing Regulations in Alberta.

Approved family day home program

Alberta's Family Day Home (FDH) Program is delivered under a contracted agency model. Homes are referred to as "approved family day homes". An approved family day home program is one in which the Child and Family Services Region has entered into an agreement with a family day home agency to coordinate and monitor the provision of child care in the private residence of each approved child care provider.

Note that an approved family day home agency is not licensed but approved.

Under the legal authority of the *Child Care Licensing Act*, the [Family Day Home Standards Manual for Alberta](#) outlines the requirements for approved family child care, including the roles, objectives, responsibilities and expectations for the Child and Family Services Region, FDH Agency and FDH provider. Contracted FDH agencies and approved providers are required to operate according to these Ministry standards.

The maximum number of children is six, including the provider's own children.

CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

[Play, participation and possibilities: An early learning and child care curriculum framework for Alberta](#)

Alberta's curriculum framework supports a holistic view of children and will build common language across diverse delivery settings about the importance of play in early learning, emergent curriculum planning and responsive care. It is intended to guide practitioners in their intentional interactions with young children. The framework was piloted in selected early learning and child care sites across Alberta. The ministry continues to work with Mount Royal University and MacEwan University on the curriculum project through expansion of programs and learning communities, as well as the development of professional resources.

The curriculum framework is currently not mandatory. It is available free of charge to any educator who wants to engage voluntarily with the ideas and concepts as a way to support their evolving practices, planning and provisions for young children's learning.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The Inclusive Child Care Program provides supports to facilitate inclusion of children with special needs in Alberta's approved child care settings. Program delivery and funding may vary depending on the needs of the child, the type of service required, and the regional Child and Family Services delivery model. Regions determine the disbursement of funds for inclusive child care programming. Funds are typically paid to licensed or contracted operators on behalf of eligible children.

Additional training for staff working with children with special needs is not required in legislation; however, staff members typically have an early childhood education credential.

In 2013/2014, Alberta Human Services funded a non-profit community program, Getting Ready for Inclusion Today (GRIT), to provide staff support at five centres to foster inclusive practices for children with additional needs and better enable meaningful participation for all children.

Between 2014 and 2016, the ministry provided GRIT programs with a grant to complete a two year provincial pilot to implement their ASaP (Access, Support and Participation) program, extending GRIT staff support to 42 licensed and approved child care programs across Alberta. Participating programs completed an assessment to determine areas for enhancement, then child care teams received training and on-site, practice-based coaching to provide them with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to provide equitable access and support participation of all children within quality, inclusive environments.

For more detailed information, see the [ASaP Continuum Project report](#) (2017).

INDIGENOUS CHILD CARE

Alberta child care programs in Indigenous communities on-reserve are not required to meet provincial child care legislation requirements. Indigenous child care programs may be eligible for federal government funding equivalent to parent child care subsidies when programs demonstrate to the federal government that they adhere to provincial licensing standards. By invitation of the First Nation, provincial child care licensing staff will schedule and conduct an inspection visit, and provide a written inspection report based on provincial licensing standards. Alberta has ongoing communication with federal funders under the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) to consult on and respond to requests for inspection of child care programs located on First Nations reserve land.

Alberta recognizes early learning and child care education training programs in approved private vocational training institutions that are based on theoretical understanding of First Nations/Indigenous cultural knowledge as well as an academic study of all aspects of child development. Depending on program content and course hours, staff members who complete these programs may be eligible for certification as a Child Development Worker or a Child Development Supervisor. Alberta also contracts with early childhood educators to deliver the entry level Child Care Orientation Course in First Nation communities. Completion of the course qualifies staff for certification as a Child Development Assistant.

SPACE STATISTICS

Number of regulated child care spaces (March 2016)

<i>Centre-based spaces</i>			
Age group	Full day	Part day	Total
Infants (under 12 months)	1,724	-	1,724
Infants (13-19 months)	4,566	-	4,566
Toddlers (19 months < 3 years)	12,480	1,445	13,925
Preschoolers (3 years-4.5 years)*	15,716	14,807	30,523
Kindergarten (age 4.5 years +)**	7,485	10,820	18,305
Out-of-school (Grades 1-6) reported as part day		28,063	28,063
Innovative child care (no age grouping)	560	-	560
Total centre-based spaces	42,531	55,135	97,666
<i>Family child care spaces</i> (Licensed family child care - 30 and approved family day homes - 11,786)	11,816	-	11,816

Total number of licensed and approved spaces

54,347 55,135 109,482

* Attending day care program - full day spaces; attending preschool program part day spaces.

** Attending an approved ECS program - part time. Day care spaces reported as full day: preschool/out-of-school care reported as part day spaces.

Children with special needs in regulated/approved child care

Not available. Funding is distributed by regional delivery offices to regulated child care programs. The number of children served is not collected.

Children receiving fee subsidies (2016) 24,509

Number of child care programs (March 2016)

<i>Centre-based programs</i>	2,402
Day care centres	782
Innovative	22
Out-of-school care	898
Preschools (part day)	700
<i>Family child care</i>	74
Group family child care programs (licensed)	3
Number of family day home agencies (contracted)	71
Number of individual family child care providers (approved by agencies)	1,999

Sponsorship of regulated child care programs and spaces (March 2016)

<i>Sponsorship</i>	<i>Number of programs</i>
Regulated centre-based child care programs (total) 2,402	
Non-profit	1,078
For-profit	1,324
<i>Day care programs (full day)</i> 782	
Non-profit	237
For-profit	545
<i>Preschool programs (part day)</i> 700	
Non-profit	444
For-profit	256
<i>Out-of-school care programs</i> 898	
Non-profit	378
For-profit	520
<i>Innovative child care programs</i> 22	
Non-profit	19
For-profit	3
Regulated/approved home child care programs	
<i>Family day home agencies-approved</i> 71	
Non-profit	38
For-profit	33
<i>Group family child care programs-licensed</i> 3	
Non-profit	0
For-profit	3
Number of full and part day centre spaces	
<i>Total</i> 97,106	
Non-profit	40,798
For-profit	56,308
<i>Day care spaces (full day)</i> 41,971	
Non-profit	11,788
For-profit	30,183
<i>Preschool spaces (part day)</i> 17,940	
Non-profit	10,551
For-profit	7,389
<i>Out-of-school care spaces (part day)</i> 37,195	
Non-profit	18,459
For-profit	18,736

Parent Fees (March 2016)

In Alberta, child care operators are responsible for setting their own fees.

Alberta collects data on actual child care fees paid, which vary by program type and age of child.

In March 2016, the mean average monthly fees based on provincial government data were:

Age Group	Child care program type-fees per month		
	Day care centre	family day home	Out-of-school-care
Infants < 12 months	\$884	\$533	-
Infants 12 months < 19 months	\$938	\$677	-
19 months < 3 years	\$864	\$735	-
3 years < 4.5 years	\$828	\$728	-
4.5+ years	\$796	\$688	\$628
4.5+ years and attending school	-	\$500	\$456
March 2016 mean parent fee	\$848	\$680	\$476

In 2016, a national survey of child care fees in Canada's largest cities included the following Alberta cities:

	Calgary	Edmonton
Median monthly infant fee	\$1,102	\$835
Median monthly toddler fee	\$1,050	\$835
Median monthly preschool-age fee	\$1,010	\$825

Note: These median monthly figures include fees from centre-based child care and home child care. Fee data collected by provincial/territorial governments and that collected by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in Canada's largest cities use different methods and represent different sets of regulated child care programs (all programs vs. those in the largest cities; break-down into centre-based, family child care and school-aged programs vs. all full day centre and home child care and median vs. mean fees), so may not be consistent.

The CCPA data are included so as to provide comparison fee data for all provinces.

STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

REGULATED CENTRES

Maximum centre size: Not specified

Maximum staff/child ratios and group sizes

Age	Staff: child ratios	Max. group sizes
<i>Full day centre-based day care</i>		
Infants < 12 months	1:3	6
Infants 12 months < 19 months	1:4	8
19 months < 3 years	1:6	12
3 years < 4.5 years	1:8	16
4.5 years and older	1:10	20
<i>Out-of-school care program</i>		
Part day programs for kindergarten-age children	1:10	20
Part day programs for children attending Grade 1 and higher	1:15	30

Centre staff qualification requirements

Child care staff certification

Under the Alberta Child Care Licensing Regulation, staff working in licensed day care, preschool, out-of-school care and group family child care programs are required to be certified. Certification is the process used to review educational training and competencies to determine eligibility and to certify staff as meeting one of the three levels of certification specified in regulation.

Staff working in licensed child care programs have six months to become certified. Without certification, they cannot be left alone to supervise children. All staff must apply for certification to the Child Care Staff Certification Office. The Certification Office is also responsible for contracting the delivery of the child care orientation course or Child Development Assistant certification and for the online delivery of this course.

Alberta has three levels of qualifications for child care certification:

Child Development Assistant certificate (formerly Level 1)

Completion of the Child Care Orientation Course (Alberta government-sponsored course); or completion of specific courses in Alberta high schools; or completion of a 45 hour (three credit) college/university-level course related to child development; or completion of the Step Ahead Family Day Home Training or Family Child Care Training Program through an approved Alberta Family Day Home Agency registered with the Alberta Family Child Care Association.

Child Development Worker certificate (formerly Level 2)

Completion of a one year early learning and child care certificate program offered by an Alberta public college or university or completion of an equivalent level of training (refer to [Educational Equivalencies for Alberta Child Care Staff Certification](#) for details).

Child Development Supervisor certificate (formerly Level 3)

Completion of a two year early learning and child care diploma program offered by an Alberta public college or has completed an equivalent level of training (refer to [Educational Equivalencies for Alberta Child Care Staff Certification](#) for details).

For certification as a Child Development Worker and Child Development Supervisor, proof of language proficiency at Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) Level 7 is required if post secondary training was not completed in English or French. Information about language proficiency requirements is available in Alberta's [Child Care Staff Certification Guide](#). (As of August 1, 2017, the only language proficiency tests accepted for certification are CELPIP and IELTS. See the Certification Guide for more information.)

A course hours equivalency chart is available to applicants (refer to the [Course Hours Equivalency chart in the Certification Guide](#)). Course equivalencies include a total of 1,545 hours of ECE coursework with 800 hours of practicum for certification as a Child Development Supervisor or completion of at least 770 hours of ECE coursework including 400 hours of practicum for certification as a Child Development Worker.

Staff credential requirements in each licensed program

Day care program requirements (Schedule 1: Child Care Licensing Regulation)

The Program Supervisor must hold a Child Development Supervisor certificate. In the extended absence of the Program Supervisor, a person with at least Child Development Worker certification must be designated to assume the responsibilities of the Program Supervisor.

In addition, at least one in every four primary staff working directly with children between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. must hold at least a Child Development Worker certificate.

All other primary staff working directly with children at any time of day must hold at least a Child Development Assistant certificate. Regulation allows maximum six months for staff to obtain this certificate; until then, the staff person must not have unsupervised access to children.

Out-of-school care program requirements (Schedule 4: Child Care Licensing Regulation)

Staff working directly with children at any time must hold at least a Child Development Assistant certificate. Regulation allows maximum six months for staff to obtain this certificate; until then, the staff person must not have unsupervised access to children.

Preschool program requirements (Schedule 5: Child Care Licensing Regulation)

Staff working directly with children at any time must hold at least a Child Development Assistant certificate. Regulation allows maximum six months for staff to obtain this certificate; until then, the staff person must not have unsupervised access to children.

Group family child care program requirements (Schedule 2: Child Care Licensing Regulation)

The licence holder or an additional care provider must be certified at minimum as a Child Development Worker and each additional child care provider must be certified at minimum as a Child Development Assistant.

Licensing, monitoring and enforcement

Inspection visits are intended to ensure all licensed child care programs adhere to the Child Care Licensing Act and Regulation. Licensed child care programs will generally receive a minimum of two licensing inspections during a 12-month-period. However, if non-compliances are identified or incidents/complaint investigations take place, licensing staff may complete additional inspections as required for follow up.

Refer to Alberta's *Child Care Licensing Act* and Child Care Licensing Regulation for additional information. Links to these documents can be found [online](#).

REGULATED FAMILY CHILD CARE

Model of organization

Alberta uses two models for delivery of regulated family-based child care: a) contracted, approved agencies, which have the role of overseeing individual approved family day homes, and b) individually licensed group family child care homes.

Licensed group family child care is provided in the private residence of the licence holder in which two providers care for a maximum of ten children.

The [Child Care Licensing Act](#) states that anyone caring for seven or more children must be licensed by the Government of Alberta.

Individuals who care for six or less children do not require a license and have the option of becoming an approved family day home with an approved agency. Section 25 of the *Act* defines the family day home program (FDH) as a program under which the person with whom the director has entered into an agreement (the agency), agrees to coordinate, monitor and administer a family day home service.

Operating under the legal authority of the *Child Care Licensing Act*, the [Family Day Home Standards Manual for Alberta](#) describes the roles, objectives, responsibilities and expectations for the Child and Family Services region, agency and approved family day home provider. Approved family day home agencies recruit, monitor and support family day home providers according to the standards. Agencies may be non-profit or for-profit.

Maximum capacity

Approved family day home providers may accommodate a maximum of six children 0 to 12-years-old in each private residence, including the provider's own children. A maximum of three children may be 36 months or younger and a maximum of two children may be 24 months or younger.

In a licensed group family child care home, two providers care for a maximum of ten children, of which not more than three may be under three years of age, and not more than two may be infants (24 months or younger). The licence holder must ensure that where seven or more children are present at a program, whether on or off the program premises, two care providers are on duty.

Monitoring and enforcement

Through its contract with a Child and Family Services Region, a family day home agency is responsible for complying with the agency standards and monitoring compliance to the provider standards. Provincial staff monitor each agency and also randomly select a minimum of 10% of the agency's active homes to visit annually. The minimum ministry-wide monitoring requirement for agencies is once annually in each contract term.

Approved family day home agencies are required to monitor all providers with both scheduled and unscheduled visits at least six times per year. Agency staff, referred to as family day home agency consultants or home visitors, monitor compliance utilizing a standard Government of Alberta checklist to ensure adherence to the provider standards. Under the Family Day Home Standards, agency staff responsible for monitoring approved family day home providers must be certified at minimum as a Child Development Worker. The consultants work closely with both family day home providers and parents.

As group family child care is a licensed category, they are subject to the Child Care Licensing Regulations. Inspection visits are intended to ensure all licensed child care programs adhere to the *Child Care Licensing Act and Regulation*. Licensed child care programs will generally receive a minimum of two licensing inspections during a 12 month period. However, if non-compliances are identified or incidents/complaint investigations take place, licensing staff may complete additional inspections as required for follow up.

Refer to Alberta's *Child Care Licensing Act and Child Care Licensing Regulation* for additional information.

Family day home provider qualification requirements

Family day home providers must be 18 years of age, have a criminal records check including a vulnerable sector search, and have completed a first aid course.

The [Family Day Home Standards Manual](#) requires that direct care providers receive training in such areas as child development, child guidance and employing appropriate culturally sensitive strategies. Family day home agencies are required to develop an appropriate training plan based on the needs of their providers and families, on topics such as first aid, health and safety, child guidance and cultural sensitivity.

In the group family child care program, the licence holder must be certified at minimum as a Child Development Assistant and ensure that each additional child care provider is certified at minimum as a Child Development Assistant (see certification table).

FUNDING

CHILD CARE SERVICES ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING

Alberta does not differentiate between non-profit and for-profit child care programs in terms of funding.

TYPES OF FUNDING

Fee subsidies

Eligible families using regulated and approved child care services may have all or some of their fees paid. Subsidies are paid to the child care program on the parent's behalf. Eligibility and the amount of subsidy funding depend on the number of individuals in the household; a family's gross income; the age of the child attending child care; and type of care.

Subsidies are available to all eligible low-income families who meet the required income test, who demonstrate the need for care child care (i.e., employment and/or schooling); and have secured a regulated space. Families must secure a space before applying for a subsidy.

Subsidy rates may not cover full fees; centres and family day home agencies are permitted to surcharge above the subsidy rates.

Note: Fee subsidies are available for preschool attendance in the Stay-at-home-parent program.

Fee subsidy rates

Monthly child care subsidy rates for eligible families living in all Alberta regions except the Northeast Alberta Region (2016).

Program type	Age group		
	Infant 1-18 mos.	Toddler 19 mos.- Kinder.	Grades 1-6
Day care/out-of-school care	\$628	\$546	\$310
Family day home and group family child care	\$520	\$437	\$310
Extended hours	\$100	\$100	\$100
Stay-at-home parent (max. per year)	\$1,200	\$1200	NA
Kin child care	\$400	\$400	\$200

One-time funding

Professional Development Grant

This grant is available to eligible certified staff to enable them to obtain higher levels of certification and attend approved conferences and workshops relating to early learning and child care. Certified Child Development Assistants and Child Development Workers in both levels of accreditation are eligible for up to \$1,000/year.

Child Care Staff Attraction Incentive Allowance

This funding is intended to reduce labour market pressures in child care by supporting the recruitment of qualified staff to the profession. Certified Child Development Workers and Child Development Supervisors in both levels of accreditation are eligible for \$2,500 if they are a new staff person and \$5,000 if they are a returning staff. This funding is also considered a "wage" under the *Alberta Employment Standards Code*.

Recurring funding

Infant Care Incentive

The Infant Care Incentive is a per-space amount paid to regulated child care programs. It pays \$150/month for each child under 19 months of age who is in more than eight hours of care in that month. Regulated programs were receiving payments for an average of approximately 4,000 infants/month in 2014/15.

Northern Allowance (Former Oil Sands Strategy)

Under the former Alberta Oil Sands Strategy, a northern allowance is still in place to help stabilize the child care sector in the Wood Buffalo region of Alberta through additional funding to support recruitment, retention and professional development of staff. This funding is intended for staff working in licensed day care centres, licensed out-of-school care programs and contracted family day home agencies located in Fort McMurray. The allowance includes a monthly flat-rate payment to staff (in addition to the provincial accreditation wage top-up) and access to an additional \$500 per year for professional development.

Accreditation funding for child care programs

Accreditation funding is paid to eligible child care programs (licensed child care and out-of-school care programs as well as approved family day home agencies). Programs are responsible to transfer funding to the staff in accordance with the Alberta Employment Standards and policies set out in the guide. The accreditation criteria include a commitment to meet the accreditation standards at all times, to continue work on quality improvement in accordance with the strategies set in Quality Enhancement Plans (QEP), annual reviews through submission of evidence to [AELCS](#), and subjection to unannounced status verification visits.

Types of accreditation funding include: Staff/Provider Support Funding, Benefit Contribution Grant, Professional Development Grant, and the Staff Attraction Incentive.

Staff/Provider Support Funding

This funding provides a wage top-up for eligible paid program staff/providers over and above the base wage paid by the employer. Wage top-up funding is paid to the child care program, which distributes it to staff members. Rates vary by type of child care program and level of staff certification. The wage top-up is considered a “wage” under the *Alberta Employment Standards Code*. Overviews of funding rates by program type are available at the link provided above. Rates for staff working in day care centres are provided below as an example:

<i>Day care staff</i>	<i>Pre-accredited centres</i>	<i>Accredited centres</i>
Child Development Assistant	\$1.44/hr	\$2.14/hr
Child Development Worker	\$2.70/hr	\$4.05/hr
Child Development Supervisor	\$4.42/hr	\$6.62/hr

Benefit Contribution Grant

Grant provided to child care programs to offset the costs of the mandatory provincial and federal employer contributions associated with the wage top-up funding and the child care staff attraction incentive allowance including statutory pay, vacation pay, Employment Insurance (EI), Canada Pension Plan (CPP), and Workers Compensation Board (WCB) premiums. This grant supports 16% of Staff Support Funding and 16% of Child Care Staff Attraction Incentive Allowance.

Other funding

Kin Child Care Funding to pay for child care by a non-custodial relative of up to \$400 per month is available to eligible low- and middle-income families with children under the age of seven and not yet attending Grade 1, and up to \$200 for school-age children (Grades 1-6).

ALLOCATIONS FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE (2015/2016)

Fee subsidies

Day care centres	\$89,000,000
Family day homes	\$14,000,000
Preschools-Stay-at-Home parent support	\$1,250,000
Out-of-school care	\$34,802,000
Extended hours	\$250,000
Total fee subsidies	\$139,302,000

One-time funding

Staff certification	\$972,000
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Recurring funding

Accreditation funding	\$101,182,000
Infant care incentive	\$8,000,000
Family day home agency contracts	\$6,437,000
Specialized child care (includes Inclusive Child Care)	\$5,782,000
Northern Allowance	\$2,169,000
Total recurring funding	\$123,570,000

Total regulated child care	\$263,844,000
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Other funding

Parent Link centres	\$26,210,000
Home visitation	\$9,896,000
Kin Child Care	\$2,200,000

ALLOCATIONS FOR CHILD CARE (2015/2016) AS
PER [ALBERTA HUMAN SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT
2015/2016](#) (p. 72)

Accreditation Funding Program	\$101,182,000
Child Care Subsidy and Supports	\$191,401,000
Program Planning and Delivery	\$4,314,000
Total allocation for child care	\$296,897,000

Source: Alberta. Ministry of Human Services. Year ended March 31, 2016.

Preschool-Stay at Home Parent Support: Eligible families who have one parent who stays at home or works, volunteers or attends school less than 20 hours per week may qualify for a child care subsidy of up to \$1,200 per year.

Oil Sands Strategy: Northern living allowance: additional funding to support recruitment, retention and professional development of staff paid to licensed day care centres/out-of-school care programs and contracted family day home agencies in Fort McMurray.

Kin Child Care Funding: Available for eligible parents who pay a non-custodial relative to care for their child in a private, non-regulated arrangement (see description above).
