

## More than spaces: Creating universal child care in Norway <sup>[1]</sup>



**MOVING FROM PRIVATE TO PUBLIC PROCESSES.**

**A SERIES ON CREATING CHILD CARE IN CANADA**

Childcare Resource and Research Unit  
[childcarecanada.org](https://childcarecanada.org)

### 8 More than spaces: Creating universal child care in Norway

Jane Beach April 2022

**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.

Jane Beach  
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Download *More than spaces: Creating universal child care in Norway* <sup>[2]</sup> (PDF, 855KB).

Norway is among the countries in the world in which early learning and child care (ELCC) has become a legal right. Today more than 90% of children 1-5 years attend full-time regardless of where they live, parental employment or financial circumstances. This case study examines the key levers, structures and policies used by the Norwegian national state to ensure that sufficient child care to achieve close to universal coverage was created and accessible to all. It pays special attention to the period of rapid expansion between 2003-2009, at the end of which ELCC became a legal entitlement. It emphasizes that it has been successful because Norway has done more than “create spaces” but has built an accessible, affordable, quality system for all children.

This publication is paper 8 in the series *Moving from private to public services: A series on creating child care in Canada* <sup>[3]</sup>.

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[3]

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