


How child care services are created in Canada ^[1]



MOVING FROM PRIVATE TO PUBLIC PROCESSES.

A SERIES ON CREATING CHILD CARE IN CANADA

Childcare Resource and Research Unit
childcarecanada.org

1 How child care services are created in Canada

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About the series

One aspect of Canadian child care provision is that the supply of child care services is too limited to meet demand, unevenly distributed and inequitable in terms of location. The primary reason for this is that “creating” child care services in Canada has mostly been treated as a private responsibility. This private approach is in contrast to public processes where governments take responsibility for ensuring that child care services are developed where and when they are needed.

As Canada begins to fulfill a historic commitment to build a universal early learning and child care system, the challenge of limited, uneven, inequitable child care availability must be tackled systemically—a more publicly managed, planned, intentional approach based on greater public responsibility for ensuring the availability and determining the characteristics and distribution of regulated child care.

This series of short, topical papers covers the importance of designing effective child care expansion strategies and some elements that can contribute to developing them. The series is based on a longer publication, [Moving from private to public processes to create child care in Canada](#) (2020), and has been revised and re-developed in this more accessible series format to reflect current Canada-wide policy developments.

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In Canada, whether or not child care services are available mostly rests on whether private individuals initiate their creation, take it through the development process, maintain it, usually finance it, and sometimes decide when to shut it down. This first paper, in a series of eight, identifies ways in which child care services are created in Canada and discusses the shifts needed to increase child care supply. The paper argues for a shift in mindset – away from assuming that creating child care is a private responsibility (that is, relying on “the market”) – toward the idea that building a child care system includes a transformational shift to public responsibility for the availability and distribution of regulated child care. This will be key in determining whether Canada “gets the architecture right” for building a child care system that will be able to meet our ambitious goals in the future.


This publication is paper 1 in the series [Moving from private to public services: A series on creating child care in Canada](#) ^[3].

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[3]

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