



PROVINCIAL CONTEXT

Number of children 0-12 yrs (2005 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0	130,900
1	135,800
2	141,800
3	133,200
4	136,400
5	143,900
6	144,100
7	153,800
8	154,000
9	155,800
10	173,600
11	155,500
12	160,400
Total	1,919,000

Number of children 0-12 years (2005 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0-2	408,500
3-5	413,500
6-12	1,097,000
Total	1,919,000

Children 0-12 yrs with mothers in the paid labour force (2005 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0	78,000
1	80,900
2	87,400
3	84,400
4	85,100
5	92,100
6	88,400
7	100,200
8	102,700
9	105,200
10	118,700
11	109,200
12	117,900
Total	1,249,900

Number of children 0-12 years with mothers in the paid labour force (2005 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0-2	246,300
3-5	261,600
6-12	742,000
Total	1,249,900

Children 0-14 yrs identifying with an Aboriginal group (2001)

Age	North American Indian	Metis	Inuit	Multiple	Other	Total
0-4	13,150	3,385	110	115	400	17,160
5-9	15,070	4,430	125	190	355	20,170
10-14	12,835	4,730	155	160	440	18,320
Total	41,055	12,545	390	465	1,195	55,650

Children 0-14 yrs with disabilities (2001)

Age	Number of children with disabilities	Rate of children with disabilities (%)
0-4	10,700	1.6
5-9	30,500	4.0
10-14	37,140	4.8
Total	78,340	3.5

Note: Total may not add up due to rounding.

Number of children by marital status of families (2001)

Age	Children in couple families	Children in lone parent families (with lone mothers)	(with lone fathers)	
0-4	575,915	92,940	82,045	10,895
5-9	636,310	132,440	114,925	17,510
10-14	636,190	147,055	123,520	23,535
Total	1,848,415	372,435	320,490	51,940

Number of children by mother tongue (2001)

Age	English	French	Non-official language
0-4	529,725	17,515	110,120
5-9	622,295	22,140	116,005
10-14	630,195	25,065	122,795
Total	1,782,215	64,720	348,920

Number of children living in families below the LICO (2004)

Age	Number	Percent (%)
0-2	53,010	14.1
3-5	71,250	16.1
6-17	354,210	18.4
Total	478,480	17.4

Workforce participation of mothers by age of youngest child (2005 rounded estimate)

Age of youngest child	Number of mothers	Participation rate (%)
0-2	249,800	69.4
3-5	194,100	75.6
6-15	609,300	83.7

FAMILY-RELATED LEAVE

Maternity leave

Seventeen weeks for the natural mother only

Parental leave

Thirty-five weeks for birth mothers who took maternity leave; 37 weeks for the other parent. Leaves may be taken by both parents consecutively.

Adoption leave

Thirty-seven weeks

Emergency leave

Ten days if employee works for an employer with more than 50 employees

Births and EI maternity and parental claims (2005)

Number of births	133,170
Birth rate per 1,000 population	10.5
Number of initial maternity claims allowed	81,570
Average length of maternity claim	14.6 weeks
Number of parental claims	89,610
Average length of parental claim	29.0 weeks
Number of adoptive parent claims	1,130
Average length of adoptive claim	25.4 weeks

Note: Maternity, parental and adoption leaves are determined by provincial and territorial legislation. The federal government pays for up to 15 weeks for maternity leave and 35 weeks for parental and adoptive leave for eligible parents at 55% of earned income to a maximum of \$423/week. See FEDERAL ECEC PROGRAMS for more information.

KINDERGARTEN

LEGISLATION

Ontario. Legislative Assembly. *Education Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2

Section 16 of the *Education Act* is specific to private schools

PROVINCIAL CONTACT FOR KINDERGARTEN

Bill Coleman
Senior Policy Advisor
Policy and Programs Branch
Ontario Ministry of Education
15th Floor, 900 Bay St Toronto, ON, M7A 1L2
Telephone: 416-325-2515

Email: bill.coleman@ontario.ca

Website: www.edu.gov.on.ca

EDUCATION FACTS

Government funding for public education in Ontario 2005/06: \$17.2 billion.

Ontario provides funding for public and Catholic school boards to deliver education in both official languages. Ontario's schools are administered by 72 district school boards and 33 school authorities. "School authorities" consist of geographically isolated boards and hospital school boards. School Boards are divided as follows: 31 English Public, 29 English Catholic, 4 French Public and 8 French Catholic.

Ontario: 4,010 elementary schools; 870 secondary schools (2003/04).

KINDERGARTEN SERVICES

KINDERGARTEN

In Ontario, it is not compulsory for children to be enrolled in kindergarten programs; however, most four and five year olds attend.

All school boards provide Senior Kindergarten (SK) for five year olds and Junior Kindergarten (JK) for four year olds. The organization and delivery of these programs is the responsibility of the local school board. Kindergarten programs are organized in different ways including, full-day, every day programs; full-day, alternate day programs and part-day, every day programs. The most common organization is part-day, every day programs in urban communities and full-day, alternate day programs in rural communities (although some urban school boards also offer full-day, alternate programs). All 12 French-language school boards provide full-day, every day kindergarten programs. In addition, some school boards offer combined 4 and 5 year old classes or French-immersion classes for 5 year olds.

The *Education Act* does not define instructional hours for JK or SK. School boards decide on the daily schedule.

Private elementary schools in Ontario may operate programs for four or five year olds and for younger children as well. Generally, these programs are licensed under the *Day Nurseries Act* but this is not required. According to the *Act*, operators of private schools in Ontario are required to notify the Ministry of Education annually of

their intention to operate by filing a Notice of Intention to Operate a Private School. There are no Ministry of Education requirements for curriculum or teacher qualifications. Although the ministry does not inspect these schools for health equipment nor practices related to safety and staffing, private operators are required conform to municipal and public health bylaws, which the Ministry reviews.

CLASS SIZE

In 2004/05 school year, the government implemented a cap of 20 students in Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3 as part of a four-year plan to improve student achievement. By 2005/06, 48% of the primary classes were at the target of 20 or fewer students. For the 2006/07 school year, boards are projecting that over 60% of primary classes will be at the target. More information on the primary class size reduction initiative can be found at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/cst/faq.html#provincewide>

AGE ELIGIBILITY

Junior kindergarten: Four years old by December 31

Senior kindergarten: Five years old by December 31

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The *Education Act* requires that all publicly funded school boards provide special education programs and services to students who have been identified as exceptional. This requirement extends to all enrolled pupils. Inclusion is not specified.

Number of kindergarten children with special needs:
Information not available

ENROLMENT (2004/05)

Number of children enrolled in Junior Kindergarten (two years before Grade 1): 113,053

Number of children enrolled in Senior Kindergarten (the year before Grade 1): 127,571

Enrolment on full-and part-day enrolment is not available

Note: 2005/06 enrolment information is not available.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS

Qualification requirements: A valid Ontario Teacher's Certificate (undergraduate degree plus one year of teacher training and successful writing of the Ontario Teacher Qualifying Test)

Responsibility for certification: Ontario College of Teachers

Representation: Kindergarten teachers are represented by one of three unions: The Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO), the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association (OECTA) and L'association des enseignants et des enseignantes francophones de l'Ontario (AEFO).

TEACHING ASSISTANTS

The provincial funding formula allocates funding for teaching assistants based on each board's elementary enrolment. The school boards' role is to determine staffing levels. Based on local priorities and staffing and program considerations, each school board determines the number of JK/SK and special education teaching assistants it requires and where those teaching assistants should be located. School boards have the flexibility to draw from other budget lines to supplement their allocation for teaching assistants. School boards also have the flexibility to use funding allocated in respect of teaching assistants to meet other priorities.

Qualifications and wages: Information not available

Role: Determined by school boards.

CURRICULUM

All kindergarten programs are based on the expectations outlined in *The Kindergarten Program 2006* (revised). A copy of the document can be found at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/kindergarten.html> The kindergarten program is designed to help children build on their prior knowledge and experiences, form concepts, acquire foundational skills, and form positive attitudes to learning as they begin to develop their goals for lifelong learning. Boards decide how the expectations can best be achieved within the total kindergarten program that they offer.

The learning expectations outlined in the document represent the first steps in a continuum of programming from kindergarten to Grade 8. They describe learning

achievements that are appropriate for young children and that provide the foundation for successful future learning experiences. Learning expectations are given for six areas of learning – Personal and Social Development, Language, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Health and Physical Activity, and the Arts.

FUNDING FOR KINDERGARTEN

The provincial government determines each school board's annual funding allocation based on a series of grant formulae that collectively make up the Grants for Student Needs (GSN). These grants respond to factors such as enrolment, student need, capital requirements, school board size, and school board location. Funding is provided to boards through a combination of local property taxes and provincial grants.

Under the GSN's formula, kindergarten classes (including full-day classes in French school boards) are currently funded on a half-time basis, according to kindergarten enrolment but boards have the flexibility to use their resources to support a full-day program.

There is no provincial government funding for independent (private) schools.

SPENDING ON KINDERGARTEN (2005/06)

Estimate per pupil (FTE) amount

JK: \$ 4,320 (part-day rate)

SK: \$ 4,320 (part-day rate)

Total provincial spending for kindergarten

JK: \$504.9 million

SK: \$535.9 million

Total provincial spending includes both operating and capital funding.

SPECIAL FEATURES

It is up to individual school boards to determine additional policies or resources regarding ESL or inner-city kindergarten students.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN KINDERGARTEN

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services are committed to the pursuit of the government's Best Start vision, announced in 2004 (see the child care section for details on Best Start). One feature of Best Start is that it is guided by a *Schools First policy*, meaning that schools are the location of first choice for new or expanded child care services. As the Best Start child care spaces become operational, it will create an environment where Kindergarten teachers and Early Childhood Educators have the opportunity to collaborate on the early learning and care provided to young children.

REGULATED CHILD CARE

LEGISLATION

Ontario. Legislative Assembly. *The Day Nurseries Act. Revised Statutes of Ontario*, 1990 (reprinted 1998). Amended by *The Services Improvement Act* effective January 1, 1998, c. D-2 Amended by: 1997, c. 30, Sched. C; 1999, c. 12, Sched. E, s. 2; 1999, c. 12, Sched. G, s. 21; O. Reg. 500/00; 2001, c. 13, s. 14.

Ontario. Legislative Assembly. *Ontario Regulation 262*, 1990. (Amended 1998, 1999, 2006)

PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILD CARE

Helen Hodgson

Manager

Early Learning and Child Development Branch

Strategic Policy and Planning Division

Ministry of Children and Youth Services

56 Wellesley Street West

15th Floor

Toronto, ON, M5S 3A9

Telephone: (416) 327-4723

Facsimile: (416) 327-0570

Email: Helen.Hodgson@Ontario.ca

Website: <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/CS/en/programs/BestStart/default.htm>

CHILD CARE SERVICES

UNREGULATED CHILD CARE¹

Unregulated family child care

Maximum number of children permitted: Five.

This does not include the caregiver's own children.

Family resource centres

Resource centres provide support services to parents and regulated and unregulated care providers. The range of services can include: drop-in programs, resource lending libraries, playgroups, training opportunities and educational workshops.

REGULATED CHILD CARE

Day nurseries (child care centres, nursery schools, before and after-school programs)

Group care for less than 24 hours/day for five or more unrelated children under 12 years, and under 18 years for children with special needs.

Supervised private-home day care (family child care)

Private-home day care agencies are licensed to provide family child care at more than one location according to the *Regulation*. Care in each location is provided to five children or less under 10 years of age in a private residence other than the home of the parent/guardian of the child. With the approval of the agency, school-age children up to and including the age of 12 years may be accommodated along with younger children where appropriate. All children who are being cared for by the provider must be counted and not exceed the limit of five at any one time. However, the provider's own children are included in the count only if they are under six years of age.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Ontario does not have a written policy regarding children with special needs but encourages integration and inclusion of children with special needs into community child care services with their peers. Special needs resourcing provides assistance for staffing, equipment, supplies or services to support the inclusion of children with special needs in child care.

Resource teachers generally work for agencies that provide a variety of services for children with special needs, and may serve children in several child care settings. The level of service per child can vary depending on the child's needs, the local service model, and available resources. Consequently, the previous ratio of one resource teacher to four children with special needs is no longer applicable in all areas. A resource teacher must hold a diploma in early childhood education or academic equivalent and have completed a post-secondary school program related to children with special needs. If working with children with multiple disabilities, the resource teacher must also have a current standard certificate in first aid.

There are no training or experience requirements for staff other than resource teachers who are working with children with special needs.

ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE

Ontario funds and regulates on-reserve child care.

As of March 2006, there were 64 licensed child care centres on-reserve with a licensed capacity of 2,890. There were also two licensed private-home day care agencies with 37 homes on-reserve.

Ontario cost-shares fee subsidies for licensed on-reserve child care programs on an 80/20 basis with First Nations and the province pays 100% of other child care financing (wage subsidies, special needs resourcing and family resource centres). First Nations manage the fee subsidy system in their communities. Ontario recovers the majority of expenditures on fee subsidies from the federal government under the 1965 *Memorandum of Agreement Respecting Welfare Programs for Indians*.

¹ In addition, some unregulated recreation programs provide subsidized child care for school-aged children.

SPACE STATISTICS (2005/06)

Number of regulated child care spaces*

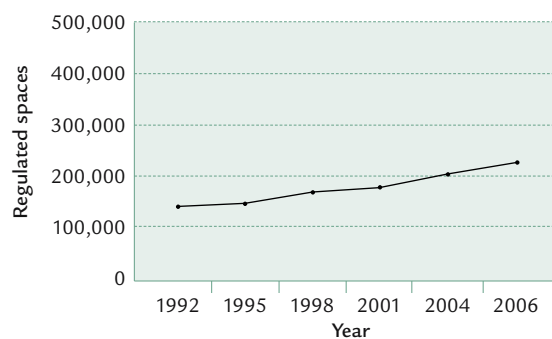
<i>Centre-based</i>	
Infants (0-18 mos.)	6,949
Toddlers (18-30 mos.)	21,631
Preschool (2.5-5 yrs.)	94,082
JK (3yrs 8mos)	8,564
SK (4yrs 8 mos)	7,753
School-age (6-12 yrs.)	71,148
<i>Private-home day care**</i>	19,748
Total number of regulated spaces***	229,875

* Breakdowns of full- and part-time centre-based child care not available by age. Licensed capacity in nursery school is not available.

** This figure represents the enrolment in family child care. Licensed capacity is not available because it fluctuates according to the ages of the children being served.

*** The estimated licensed capacity comes from adding together the capacity of child care centres and family child care enrolment (in lieu of family child care capacity).

Figure 6: Number of regulated spaces in ON, 1992–2006



Children receiving special needs resourcing in regulated child care

A cumulative total of 22,928 children were served throughout the fiscal year.

Note: Figures comparable to the other provinces/territories - that is the number of children at a given point in time - are not available.

Number of children in regulated child care receiving subsidies

Regular fee subsidies	96,282
<i>(cumulative total throughout the fiscal year)</i>	
Ontario Works funding for regulated care	13,531
<i>(cumulative total throughout the fiscal year)</i>	
Total	109,813
<i>(cumulative total throughout the fiscal year)</i>	

Note: Figures comparable to the other provinces/territories - that is the number of children subsidized at a given point in time - are not available

An additional 9,420 children received Ontario Works subsidies for unregulated care.

Number of centres and homes

Number of child care centres	4,175
Full day	3,869
Part-day nursery schools/preschools	1,599
Stand-alone school-age programs	1,293
Number of family child care providers	7,716
Number of family child care agencies	144

Note: Child care centres may be licensed to offer more than one program (e.g., a before-and-after school program for school-age children and a full-day program for preschool-age children). As a result, a number of individual centres will appear in more than one category above.

Sponsorship of full-time regulated centre spaces

Not-for-profit	161,233
For-profit	48,894

Note: The not-for-profit category includes municipally-operated centres. Current figures are not available for the number of municipally-operated child care spaces. In 1998, however, 18,143 of the non-profit spaces were municipal.

Sponsorship of regulated private-home day care agencies

	Agencies	Homes
Not-for-profit	129	7,297
For-profit	15	419
Total	144	7,716

Note: This includes municipally-operated family child care agencies and homes. See previous note.

Openings and closings

New child care centre licences issued	390
Number of child care centre closures	243
Number of new licences issued to family child care agencies	7
Number of family child care agencies who ceased providing care	5

Note: Number of new licences issued and centres or agencies closed include those that have relocated or have had a change in ownership.

STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

REGULATED CENTRES

Maximum centre size	Not specified
----------------------------	---------------

Maximum staff: child ratios and group sizes

Age	Staff:child ratios	Max. group sizes
0-18 mos	3:10	10
18 mos-2.5 yrs	1:5	15
2.5-5 yrs	1:8	16
3 yrs 8 mos-5yrs	1:10 (with Director's* approval)	20
5-6 yrs	1:12	24
6-10 yrs	1:15	30

*Director is an employee of the Ministry appointed by the Minister as a Director for the purposes of the Day Nurseries Act.

Note: See RECENT DEVELOPMENTS section for changes to age groups for kindergarten and school-age children, effective November 2006.

Staff qualification requirements

Centre supervisors must have a two year diploma in early childhood education from an approved College of Applied Arts and Technology (CAAT) or the equivalent and at least two years experience working in a day nursery with children who are of the same age and developmental level as the children in the day nursery where the supervisor is employed.

One staff person with each group of children must have a two year early childhood education diploma from a CAAT or the equivalent.

A Ministry Director has the authority to approve exceptions to the educational requirements for supervisors and other staff in a specific program.

Parent involvement

Each centre and family child care agency must have a written statement regarding parent involvement. The type of parental involvement is not specified.

Licensing, monitoring and enforcement

Ministry Program Advisors based in Regional Offices license, monitor and enforce *The Day Nurseries Act and Regulations*.

Program Advisors are not required to have training in early childhood education.

The annual licence renewal process includes an inspection of the child care facility to determine whether it is in compliance with the regulatory standards. Some licence renewals are conducted more frequently if the licence is provisional or short term. Unannounced drop-in visits are also conducted. Noncompliance with the legislation that does not pose an immediate threat to the children's well-being may result in a provisional licence with a time frame in which the operator is required to correct the noncompliance. Repeated noncompliance of a serious nature or noncompliance that poses a likely danger to the children may result in a refusal to renew or a revocation of the licence. However, the Director must give notice of intent to close the centre to the operator who then has the right to appeal to the Licence Appeal Tribunal. The legislation provides the authority for immediate closure in the situation of immediate danger to the children's well-being.

REGULATED FAMILY CHILD CARE

In Ontario, family child care has historically been referred to as "private-home day care" in provincial legislation. The terms "home child care" or "family child care" are also used.

Regulation

The Ministry licenses family child care agencies that then enter into agreements with caregivers to provide child care. The agencies provide supervision as specified in the regulations.

Maximum capacity

Care for up to five children from 0-12 years. Not more than two of the children may be under two years, and not more than three of the children may be under three years

or five children under six including the caregiver's own children only when they are less than six years. Not more than two may be children with special needs. Only one child with special needs may be cared for if there is one other child under two years of age or two children over two years of age.

When the caregiver's children are less than six years, she/he may still have five children in addition to her own by caring for school-aged children over six years. For example, a caregiver who has 2 children ages three and four may also care for three children under six years and two children over six years.

Provider qualification requirements

No caregiver training qualifications are specified in provincial regulations. Regulation requires caregivers to be older than 18 years and, if working with children with special needs, to hold a standard first-aid certificate. Many agencies provide training for caregivers.

Caregivers are supervised by agency staff called home visitors who are required to have completed a post-secondary program in child development or family studies and to have at least two years experience working with children who are of the same age and developmental levels as the children cared for by the agency where the person is employed.

Licensing, monitoring and enforcement

The agency home visitor is required to conduct quarterly in-home supervisory visits. The agency is responsible for ensuring that legislated requirements are met.

As part of agency licensing inspection, provincial program advisors inspect a sample of homes to determine whether the agency is in compliance with *The Day Nurseries Act and Regulations*.

FUNDING

CHILD CARE FEE SUBSIDY PROGRAM

Fee subsidies are paid directly to regulated non-profit and for-profit service providers on behalf of eligible parents. In Ontario, 47 Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSM) or District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSAB) (these are usually municipal or regional governments) and Native Bands administer the fee subsidy program. These pay at least 20% of the approved cost of fee subsidies. Ontario has waived cost sharing for municipalities on funds received through the 2003 Multilateral ELCC agreement (see Recent Developments) and on Best Start funding from 2005/06 onward.

As of January 2007, MCYS implemented an income test to determine eligibility for fee subsidy (see RECENT DEVELOPMENTS for details). The province does not set maximum subsidy levels.

There is no provincial minimum user fee.

The provincial government permits subsidization up to the full cost of the program. However, in practice, some municipalities set maximum subsidy rates.

Municipalities may allocate a specified number of subsidized spaces to particular programs or may allow them to float.

There is a province-wide cap on the total subsidy budget rather than on the number of subsidized spaces available. Lengthy waiting lists of parents eligible for subsidies exist in some communities but some do not maintain waiting lists.

Fee subsidies for all children including those with special needs are determined on the basis of 80% contribution by the provincial government and 20% contribution by local governments with the exception of fee subsidies funded under new federal funds from 2005/06 onwards.

Special needs resourcing is split 80/20 between the province and municipalities with the exception of special needs resourcing funded under the new federal funds from 2005/06 onwards.

See RECENT DEVELOPMENTS section for average net income of families receiving subsidies, as a result of change to income test effective January 2007.

PUBLIC FUNDING FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE (2005/06)

Wage subsidy funding may be paid to full and part-time permanent staff in:

- non-profit and for-profit licensed child care centres;
- non-profit and for-profit private-home day care agencies;
- non-profit special needs resourcing agencies; and
- non-profit family resource centres.

Private-home day care providers may be eligible to receive the provider enhancement grant (a portion of wage subsidy) if they are associated with a licensed private-home day care agency. Private-home day care providers are not employees of private-home day care agencies.

PROVINCIAL EXPENDITURES FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE (2005/2006)

Fee subsidies

Regular fee subsidies	\$323,700,000
Ontario Works subsidies (regulated)	*24,200,000

*Note that this category was not included in the 2001 data for Ontario as the breakdown of Ontario Works subsidies for regulated and unregulated child care was not available.

Recurring funding

Wage subsidies	**\$138,000,000
Special needs resourcing	48,200,000
Total	534,100,000

** Includes wage subsidy funding (\$123.2M), Broader Public Sector pay equity funding (\$1.2 M) and pay equity funding for eligible non-profit child care service providers as per Memorandum of Settlement (\$13.6 M).

Other

Resource Centres	\$8,100,000
Ontario Works child care (unregulated care)	7,300,000
Ontario Early Years Centres	64,300,000

Federal Transfers 2005/06

Multilateral Framework	\$87,500,000
Early Learning and Child Care Agreement	271,900,000

The Early Learning and Child Care funding is not included in the provincial allocation. In 2005/06, \$296 million in the form of unconditional grants was provided to municipalities under Best Start to support child care capital expansion and operating costs. Municipalities were to spend the funds for operating funds, fee subsidies, special needs resourcing, wage subsidies and wage improvement. Information is not available to identify how or in what year the funds were spent.

SALARIES

Ontario does not collect wage information.

Mean gross hourly wage for centre-based child care staff (full and part-time staff combined) (1998)

Assistant teachers	\$10.60
Teachers	13.48
Teacher-directors	17.48
Administrative directors	22.00

Source: You Bet I Care! More recent information not available.

FEES

Ontario does not collect fee information.

Median monthly parent fees for full-time centre-based care (1998)

Infants (Age 1-17 mos.)	\$783
Toddlers (Age 18 mos. - 3 yrs)	603
Preschool (Age 3 - 5.11 yrs)	541
School-age	Not available

Source: You Bet I Care! More recent information not available.

Average daily fee in family child care

Information not available

ADMINISTRATION

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services is responsible for developing policy and legislation, coordinating planning, licensing programs and monitoring compliance with the regulations.

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services is a decentralized ministry. Licensing and monitoring of programs is the responsibility of nine Regional Offices. The Early Learning and Child Development Branch is responsible for policy and legislation development.

Administration of all funds has become the responsibility of municipal governments (see section following).

MUNICIPAL OR OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROLE

Responsibility for managing delivery of child care services lies with 47 Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) or District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs). (These are usually municipal or regional governments.)

The transfer of responsibility was completed on January 1, 2000 and was authorized by amendments to *The Day Nurseries Act*.

This change meant that 20% of funding for wage subsidies, resource centres and special needs resourcing is paid by local governments, whereas 100% of these funds were previously paid by the provincial government.

Ontario has waived cost sharing for municipalities on funds received through the 2003 Multilateral Agreement on ELCC (see RECENT DEVELOPMENTS) and on Best Start funding from 2005/06 onward.

In addition, Ontario municipal governments operate regulated child care, a role they have played since the time of World War II.

Of the 47 CMSMs/DSSABs, 27 directly operate child care, and 20 do not. Of the 27, 21 operate child care centres and 13 operate regulated private home child care*.

Beginning in 1992, school boards also were authorized to operate child care services; however, very few do so.

The Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA), in operation since 1950, works to “build members’ (municipal governments and non-profit social service organizations) capacity to plan, manage and deliver quality human services in their communities”.

*Source: Survey by the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA).

CHILD CARE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The provincial government requires local governments to develop local service plans including service targets and levels according to provincial guidelines on local service planning. Although these are three year service plans (MCYS), Regional Offices review them on an annual basis.

Under the Best Start initiative, Community Best Start Networks were established and required to submit long-term plans outlining how the Best Start vision would be achieved in their communities. See HISTORY section for more information on Best Start.

OTHER ECEC SERVICES

Early Years Centres

The Ontario Early Years Centres offer a common set of programs and services for children and parents/caregivers including:

- Early learning activities for children, such as literacy and numeracy;
- Parent resources, information and training on topics such as healthy child development;
- Pre and post natal resources, information and training;
- Outreach to encourage parent participation;
- Monitoring program effectiveness and tracking community progress in improving child development outcomes; and
- Information about and linkages to services external to the Centre.

Ontario Works child care

Ontario Works child care funds may be used to cover either the cost of regulated child care as a transition measure where participants are in employment assistance activities or are entering the paid labour market or payment for unregulated child care arrangements or alternatives to child care (e.g., summer camp, supervised homework programs, recreation programs) up to established maximums.

Whether the payment goes to the parent or to a service provider is determined by each local government.

Learning, Earning and Parenting is a program within Ontario Works which supports young parents on social assistance and includes high school, parenting courses, career counseling, job preparation and child care.

HISTORY OF CHILD CARE AND OTHER ECEC SERVICES

1881 Establishment of The Crèche in Toronto.

1883 Establishment of Canada's first public kindergarten by the Toronto Board of Education.

1887 Kindergarten for three to five year olds was recognized in the *Education Act*.

1926 Establishment of the University of Toronto's Institute of Child Study and its laboratory school, St. George's Nursery, to train nursery school teachers.

1942 Ontario was one of two provinces to sign the Dominion-Provincial War-Time Agreement with the federal government, enabling 50% cost-sharing for nurseries for children whose mothers were employed in essential war industries. The Day Nurseries Branch was established to administer funding and to support the development of new nurseries.

1945 Twenty-eight day nurseries in Ontario serviced 900 preschool children in 44 "school units" which served approximately 2,500 children. At the end of the War, federal funding was withdrawn and the province threatened to close all centres.

1946 The Day Nursery and Day Care Parents' Association in Toronto successfully lobbied to keep the day nurseries open.

The Day Nurseries Act was passed, providing provincial funds to cover 50% of net operating costs of child care programs and a system of licensing and regular inspection for centres. It provided Canada's first child care regulation.

1950 The Nursery Education Association of Ontario (now the Association of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario) was established.

1950s Kindergarten for four year olds was introduced in Toronto as a transition to school for immigrant children.

1966 The introduction of the federal Canada Assistance Plan resulted in the provision of fee subsidies in Ontario for low-income families.

1974 Ontario's first major policy statement on child care called it a welfare service for those in social/financial need.

The Day Care Reform Action Alliance successfully fought the Birch Proposals, the provincial government's proposed reduction in staff/child ratios and other standards to reduce costs.

1978 *The Day Nurseries Act* was amended to require licensing of private-home day care agencies. The Regulation was amended in 1984 to provide requirements for private-home day care.

1980 The Ontario Coalition for Better Day Care (later Child Care) formed to advocate for public funding for universally accessible, high quality, non-profit child care.

1987 In *New Directions for Day Care*, a Liberal government promised a "comprehensive policy that recognizes child care as a basic public service, not a welfare service". A three year plan to provide additional funds to expand non-profit child care programs was announced. In the next few years, there was considerable expansion of non-profit child care, a Direct Operating Grant directed primarily to wages and to non-profit programs was introduced and policy work on flexible hours and rural child care was undertaken. A policy to include space for child care in all new schools was announced. Provincial pay equity legislation was proclaimed but did not include child care staff in centres where no male comparator was available.

1991 An NDP government made two announcements that reflected its intention to establish growth in the non-profit sector: a Wage Enhancement Grant for workers in non-profit care as a "down payment" on including child care staff in pay equity and a strategy to encourage commercial programs to convert to non-profit status.

1992 The provincial government released *Child Care Reform in Ontario: Setting the Stage*, which stated four basic principles as the basis for child care reform: quality, affordability, accessibility, and sound management. The consultation paper promised dramatic reform of child care in Ontario with the goal of making high quality child care accessible to every family. New legislation was to be developed by the end of 1994.

The provincial government also released the Ontario Child Care Management Framework, establishing a context for the development of new programs and changes to existing programs.

School boards were granted eligibility to hold licences to operate child care programs.

As part of the Jobs Ontario Training Fund, 8,200 child care subsidies, fully funded by the province, were targeted to assist unemployed parents looking for work or participating in job training programs.

1994 The report of The Royal Commission on Learning recommended introduction of early childhood education programs for all three, four and five year olds as part of the education system.

Pay equity for child care staff was introduced through the “proxy method”; funds for non-profit programs to comply were to be provided by the provincial government.

1995 The provincial government announced a major pilot project, the Early Years Program, the first step toward a “seamless day” for four and five year olds. School boards were asked to submit proposals for pilot status.

June 1995 A Conservative government was elected. Their platform, the Common Sense Revolution, promised to change the direction in child care made during the two previous (Liberal and NDP) governments.

Before the end of 1995, the following changes were made:

- The proxy fund for pay equity for staff in non-profit child care centres was capped
- The Program Development Fund (start-up and minor capital) was eliminated
- Major capital funding was cancelled
- Funding that supported inclusion of child care facilities in new school sites was cancelled
- The Conversion (to non-profit) Program was cancelled
- The Early Years Program (to pilot a “seamless day” for four and five year olds) was cancelled
- The policy limiting new subsidies to non-profit programs was cancelled
- Jobs Ontario subsidies (fully-funded by the province) changed to 80-20% provincial-municipal cost-sharing.

1996 The proxy mechanism that allowed child care staff to benefit from the *Pay Equity Act* was eliminated.

A review of the child care program was conducted by the Ministry of Community, Family and Children’s Services. The Ministry produced *Improving Child Care in Ontario* in September 1996. Its proposals included:

- Reduction of Wage Subsidy for staff in non-profit centres and resource centres
- Minor capital (50/50 cost-shared) which included for-profit child care for the first time
- Less frequent monitoring
- An increase in the preschool staff/child ratio
- An increase in the number of school-aged children permitted in regulated family day care

- A change in cost-sharing 87/13 to 80/20 for special needs children
- Introduction of user fees in resource centres.

Note: Not all of these proposals were implemented.

1998 The government made amendments to the *Day Nurseries Act* through the *Services Improvement Act* outlining how delivery and additional funding responsibility for child care services would be transferred to local governments. Previously, 20% of municipal funding had been discretionary and was limited to fee subsidies with the provincial government paying for 100% of the other items.

The government announced its intent to transfer licensing to the local level. However, the authority for licensing was not included in the *Services Improvement Act* and no date for transfer was set.

The Ministry began developing a child care information system, the Child Care Data Warehouse, in collaboration with municipalities for local program delivery and for centralized performance-related data collection (note that the data were never centralized).

A Workplace Tax Incentive was introduced to encourage businesses in building and renovating onsite and community-based child care facilities. Corporations may receive a tax deduction of 30% of qualifying expenditures and unincorporated businesses may receive a 5% refundable tax credit.

A new funding formula for Ontario education was introduced. The new funding formula meant that school boards experienced shortfalls leading to new rent and other charges for early childhood services, as well as withdrawal of school board support for services considered not to be “education” as defined by the *Education Act*. The shortfalls, calculated to be massive in some boards, meant that schools would be closed and consolidated. Accurate statistics were not available but it was estimated that as many as a third to a half of Ontario child care centres were located in school space. Previous provincial governments pursued a policy, introduced in the late 1980s and ended in 1995, of locating child care centres in all new schools.

The Child Care Supplement for Working Families was established. It used funds made available through the National Child Benefit initiative, and additional provincial funds, to provide financial assistance to low and

modest income families with children under the age of seven. Eligible families included those with earned income of at least \$5,000, or eligible child care expenses. This included families where both parents are working or in school/training, single parents who are working or attending school/training and working families where one parent stays at home. The maximum annual benefit per child was raised to \$1,100 per child in 1999 from \$1,020 per child in 1998.

A national study of wages, working conditions and quality, *You Bet I Care!*, found that – based on a sample of full-time centres for children 0-6 years and regulated family child care – Ontario scored 4.9 on the ECERS-R (preschool rooms), 4.1 on the ITERS (infant rooms), and 3.9 on the FDCRS (family child care). The scale ranges from 1-7 (excellent).

1999 The proxy mechanism that allowed child care staff to benefit from the *Pay Equity Act*, eliminated in 1996, was reinstated following a court challenge by the Equal Pay Coalition. Retroactive payments were made to eligible non-profit child care programs as a lump sum pay equity adjustment sent out in early 1999.

The government discontinued dedicated funding for proxy pay equity, and rolled its existing commitment into the base budgets of eligible transfer payment agencies.

Report of the *Early Years Study*, commissioned by the provincial government and led by Dr. Fraser Mustard and the Hon. Margaret McCain, was released. It concluded that the development in the first six years of a child's life sets the foundation for lifelong learning, behaviour and health. It recommended the establishment of Early Childhood Development and Parenting Centres that are “accessible, affordable and optional for all children and families in Ontario from conception to entry into Grade 1 in the school system”. It further recommended that these become available for all children within five years, by 2004.

A Task Group is appointed “to advise the government on key elements and standards for an Early Years Program”.

The Early Years Challenge Fund, a matching fund that challenges businesses, volunteer and charitable groups to “help communities promote early childhood development and parenting programs” was announced.

A study by KPMG, a consulting firm, found that the shortage of child care spaces is a major obstacle to people obtaining a job under Ontario Works, the provincial workfare program.

2000 In September, the Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services amended the regulation under the *Day Nurseries Act* to allow child care fee subsidies to flow to parents in need with children ages 6-12 (up to age 18 for children with special needs) enrolled in unregulated recreation programs. These will have purchase of service agreements with the local government or authority.

In November, the provincial government launched Ontario's Promise, a program to promote public/private partnerships and volunteers in fulfilling five “promises to children”. Ontario's Promise was based on an American program called America's Promise.

A Minister's policy statement on eligible hours of care is issued. It requires that child care fee subsidies and Ontario Works child care assistance be used only for these periods when child care is actually required for parents to work or attend school.

The provincial Education Improvement Commission (Ministry of Education) proposed full-day kindergarten for four and five year olds and expanding regulated child care for younger children rather than cash payments to parents.

2001 The provincial government launched its Early Years Plan for children 0-6 which “fulfilled the new way of thinking outlined in the Mustard-McCain study”.

Ontario received \$114 million for the first year from the federal/provincial Early Childhood Development Initiative. Of the \$114 million, \$30 million is announced to establish Early Years Centres across Ontario, places where “parents can go to find the answers to questions they have about their children.” There was one per provincial riding. In addition, funds were earmarked for the Early Years Challenge Fund, pregnant women with addictions, Community Health Centres, sexual assault services, autism, children's mental health, to teen parent programming, Program Effectiveness Management, Injury and Family Abuse Prevention, and others. None of the money was spent on “early learning and care” in Ontario.

The provincial government tightened eligibility criteria for subsidized child care; hardest hit were student parents.

In December, the Provincial Auditor's Report on education stated that school boards in Ontario were spending \$95 million more than they receive from the government on special education services.

Five unions challenged the government's decision not to finance proxy pay equity under the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, arguing that the lack of dedicated funding for proxy pay equity was discriminatory.

2001/02 The government invested some of the federal government's Early Childhood Development funding in the creation of 103 Ontario Early Years Centres. The majority of the then-226 family resource centres receiving ministry funding either became an Ontario Early Years Centre, dissolved and came under the governance of an Ontario Early Years Centre, or established a purchase-of-service agreement with an Ontario Early Years Centre, while a few closed.

2002 In August, Dr. Fraser Mustard and the Hon. Margaret McCain released their follow-up report, *The Early Years Study – Three Years Later*. This report stated that the Ontario government had not responded to the recommendations from their previous 1999 report. It noted the failure to support child care as part of the Early Years strategy.

2003

March The Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care was released by federal, provincial, and territorial social services ministers for regulated early learning and child care programs for children under the age of six. Ontario's share for 2003/04 was \$9.7 million and \$58.2 million in 2004/05.

April A Memorandum of Settlement was reached between the province and five unions to provide provincial funding to eligible service providers and organizations, including child care programs with outstanding and ongoing proxy pay equity obligations. (See 2000 for background). The settlement provided both base and one-time funding for eligible child care organizations with current proxy pay equity wage adjustment liabilities between January 1, 1999 and March 31, 2006 (funds flowed to municipalities).

October In a provincial election, a Liberal government was elected. Its platform for young children was called "Best Start"; it was a long-term plan "to promote healthy development and early learning and child care for Ontario children so they arrive at school ready to learn". One of the goals was to create a universal regulated child care system as a "seamless extension of our public education system". It also promised to provide an additional \$300 million for regulated child care.

The Ministry of Children's Services was established. (The name was subsequently changed to Ministry of Children and Youth Services in March 2004). The new ministry became fully operational on April 1, 2004. It now has responsibility for children's programs that were formerly under the Ministry of Community and Social Services (e.g., child care, early years, children's mental health, child welfare, special needs, etc.), youth justice services formerly under the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, and some services formerly under the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (e.g., children's treatment centres, etc.).

2004

January \$9.7 million federal dollars from the Multilateral Framework agreement were directed on a one-time basis to regulated, non-profit child care centres and private-home day care agencies for capital improvements and repairs/maintenance through the purchase of furnishings and equipment.

July The government announced that the \$58.2 million in 2004/05 federal Early Learning and Child Care funds through the Multilateral Framework Agreement would be used to create up to an additional 4,000 new subsidized child care spaces with a priority on preschool-aged children, and to further stabilize the regulated child care system.

November The government announced its Best Start Strategy. Under Best Start, there was to be a major expansion of child care during non-school hours for children enrolled in junior and senior kindergarten. Ontario's long-term vision, to be delivered over the next 10 to 15 years, is to extend wrap-around child care programs, first to four and five year olds, and then to children aged 2.5 – four years for whom a full-day made up of universal part-day preschool with wrap-around part-day child care (to make up a full day) will be developed. Schools are a preferred site for these child care programs. The subsidy system will be revamped.

Other child care components of Best Start include:

- Panel on Early Learning Framework
- Panel on Quality and Human Resources
- Establishment of a College of Early Childhood Educators
- Flexibility in eligibility requirements for child care fee subsidies
- Review of child care financing

The government also announced the following changes to child care fee subsidies (these took effect December 1, 2004): Municipalities are able to determine the amount of subsidized child care to provide, so will be able to include social need, study/preparation time in relation to education or training for parents, and other parental needs beyond participation in activities (e.g., illness/disability, and other special circumstances). In addition, Registered Education Savings Plans (RESPs) and Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs) are no longer considered liquid assets under the needs test for child care fee subsidies, and families are able to claim contributions as allowable expenditures when determining how much they are able to contribute to the cost of child care.

These changes reversed changes made to child care by the previous government.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CHILD CARE AND OTHER ECEC SERVICES

Winter 2004 Further details on Best Start were announced. Once fully implemented, it is intended to provide:

- An integrated approach to early learning and care that is seamless for both the child and family
- A significant expansion of child care
- Additional child care subsidies
- A sliding-scale income test to determine eligibility for a child care subsidy
- A part-day preschool early learning program for children 2.5 to 4 years of age at no cost to parents
- Early and ongoing screening of all children with appropriate referrals to intervention. This includes the Healthy Babies Healthy Children program, provided by public health nurses and lay home visitors, screening and assessment services, a home visiting service and service co-ordination to families with children identified as at-risk
- A comprehensive 18-month well baby check-up
- Early learning and care hubs to integrate screening, assessment and access to services, intended to offer a single point of access to services and supports based on local needs and available resources

2005 Ontario Early Years Centres (OEYC) participated in a service implementation review. Findings from 2004/05 showed that OEYCs had 2 million visits by children and 1.4 million visits by parents and caregivers.

March The government announced three demonstration Best Start projects in the District of Timiskaming, the east end of Hamilton; and the rural areas of Lambton and Chatham-Kent.

March A conceptual model of a College of ECEs, promised by the provincial government, was released.

July The community planning process for Best Start was launched and all Ontario municipalities were provided with their three-year Best Start targets and allocations. Forty-seven Best Start Networks and four Regional French language Best Start Networks were established to lead the planning and implementation of Best Start at the local level.

October Ontario municipalities submitted Best Start Transition Plans (developed in collaboration with the Best Start Networks) which outlined plans for the expansion of spaces and subsidies in 2005/06.

November Ontario was to receive \$271.9 million through the Early Learning and Child Care Agreement in 2005/06 and \$252.9 million in 2006/07 (as part of a signed five-year \$1.9 billion Agreement with the Government of Canada) to deliver a comprehensive early learning and child care program to Ontario families, including greater access to more high quality, licensed child care spaces.

November The Ministry commenced a three-month pilot test to collect data on fee subsidy clients throughout Ontario to better understand the expected outcomes of the proposed sliding-scale income test model for the determination of child care fee subsidies.

2005/06 \$296M was provided to Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSM) and District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSAB) as unconditional grants.

2005/06 The Panel on The Early Learning Framework and the Panel on Quality and Human Resources continued their work.

2006

January Best Start Networks, in collaboration with the Regional French-language Networks, Municipalities and District School Boards, developed their *Phase One Integrated Implementation Plans* outlining their long-term vision for Best Start (2006–2007/08 and onwards)

March The federal government terminated the existing bilateral ELCC agreements signed by the provinces as of March 31, 2007. The Government of Canada announced it would transfer funds for one year, 2006/07, at the level set out in *Budget 2005* to all provincial and territorial governments. Ontario announced that it will use the final federal payment funds to support the almost 15,000 new child care spaces that will be implemented by September 2006 in addition to the 4,000 subsidized child care spaces that were created in 2004/05.

November Age definitions for kindergarten and school age children were amended as follows:

Age of child	Staff: child ratio	Group size
44 months of age or over and up to and including 67 months of age as of August 31 of the year	1 to 10	20
56 months of age or over and up to and including 67 months of age as of August 31 of the year	1 to 12	24
68 months of age or over as of August 31 of the year and up to and including 12 years of age	1 to 15	30

2006/07 \$122.5M was made available for Best Start. This includes funding from the 2003 Multilateral Framework on ELCC and \$63.5M as a result of the reallocation of the 2005 ELCC Agreement.

2007

January Effective January 1, 2007 amendments to O. Reg. 262 under the *Day Nurseries Act* enabled Ontario to introduce an income-test to determine eligibility for child care fee subsidies, to replace the previously used needs-test. Under the income-test, families with net income up to \$20,000 will be eligible for a full subsidy for child care. For families in receipt of a subsidy, family contribution toward the cost of child care will be calculated based on 10% of their net income over \$20,000 plus an additional 20% of net income over \$40,000. Assuming an average daily child care fee of \$43, the following chart shows what a family receiving a fee subsidy would pay for child care under the income test. No family would pay more than the total cost of child care.

Net family income	Daily child care fee for licensed child care for subsidized families as of January 1st, 2007 (Rounded to the nearest dollar)
\$20,000	\$ 0
\$30,000	\$4.00
\$40,000	\$8.00
\$50,000	\$19.00
\$60,000	\$31.00
\$70,000	\$42.00

June The reports of the panel on The Early Learning Framework and the panel on Quality and Human Resources were released. (Available online at www.children.gov.on.ca).

■ KEY PROVINCIAL ECEC ORGANIZATIONS

Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care
489 College Street, Suite 206
Toronto, ON M6G 1A5
Telephone: 416-538-0628
Facsimile: 416-538-6737
Website: www.childcareontario.org

Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario
40 Orchard View Blvd., Suite 211
Toronto, ON M4R 1B9
Telephone: 416-487-3157
Facsimile: 416-487-3758
Website: www.aeceo.ca

Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario
P.O. Box 208, Foxboro, ON, K0K 2B0
Telephone: 613-395-6111 / 1-800-567-7075

Facsimile: 613-395-6111
Website: www.childcaretoday.ca

TEACHERS' ORGANIZATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS

Consultants/Coordinators' Association of Primary Educators
c/o Peel District School Board
5650 Hurontario St., Mississauga, ON L5R1C
Telephone: 905-890-1099
Facsimile: 905-890-6747
Website: www.capeonline.ca

Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario
480 University Ave., Ste.1000, Toronto, ON M5G 1V2
Telephone: 416-962-3836
Facsimile: 416-642-2424
Website: www.etfo.ca

Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association
65 St. Clair Ave. E., Suite 400, Toronto, ON M4T 2Y8
Telephone: 416-925-2493
Facsimile: 416-925-7764
Website: www.oecta.on.ca

Ontario Teachers' Federation
1300 Yonge Street, Suite 200
Toronto, ON M4T 1X3
Telephone: 416-966-3424
Facsimile: 416-966-5450
Website: www.otffeo.on.ca

Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens
681, chemin Belfast, Ottawa (Ontario) K1G 0Z4
Tél. : 613-244-2336 / 1-800-267-4217
Télééc. : 613-563-7718 / 1-888-609-7718
Website: <http://franco.ca/aefo/>

People for Education
P.O Box 64 Station P. Toronto, ON M5S 2S6
Telephone: 416-534-0100
Website: www.peopleforeducation.com

