

An examination of regulatory and other measures to support quality early learning and child care in Alberta: A discussion paper ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

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Excerpts from introduction

Over the past several decades, countries across the globe have increasingly recognized the important role that high-quality, affordable early learning and child care (ELCC) plays in supporting a healthy economy, the labour force participation of mothers, greater gender equity and social inclusion, reducing poverty, and increasing the well-being and healthy development of children. Numerous international studies have examined the factors that support quality provision, and recommended various strategies to address policy, funding and structural concerns.

In Canada, statutory responsibility for ELCC rests with provincial/territorial governments. While all orders of government, parents, the child care sector and other stakeholders have important roles to play, it is the provincial/territorial governments that define the overall policy direction, regulations and funding mechanisms, and determine how ELCC services are developed and distributed. These factors all have an impact on the quality of care provided.

Provinces and Territories are involved in ELCC to varying degrees. Some are involved in setting service and quality goals, forecasting demand and planning for services, establishing maximum parent fees and providing supply side funding to programs, establishing wage scales, developing strategies to support the workforce, collecting and analyzing data, and evaluating the effectiveness of policies and funding programs. Others play a more passive role, leaving it to individuals, and community and business groups to determine where and when to establish programs, how much to charge parents and pay staff, minimizing policies and standards to stimulate growth, and intervening only as required. Across jurisdictions there are many variations in policy, provision, funding levels and arrangements, availability, and mechanisms and process that support quality, and ELCC systems usually fall somewhere along the policy and funding continuum.

In spite of the considerable variations in approaches across the country, all provinces and territories provide some type of ongoing funding to eligible programs and fee reductions for eligible low-income families, and all define the minimum requirements to operate a child care program through their respective child care regulations.

Related link: [Webinar: Early learning and child care in Alberta: An examination of regulations and other measures that support quality](#) ^[4]

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[2] <https://www.muttart.org/muttart-releases-new-report-an-examination-of-regulatory-and-other-measures-to-support-quality-early-learning-and-child-care-in-alberta/>

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[4] <https://childcarecanada.org/resources/events/20/12/early-learning-and-child-care-alberta-examination-regulations-and-other>

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