

# TRENDS & ANALYSIS

## Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2004

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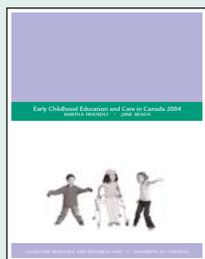
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#### *Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2004.*

Martha Friendly, Jane Beach.  
April 2005. 212pp.

Available on line from the Childcare Resource and Research Unit web site at [www.childcarecanada.org](http://www.childcarecanada.org). Print copies may be ordered online, or directly from the Unit. See the web site for details.

This *Trends and Analysis* provides insight into trends in early childhood education and care in Canada using data from provincial/territorial governments, the federal government, community groups and published sources over more than a decade. It also summarizes the more detailed information found in the full publication *Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2004*.

For more than a decade, the Childcare Resource and Research Unit at the University of Toronto has compiled data and information about child care policy and services on a regular basis. The publication that is now *ECEC in Canada* grew from a "provincial fact sheets" format to *Child Care in Canada: Provinces and Territories*, then to a broader conception of "early childhood education and care" (ECEC) or "early learning and child care". *Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2004* is the 6th version to be published (1989, 1992, 1995, 1998, 2001 and 2004).

### THE POLICY CONTEXT

In the past two years – 2003 and 2004 – there has been unprecedented recognition of early learning and child care in national policy initiatives. Building on the 2003 Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care, a strong commitment to a national early learning and child care program (ELCC) was part of the Liberal platform in the June 2004 election. This committed to build – over time – a "national program" based on four principles: Quality, Universality, Accessibility and Developmental (ness) "...with flexibility - provided that provinces meet the QUAD principles".

A key contributor to the current context for early learning and child care, or early childhood education and care (ECEC), has been international interest in it as an important foundation for achieving societal goals. International organizations including the United Nations, the European Union and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as well as researchers in fields from economics to health promotion have identified ECEC as a fundamental factor in child development, as essential for women's labour force participation and as a way of supporting equity and social justice.

The work on early childhood education and care by the OECD exemplifies these themes. A review of Canadian ECEC – the

17th in a multi-country Thematic Review – was carried out in 2003 and released in the fall of 2004. Describing how Canada has fallen far behind international developments in early childhood education, the OECD observed that Canadian policy approaches at both national and provincial levels are incoherent and ineffective, that ECEC programs are severely underfinanced; and that neither quality nor access are adequate.

**"Over the next decade we must build for Canada's children and parents an early learning and child care system for the 21st century. A Liberal government will create Foundations: The national early learning and child care program".**

– Federal Liberal platform 2004.

As of the spring of 2005, there have been important political and financial commitments and the first federal/provincial agreements but there is as yet no national ECEC program. While the federal government has historically used its spending power to shape the health and social

## DEMOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

programs that fall within provincial jurisdiction (as it has with health care) under Canadian constitutional arrangements, development and regulation of social programs like child care are primarily a provincial responsibility.

**"...It is clear that national and provincial policy for the education and care of young children in Canada is still in its initial stages. Care and education are still treated separately and coverage is low compared to other OECD countries...."**

– OECD Canada Country Note, 2004

Generally, provincial/territorial governments are responsible for ECEC. However, the federal government provides a number of programs of ECEC services targeted to specific populations – Aboriginal people, military families and new Canadians – as well as maternity/parental leave benefits and a tax deduction for child care expenses. Otherwise, the provinces/territories set ECEC policy, financing and service provision. Thus, fourteen Canadian jurisdictions – the federal government, ten provinces and three territories – are involved in ECEC programs. And as "care" and "early learning" are generally separate mandates, in each jurisdiction there are multiple child care, "child development" and early childhood education (for example, kindergarten) programs.

Overall, Canadian ECEC services are either not sensitive to the needs of parents in the labour force (as kindergarten is not) or – like regulated child care – inaccessible to many families because the costs are too high or the services unavailable. And research confirms the OECD's observations that the quality of much of Canada's available regulated child care is less than exemplary. In any case, most young children are cared for in private unregulated arrangements while their parents are at work.

### Number of children

Since 1992, the number of children 0-5 years has decreased in all provinces (note that comparable data are not available for the territories). In Canada as a whole, the 0-5 cohort decreased from 2,257 million in 1992 to 2,046 million in 2003. Most provinces lost population in the 6-12 year age group too although in the largest provinces – ON, AB and BC – the 6-12 year old group increased. As a result, the 6-12 year age group grew somewhat in Canada as a whole – from 2,680 million in 1992 to 2,764 million in 2003.

The percentage decrease in the number of children 0-5 years between 1992 and 2003 ranged from more than –30% (NL), –25% (PE) and –26% (NS) to a decrease of only –.2% in ON. It is interesting to note that in some parts of Canada – most of Atlantic Canada and MB, SK, and AB (in the 0-5 age group only) the size of the child population decreased steadily year after year between 1992 and 2003 whereas in QC, ON, BC, and AB (in the 6-12 age group only), there were up and down fluctuations in child population. And the child population in NL rose slightly between 2001 and 2003, reversing more than a decade of decline.

### Labour force participation rate of mothers

The labour force participation rate of mothers has risen steadily over the years. As Table 1 shows, by 2003, it had risen to 66% for mothers whose youngest child was < 3 years (up 5% since 1995); it had reached 75% for mothers whose youngest child was 3-5 years (an increase of 7%

from 1995); and for mothers whose youngest child was 6-15 years, it had risen 6% since 1995 to 82% [Table 1].

There were considerable differences among provinces in the labour force participation rate of mothers. In 2003, AB had the lowest rate (59%) for mothers with <3 year olds while PE had the highest (78%). PE also had the highest rate for mothers with 3-5 year olds (82%), and for mothers with 6-15 year olds (87%) while NL had the lowest rates for both these age groups (67% for 3-5 year olds and 78% for 6-15 year olds). (See the full publication for details.)

It should be noted that Canada's labour force participation rates for mothers are high when compared to those in many other OECD countries. In France, for example, the labour force participation rate for mothers with at least one child under three years was 55% in 2001. In Australia, it was 47% for mothers with children under three years (2000).

### Children with mothers in the paid labour force

Changes in the number of children with mothers in the paid labour force between 1992 and 2003 are a function of the generally diminishing child population and the increasing labour force participation rate of mothers. In almost every province (except NL), the number of children aged 6-12 with mothers in the paid labour force rose. And while the number of children aged 0-5 with mothers in the paid labour force decreased in every province, due to the rising labour force participation rate of mothers, it decreased less than the

TABLE 1

Labour force participation rate of mothers with children 0-15 years (rounded)

	1995 (%)	1998 (%)	2001 (%)	2003 (%)
With youngest child 0-3 years	61	65	66	66
With youngest child 3-5 years	68	71	73	75
With youngest child 6-15 years	76	78	81	82

decrease in the number of children in that age group overall (see Number of children, above). (In NL, the number of children with mothers in the labour force in all age groups decreased).

## Aboriginal children

The 2001 Census uses the categories "North American Indian, Metis, Inuit, Multiple and Other" for Aboriginal designation. Altogether, there is an estimated total of 269,895 children aged 0-12 identifying with an Aboriginal group (note that the figure for children aged 10-12 was estimated by dividing the 10-14 years category in two).

The proportion of the child population that is Aboriginal varies enormously by province/territory, with 90% of NU's child population identifying as Aboriginal (mostly Inuit), 27% and 25% in SK and MB respectively, and as low as 2% in NL, QC and ON. (See the full publication for details.)

## Children with disabilities

The number of children with disabilities comes from the 2001 Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS). This provides both the number and rate of children with disabilities in three age categories – 0-4 years, 5-9 years and 10-14 years. It is generally assumed to under-represent the number of children with special needs from the perspective of the ECEC field. However, the PALS is the sole



TABLE 2		Number of children with mothers in the paid labour force by province 1992 - 2004 (rounded estimates in 1000s)				
		1992	1995	1998	2001	2004
NL	0-5 yrs	26	22	19	18	17
	6-12 yrs	33	33	30	31	25
PE	0-5 yrs	8	8	8	7	6
	6-12 yrs	9	10	11	10	10
NS	0-5 yrs	44	40	38	40	35
	6-12 yrs	49	53	59	57	51
NB	0-5 yrs	33	30	31	32	28
	6-12 yrs	38	43	44	45	41
QC	0-5 yrs	315	325	325	304	286
	6-12 yrs	305	400	424	469	424
ON	0-5 yrs	539	539	546	538	495
	6-12 yrs	556	711	774	787	730
MB	0-5 yrs	51	55	54	49	46
	6-12 yrs	59	76	79	79	72
SK	0-5 yrs	59	55	47	47	43
	6-12 yrs	57	80	77	66	64
AB	0-5 yrs	149	154	138	135	118
	6-12 yrs	158	211	207	206	198
BC	0-5 yrs	154	162	168	147	148
	6-12 yrs	182	248	234	241	210
TOTAL	0-5 yrs	1,378	1,390	1,375	1,317	1,223
	6-12 yrs	1,456	1,862	1,939	1,991	1,829

comparable Canadian data source for this information so these data are used. According to PALS, the rate of disability in most provinces is in the vicinity of 2-4% of the child population in each age group. In total, the survey records 138,565 children aged 0-12 years as having a special need (half the number of children 10-14 were included in this total).

## Children living in poverty

More than a million children - almost one in six children in Canada – live in poverty. The national child poverty rate is about 15% with most poor children having poor mothers; children from recent immigrant

and Aboriginal families are overrepresented in poverty figures. In a 2004 report (2000 data), the Innocenti Centre of the United Nations placed Canada at 19th – below most of the rest of the OECD countries.

There is considerable variation by province. For children aged 0-2 years, the rate of children living below the Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) ranged from 11.6% in PE to 28.3% in MB; in NB, 11.2% of 3-5 year olds lived below the LICO (the lowest) with 26.8% in SK (highest). And PE had 9.8% of 6-12 year olds below the LICO while 21.9% of 6-12 year olds in NL (the highest rate) were below. (See the full publication for more details.)

## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE PROGRAMS

All provinces and territories provide public kindergarten and regulated child care programs. In regulated child care, there is considerable variation across provinces/territories in the range and scope of services offered, fees, quality, financing, teacher/staff training, wages, and monitoring. Kindergarten programs tend to be somewhat more consistent across jurisdictions. While there are some differences in curricular approaches and in educational expectations, variations in kindergarten are found primarily in amount of provision (full or part-day) and in age eligibility.

### Kindergarten

- In almost all jurisdictions, ministries of education have responsibility for kindergarten.
- Kindergarten is almost always publicly funded with no parent fees.
- Kindergarten is an entitlement in most provinces/territories.
- Kindergarten is primarily for five year olds. In ON, kindergarten is provided for almost all four year olds also. Some other provinces offer limited four year old kindergarten but usually for children described as "at risk".
- Kindergarten is part-time (usually 2.5 hours a day) in most jurisdictions but full school day in three provinces and in some school boards in some provinces.
- In most provinces/territories, kindergarten is not compulsory.
- Generally, educational requirements, wages and working conditions for kindergarten teachers are similar to those of other elementary teachers (a university degree is required). No jurisdiction (except PE where kindergarten is part of the child care system and a two-year ECE diploma is the required qualification) requires specialization in early childhood.
- There are an estimated 334,552 children in five year old kindergarten and an estimated 128,222 in four year old kindergarten, most of whom are in ON.

(Reliable enrolment data are not available from some jurisdictions.)

- Province/territory-wide kindergarten curricula are generally described as play-based or developmentally appropriate.
- Financial data on kindergarten spending are not consistently available.

### Regulated child care

- Generally, a social/community services ministry is responsible for regulated child care.
- Child care is primarily a user pay service financed through various combinations of parent fees, fee subsidies for low income families and some direct funding to programs.
- Capital funding is either quite limited or not available in all provinces/territories.
- An entitlement to service is not a feature in any province/territory.
- All provinces/territories regulate child care centres; unregulated child care centres are not permitted although unregulated nursery schools may be.
- Each province/territory has a mechanism for regulating family child care (care in a provider's home) either through licensed or approved agencies that supervise providers according to a set of regulations or through direct licensing of the individual provider.

• Most family child care operates outside of regulation. All provinces /territories set a maximum number of children who can be cared for in an unregulated family child care setting.

• Six jurisdictions have a distinct regulatory category for nursery schools/preschools; in four jurisdictions, these operate outside of regulation.

• Centre-based care for school-age children is regulated under child care legislation in most provinces/territories.

• Provincial/territorial training/educational requirements for staff in child care centres range from none to a requirement that 2/3 of staff in a centre must have a college diploma in early childhood.

• No jurisdiction requires university-level training for child care centre staff.

• Most Canadian child care (80%) is operated on a not-for-profit basis (usually by community-based or parent organizations with some public operation in ON and QC (school-aged programs). While only 20% of centre-based services are operated for profit, these form a large sector in a few provinces.

• The proportion of for-profit child care has decreased from 30% to 20% since 1992; however, it has increased in four provinces since 2001.

• Inclusion of children with disabilities in regular ECEC services is the preferred

**TABLE 3** ECEC programs under federal jurisdiction

Program	Who's eligible?	Spending
Child minding	Newcomers to Canada enrolled in LINC (language) programs	Not available
Military Family Resource Centres	Military families	\$4 million (for 0-6 years)
Child Care Expense Deduction	All families with children aged 0-16 for work-related ECEC costs	\$545 million
Community Action Programs for Children	Children 0-6 living in "conditions of risk" (May not be ECEC programs).	\$58.5 million

## FAMILY POLICY—MATERNITY AND PARENTAL LEAVE

approach in Canada. Financial support for inclusion is generally available but it is variable and is usually not an entitlement.

### ECEC programs under federal jurisdiction

Federal transfer payments may apply to provincial/territorial ECEC programs. They may be specific (as is the funding through the Multilateral Framework) or general (as through the Canada Social Transfer block fund).

In addition, the federal government takes more direct responsibility for ECEC programs for some populations [Table 3].

### Aboriginal ECEC programs

The federal government assumes responsibility for a variety of Aboriginal ECEC programs.

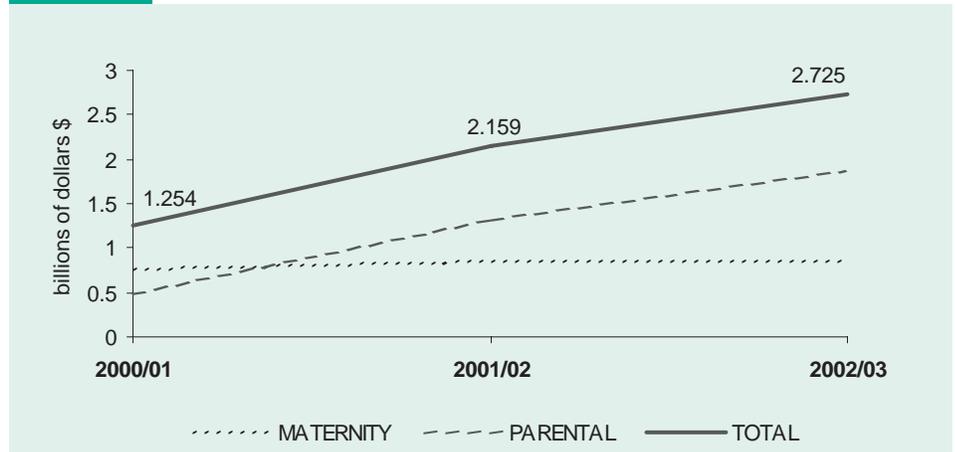
- There are seven federal government programs for Aboriginal ECEC. This includes funds for on-reserve kindergarten as part of elementary education and six child care or "head start" funding programs. These are targeted to specific Aboriginal populations and, in some cases, to specific provinces.

- Aboriginal ECEC programs can be found in all provinces both on and off reserve, as well as in the three territories. There is a total of 425 on-reserve child care centres.

- In six jurisdictions, on-reserve child care is regulated by the province or territory and in eight, provincial/territorial funding is available (in addition to federal funding which is available in all jurisdictions). (See the full publication for further details.)

- Federal spending for the six child care (including head start) programs totaled \$135.7 million in 2003; most of these funds are targeted to communities on-reserve.

**FIGURE 1** Federal expenditure on maternity and parental leave benefits 2000/01 - 2003/04



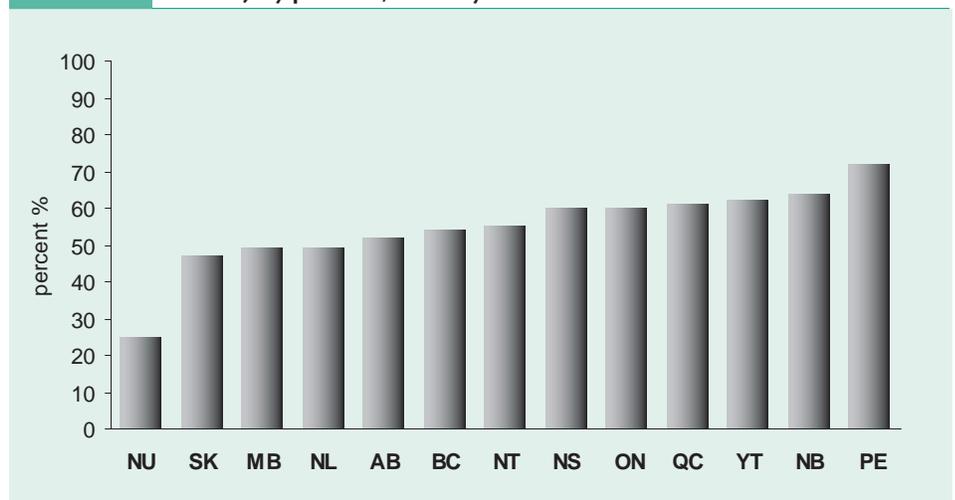
Maternity and parental leave provisions are shared between federal and provincial governments with provinces setting the length and conditions of leave under employment legislation and the federal government providing benefits under Employment Insurance (EI).

In 2001, the federal government increased the parental leave portion of the benefit to 35 weeks (50 weeks combined maternity/parental). All provinces/territories have now amended their employment legislation to allow for an extended parental leave that matches or exceeds the federal benefit period.

The EI benefit pays 55% of wages (up to a ceiling of \$413 in 2005, unchanged from 2001) for eligible workers. It should be noted that for a variety of reasons, including self-employment and the number of hours worked, many new parents are not eligible. In 2005, Quebec and the federal government agreed that Quebec would begin to provide leave benefits for longer duration or at a higher rate and would include self-employed workers in the program.

There are considerable differences among provincial/territorial rates of take-up of maternity leave (by initial claims) [Figure 2].

**FIGURE 2** Take-up of maternity leave (initial maternity leave claims as a percent of births) by province/territory 2003



## ECEC POLICY ISSUES

### Access

Several features of ECEC programs determine whether they are accessible. There has to be a space available, the parent has to be able to afford the fee (if there is a fee) and the program must be appropriate, that is, able to meet the child's and family's needs.

- In Canada as a whole, in 2004, there were enough regulated child care spaces to accommodate 15.5% of children aged 0-12, up from 7.5% in 1992 and from 12.1% in 2001.
- In 2004, there were 745,254 regulated child care spaces across Canada, up 151,824 from 2001 and an increase of

373,741 from 1992. That is, the supply about doubled over 13 years [Figure 3].

- The increase of 151,000 regulated spaces between 2001 to 2004 is much bigger than it was in the preceding decade. In comparison, growth in regulated child care grew by only 77,000 between 1998 and 2001, 91,000 between 1995 and 1998 and 54,000 between 1992 and 1995.

- While much of the increase – 87,000 – or more than half of new spaces between 2001 and 2004 was in QC, there was growth outside QC too. In Canada outside Quebec, there was an increase of 64,997 regulated spaces between 2001-2004. In comparison, there were fewer than 17,000 new spaces across Canada between 1998-2001; an increase of 28,000 between 1995-1998, and an increase of 21,000 between 1992-1995 [Figure 3].

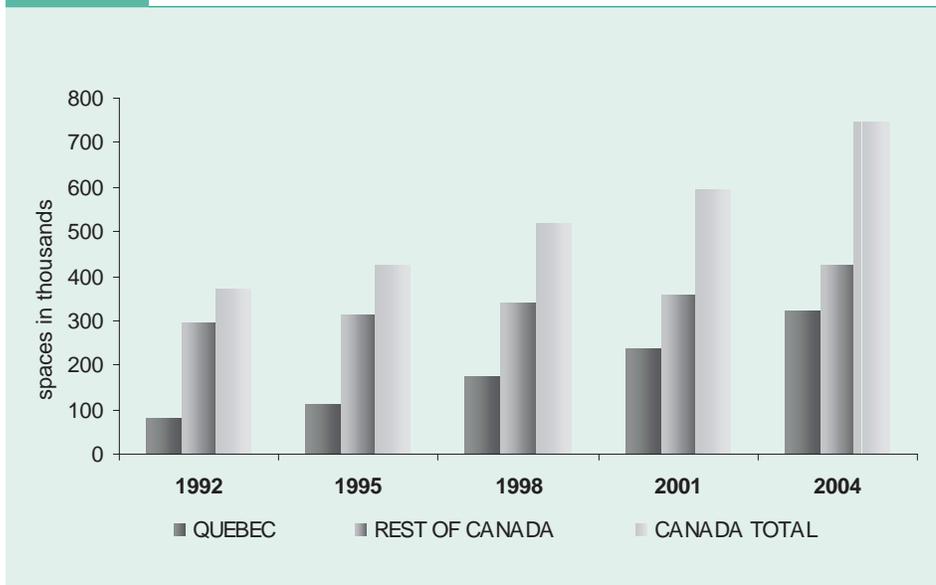
- In 2004, 43% of all regulated spaces were in QC, up from 40% in 2001.

- By province and territory, in 2004, the percent of children 0-12 for whom a regulated space was available ranged from 4.9% in SK to 29.9% in QC [Figure 4].

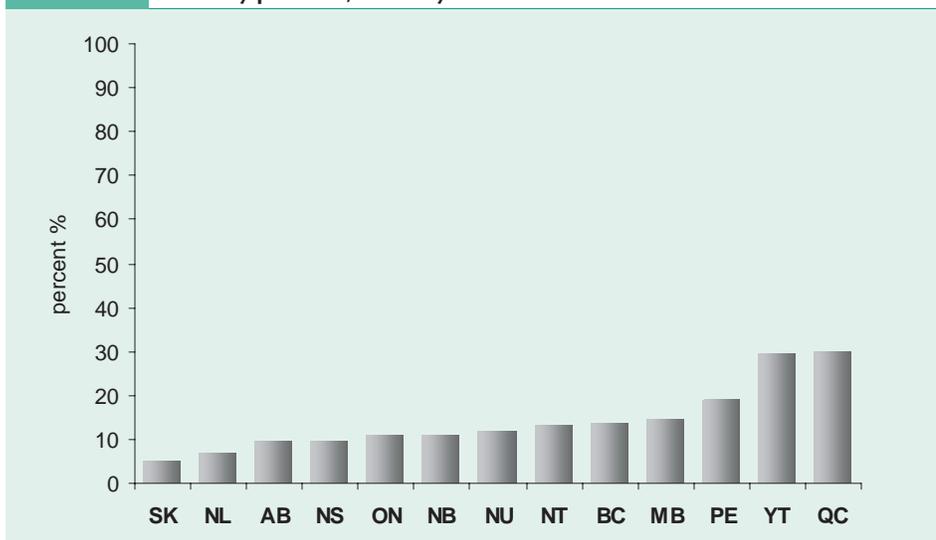
- From 1992 to 2004, the increase in the percent of children for whom a regulated space was available ranged from -4% (a decrease) in AB to 23.1% in QC [Figure 5].

- Considering improvement in access between 2001 to 2004, the increase in the percent of children for whom there was a

**FIGURE 3** Number of regulated child care spaces in Quebec and the rest of Canada 1992-2004



**FIGURE 4** Percent of children 0-12 for whom a regulated child care space is available by province/territory 2004



regulated space increased by less than 2 % in all provinces except QC where it increased by 8.8% and PE, where it increased by 4.9%.

- The percent of children for whom a regulated space is available increased in every province/territory except AB between 1992 and 2004. However, in most provinces the increase in coverage between 1992 and 2004 was very small – the increase was less than 5% in five provinces [Figure 5].

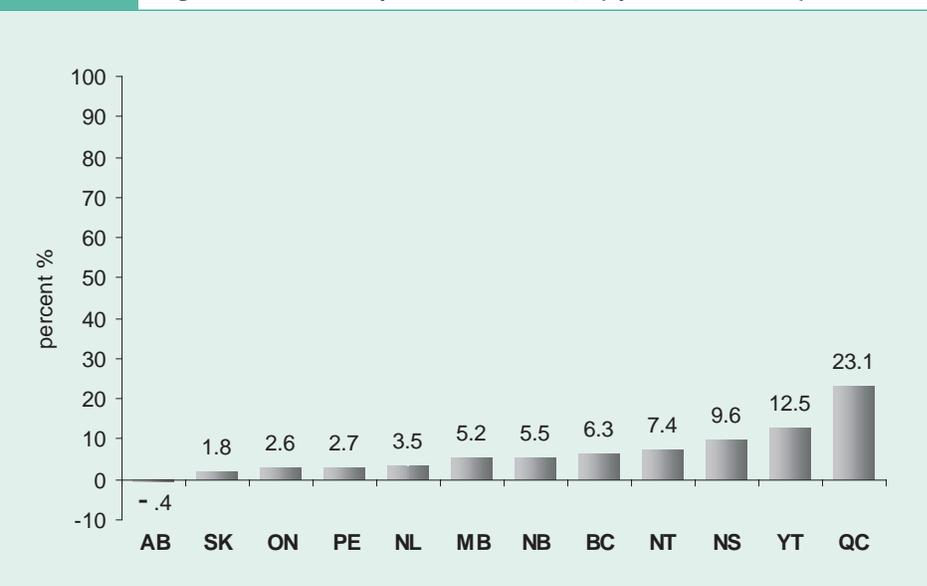
- The supply of regulated child care is often not stable. Data for 2003/04 show that in three jurisdictions, more centres closed than opened. In four more, the ratio of closings to openings was 40% or more (for example, in NS, there were 28 new licenses but 24 centres closed – or a closure rate of 86%.

- Since 2001, subsidy eligibility levels (in non-adjusted dollars) went up in only two provinces: in AB, the eligibility level for a family with one parent and one child rose by \$7,560 and in SK, it rose by \$132. In BC, the subsidy eligibility level was less in 2004 than it was in 2001 (the first time in Canada that subsidy eligibility levels diminished). Subsidy eligibility levels in all other provinces were static.

- When fee subsidy eligibility levels are considered between 1992 and 2004, increases (in actual dollars) ranged from -\$1,992 (BC) (a decrease) to an increase of \$9,370 (AB). There are considerable differences among the provinces in this period in this regard. A number of provinces have not changed eligibility for subsidies since before 1995 or even before 1992 [Figure 6].

- Data on fees that are comparable either across provinces/territories or over time are not available. The most recent cross-Canada fee data is from 1998, from the *You Bet I Care! Study*. In two provinces, fees are set by the provincial government: in QC, parents pay \$7 a day for all ages of children; in MB, the government sets maximum fees by age group (\$18.80/day for 2-5 year olds).

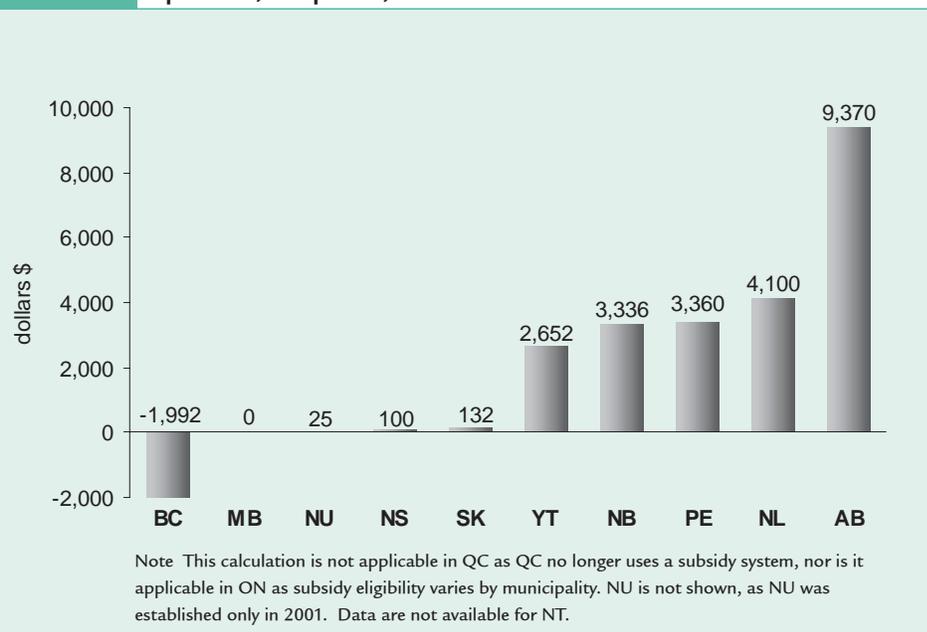
**FIGURE 5** Percentage increase/decrease in coverage (percent of children for whom a regulated child care space was available) by province/territory 1992-2004



- Canadian practice in ECEC programs generally supports inclusion of children with special needs in regular programs. Extra supports may be available to support this. Provinces/territories employ different definitions of disability and for eligibility

for supporting funding so there may be variation in the criteria used by provinces/territories to determine how many children with special needs are in regular child care programs.

**FIGURE 6** Increase/decrease in subsidy eligibility levels in actual dollars by province, one parent, one child between 1992-2004



## Quality

In *You Bet I Care!*, a national 1998 study of child care quality across Canada (seven jurisdictions), centres and regulated family child care homes received generally mediocre scores on standard observational measures used widely in North American research. The study also provided considerable data on such indicators of quality as training in early childhood education, wages, working conditions and benefits, management style, in-service training, staff morale and other key indicators.

Since that time, there has been no such Canada-wide study and almost no regional studies of this nature. Two recent large-scale Quebec studies, however, show that quality in Quebec child care is generally poor to mediocre and that for-profit programs are generally poorer in quality than non-profit programs (see Quebec section of Further Readings in the main report for references to the ÉLDEQ and Grandir en qualité studies).

No other data about quality that are comparable across jurisdictions and/or over time are available although some provinces/territories have collected their own wage data. (These may be found in

each provincial/territorial section of the main report).

### Indicators of quality: Human resources

- No jurisdiction requires all child care staff to have a postsecondary credential in ECE. In a number of jurisdictions it is a minority of staff who are required to have this training.
- The length of training required for teachers and other staff in regulated child care centres and nursery schools ranges from none to a community college certificate or diploma of one to three years.
- No province/territory requires child care staff to have university level training in early childhood.
- Seven provinces now require ECE training of one or two years for the centre director. Only MB requires directors to have a further credential.
- NL, PE and BC require all staff to have regular professional development and five jurisdictions require all staff to have a first aid certificate.

- One province—SK—upgraded training requirements between 2001-2004. In NB, in new centres, one in four staff or the director now must have a one year community college certificate or equivalent.

- There are minimal or no early childhood training requirements for regulated family day care providers and providers earn low wages.

- There are no current or recent comparable data – either cross-Canada or over time – on child care wages, a key indicator of quality.

- There are about 31,000 unionized centre-based child care staff. Nine provinces/territories have unionized staff, 25,000 of whom are in QC.

- Drives to unionize child care staff are underway in PE and MB.

### Indicators of quality: Financing

- Six provinces/territories – PE, ON, AB, BC, NU, YT – spent less per regulated child care space in 2004 than they did in 2001 (in actual dollars) [See Table 29 in full publication]. It should be noted that in all but two provinces (AB and BC), total funding allocations for regulated child care increased in that period but expansion of spaces meant that in some provinces/territories, funding per space decreased [Figure 7, Table 4 on page 10].

- Increases/decreases in financing per space between 2001 and 2004 range from -22.3% (a decrease) in BC to +60.6% in NT.

- Financing per regulated space increased steadily (or fairly steadily) since 1992 in five provinces. Three jurisdictions (ON, AB, NT), however, were spending less (in actual dollars) in 2004 than they were in 1992. BC was spending less in 2004 than in 1998 and PE and YT were spending less than in 2001. (See the full publication for more details.)

- The range of provincial/territorial spending per regulated space was from \$816 in AB (including newly regulated school-age spaces) to \$4,849 in QC (including school-age under the Ministry of Education) [Figure 8].

**FIGURE 7** Increase/decrease in public spending per regulated child care space by province/territory in actual dollars 2001-2004



• Seven jurisdictions spent less than \$2,000 per regulated space in 2004 [Figure 8].

*Indicators of quality:  
Auspice*

• In Canada as a whole, not-for-profit child care (including some publicly operated child care in ON and QC) accounted for 80% of spaces in 2004. The overall trend was toward not-for-profit child care which had increased from 77% of all spaces in 2001 and 70% in 1992. (Note that child care in QC which is 88% not-for-profit accounted for 43% of all regulated spaces) [Figure 9].

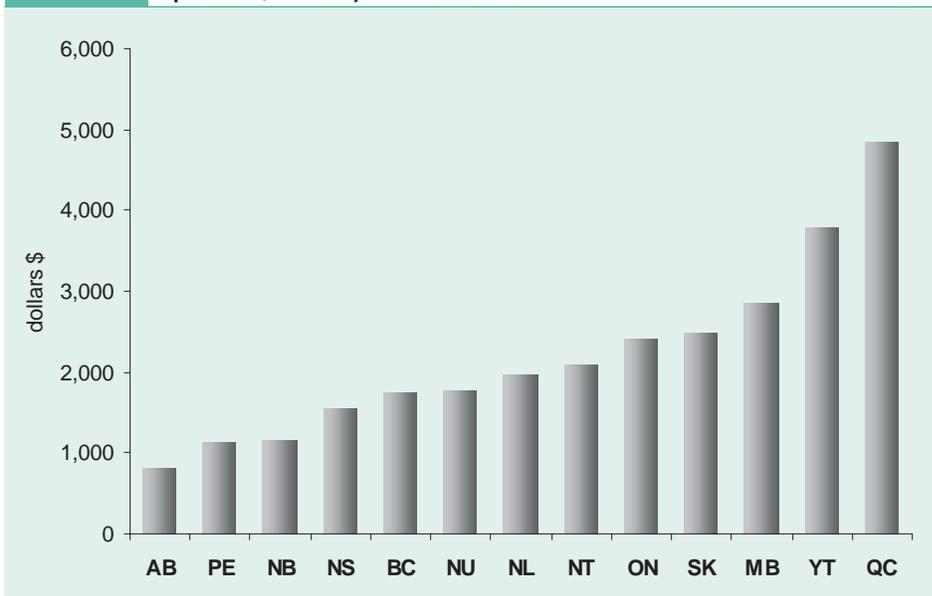
• However, the proportion of for-profit child care in PE, NS, NB and YT was higher in 2004 than it was in 1992.

- Between 2001 and 2004, while the overall proportion of for-profit child care decreased, in four provinces – NL, PE, NS and ON – it increased in this period.

- In ON, the increase in for-profit spaces between 2001 and 2004 was more than three times that of non-profit spaces



**FIGURE 8** Public spending allocation per regulated child care space by province/territory 2004



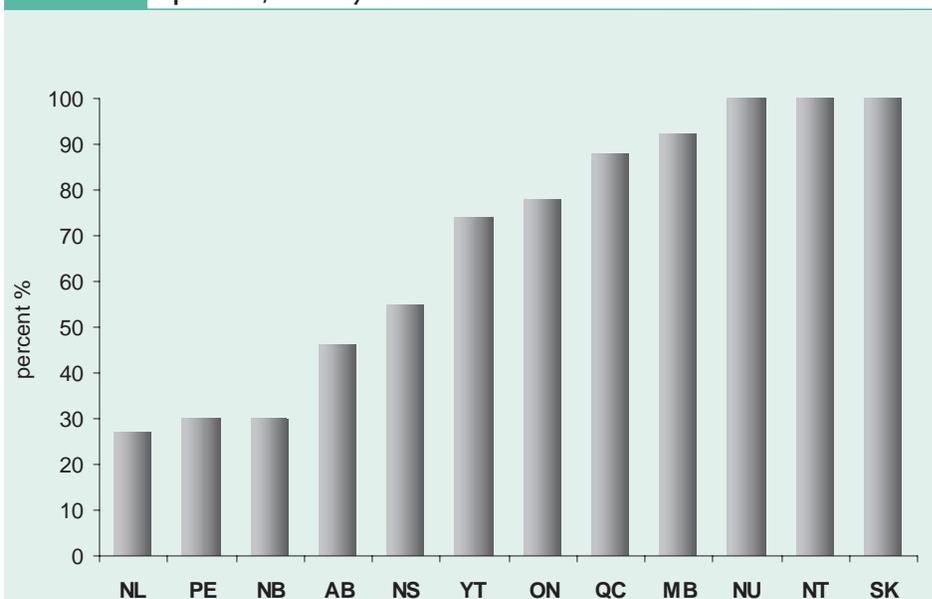
(+10,732 for-profit spaces and + 3,264 not-for-profit spaces).

- In QC, the number of new for-profit spaces in 2001-2004 was double that in the previous period (1998-2001) although

there were considerably fewer new for-profit spaces than there were new not-for-profit centre-based spaces.

- SK, NT and NU reported that all of their child care was not-for-profit in 2004.

**FIGURE 9** Percent of centre-based child care spaces that are not-for-profit by province/territory 2004



NOTE Data on auspice are no longer available in BC. NB data are estimates provided by provincial officials.

## Financing

This section uses 2004 provincial/territorial allocations for regulated child care (all amounts in actual dollars).

- Total provincial/territorial spending for regulated child care has risen from \$762 million in 1992 to \$2,402 billion in 2004.

- QC represents 65% of this total in 2004 – \$1.56 billion. This is an increase from QC's 58% percentage share of total funding in 2001.

- Thus, allocations for child care in the rest of Canada (except QC) were \$842 million in 2004, an increase of \$44 million since 2001. The increase in the QC allocation between 2001 and 2004 was \$468 million.

- Allocations for child care in QC increased \$1.42 billion between 1992 and 2004 whereas the total increase for the rest of Canada was \$221 million in the same period [Figure 10].

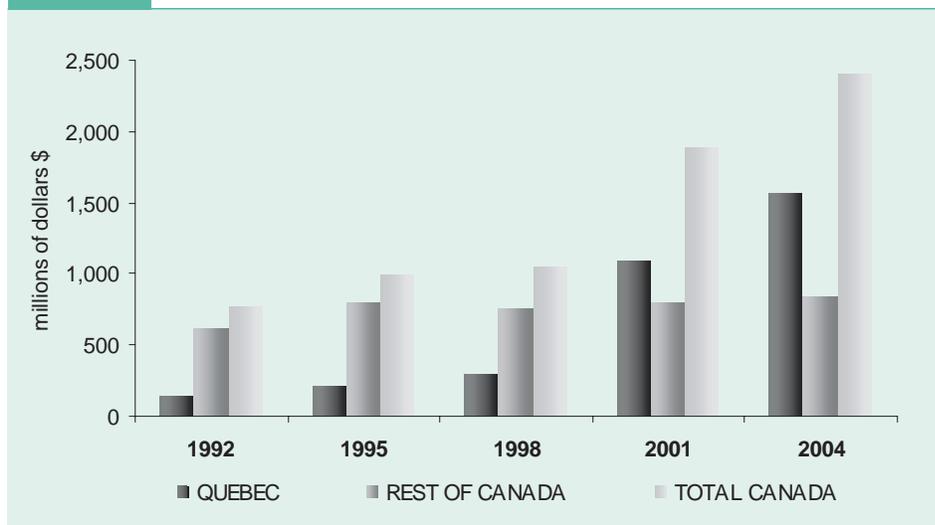
- The change in provincial/territorial allocations for regulated child care from 1992-2004 ranged from an 11-fold increase in QC to a decrease of –20% in AB [Table 4].

- Since 2001, allocations for regulated child care decreased in AB, BC and NU (Note that Nunuvut was created in 2001 when the North West Territories was divided). In all other provinces/territories, there were increases in provincial/ territorial allocations for child care between 2001 and 2004 [Table 4].

- In only three provinces – NL, QC and SK – did allocations for regulated child care increase steadily – 1992, 1995, 1998, 2001 and 2004; some of the increases were quite small. In all other provinces/territories, financing was fluctuating [Table 4].

- In ON, the funding high point was in 1995; funding then decreased in 1998 and again in 2001. While there was again an increase in 2004, the 2004 funding level was still \$44 million below the 1995 level (in actual dollars).

**FIGURE 10** Public spending for regulated child care, QC and the rest of Canada 1992-2004



- In AB, the high point in child care funding was 1995 when it was almost \$68 million; allocations have gone down steadily since that time.

- BC reached its high child care funding

point in 2001 at \$165 million; it decreased to \$141 in 2004.

- All other provinces and two of the territories reached their high funding point in 2004 (the 2003/04 fiscal year) [Table 4].

**TABLE 4** Allocations for regulated child care by province/territory 1992 - 2004 (dollars in millions - rounded)

	1992 (\$M)	1995 (\$M)	1998 (\$M)	2001 (\$M)	2004 (\$M)
NL	1,668	2,980	3,300	7,753	9,636
PE	2,766	1,682	2,578	4,229	4,682
NS	11,421	11,844	15,684	12,892	19,768
NB	3,646	3,200	5,523	11,823	13,900
QC	140,726	203,695	299,860	1,092,428	1,560,000
ON	420,140	541,800	470,500	451,500	497,400
MB	42,152	45,204	45,189	62,876	73,004
SK	12,307	12,714	15,746	16,388	19,639
AB	66,613	67,623	54,297	57,500	53,699
BC	55,798	98,680	128,865	164,563	140,725
NT	not applicable	not applicable	not applicable	1,602	2,542
NU	not applicable	not applicable	not applicable	1,865	1,786
YT	2,438	4,148	4,764	4,440	5,197
<b>CANADA</b>	<b>761,959</b>	<b>995,279</b>	<b>1,048,579</b>	<b>1,888,837</b>	<b>2,402,000</b>

## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Each of the editions of *Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada* has included a HISTORY section summarizing past policy developments, advances and changes and a RECENT DEVELOPMENTS section covering the period since the previous edition. Over the years, this has provided a historical record of policy shifts, announcements and program changes that can be forgotten as governments and ideologies change.

From the cumulative histories of ECEC in some provinces/territories, it can be seen that the effects of shifts in government direction on ECEC programs and policies have been striking. In the past decade, changes in governments have sometimes produced tremendous swings in provincial approaches to ECEC – sometimes shifting rapidly in one year to a diametrically-

opposed approach. The effects of these swings can be observed in some of the data and in the notes in the HISTORY and RECENT DEVELOPMENTS sections in the main report.

These effects are especially noteworthy in QC, ON and BC. In all three cases, policy and program developments that included increased funding, strengthened policy and even transformational change were abruptly followed by about-faces that brought cuts and considerably diminished support for ECEC. This may mean the loss of public and community resources – both human and fiscal – that had been expended to put policy and programs in place. ECEC programs in the province may take then some years to recover even with yet another change in government direction.

The idea of a national child care program has been discussed for more than 30 years but until now ECEC has remained a purely provincial/territorial responsibility. There are many good reasons for Canada to have a national early learning and child care program. Among these is the importance of a national approach so as to maintain some assurances for Canadian parents regardless of periodic changes in provincial/territorial governments as well as common assurances of access to high quality early learning and child care in all regions. Through a national policy framework, an early learning and child care system can be built - with public and community resources – to serve all of Canada's children.

### A note about data, research and evaluation

It is important to note that the quality of the analysis is only as good as the quality of the available data, research and evaluation. As we noted in the 2001 version of *ECEC in Canada*, "...a recurring theme in the successive documents has been concern about the frailty of much of the data that are available" (Friendly, Beach and Turiano, 2002). It should be noted that in this version, some key data – fees and wages for example – are unavailable. As the policy context of ECEC has changed, attention to data, research and evaluation necessary to support policy development and analysis and to ensure public accountability will become increasingly important.



## ONLINE RESOURCES: [www.childcarecanada.org](http://www.childcarecanada.org)



### Online documents

Database of research reports, government documents, policy studies, and news articles



### Childcare information resource collection (CIRC)

Catalogue of over 17,000 print materials on ECEC policy and related topics



### Current developments in ECEC in Canada

Selection of online readings about ECEC policy issues in each province and territory



### Issue files

Collections of online readings about topical issues in ECEC policy



### CRRU publications

Most of our publications are available in full text online. Print copies may be ordered using the online order form or by contacting the Unit.



### Links

Government, academic and NGO web sites relevant to ECEC policy and social policy



### Events calendar

An online listing of significant conferences and other events for the ECEC community

Since the early 1980s, the **Childcare Resource and Research Unit** has provided information resources on early childhood education and care policy and research. Its mandate is to provide information and resources and to support policy and research that contribute to the development of publicly funded, universally accessible, high quality early childhood care and education in Canada. CRRU began operation in the early 1980s in response to the requirements of researchers, advocates, and policy makers for research, policy and program materials concerning child care. CRRU produces publications including an Occasional Paper Series, a compilation of national ECEC data and information, fact sheets, bibliographies and other publications. CRRU maintains a comprehensive collection of materials on ECEC and related topics, catalogued in a fully computerized database (CIRC). The CRRU website at <http://www.childcarecanada.org> provides online access to CIRC, to CRRU publications and other CRRU resources, as well as links to a wide range of current reports and other documents. The **Childcare Resource and Research Unit** receives funding from Social Development Canada, whose support is appreciatively acknowledged.



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