

# Pan-Canadian growth of early learning and child care since 2008

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## AVAILABILITY

Access online [2]

## Project overview

This report is produced as part of a larger project funded by the Employment and Social Development Canada's Early Learning and Child Care Innovation Program, called 'Growth by Design: Expanding Early Learning and Child Care in Canada' (2023-2026).

- Identify the barriers and facilitators that impact the capacity of public and not-for-profit providers to expand licensed ELCC
- Engage the not-for-profit ELCC community, ELCC allies and public stakeholders in innovative thinking and capacity building to expand access to affordable, accessible and high quality ELCC
- Identify, describe and assess innovative practices and public policies that have supported the expansion of not-for-profit and public ELCC
- Increase awareness and enable knowledge transfer about effective mechanisms and innovative practices to support the expansion of quality, affordable, accessible not-for-profit and public ELCC

This project is being undertaken in the context of the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) agreements between the federal government and each of the provinces and territories. In the 2021 budget, the federal government committed over \$27 billion over five years (2021-2026) to build a Canada-wide early learning and child care system for children aged 0 to 6 years. This involved forming bilateral agreements with the 13 provinces and territories. The agreements included annual Action Plans that outline the funding that is transferred from the federal government to each of the provinces and territories, plus the individual provincial and territorial funding commitments over this period. The \$27.2 billion is intended to achieve a reduction in parent fees, properly value the work of early childhood educators, and support expansion of not-for-profit child care services.

The expansion targets set out in the federal-provincial/territorial agreements amount to over 275,000 new spaces across Canada between 2021 and 2026. This target can be compared to a total increase of approximately 85,000 spaces in the five year period from 2016 to 2021, with the caveat that growth in this earlier period was impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. It's also important to note that the earlier period 2016-2021 includes licensed centre-based spaces for 0-5 years plus family child care for 0-12 years (noting that most family child care spaces are used by 0-5 year olds). The number of family child care spaces includes enrolment of children 0-12 as age breakdowns are not usually available. The 2021-2026 targets under CWELCC include licensed centre-based and family child care spaces (See Appendix 5.1 for a breakdown for provinces and territories for these two time periods).

This document forms part of the first phase of the project, Growth by Design, which is to track expansion of child care spaces in the years leading up to the implementation of the CWELCC agreements. This report will be complemented by further policy analysis at the provincial and territorial level to better understand if and how these and future trends are being shaped by investments and the design of policy mechanisms. Other phases of the project include jurisdictional case studies and review of international policy approaches that support the expansion of public and not-for-profit ELCC.

The purpose of this pan-Canadian environmental scan is to look at historical trends in child care expansion prior to the CWELCC agreements, specifically the time period 2008 to 2021. These trends help to inform our analysis of the growth under the CWELCC agreements and understand its impact on expansion.

While the focus of this scan and CWELCC is on children 0 to 5 years old, we are including before and after school care (BASC) as the Government of Canada has previously announced that it intends to help support 200,000 new BASC spaces.

**Region:** Canada [3]

**Tags:** before and after school [4]

expansion [5]

spaces [6]

child-care-2008

#### Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/24/04/pan-canadian-growth-early-learning-and-child-care-2008> [2] <https://childcarenow.ca/pan-canadian-growth-of-early-learning-and-child-care-growth-since-2008/> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7864> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/and-after-school> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9026> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/spaces>