

# Lack of sleep regulations in Canada's licensed child-care facilities puts children's health at risk <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

Access online <sup>[2]</sup>

## Excerpts

In 2023, more than half of Canadian children (up to five years old) were in child care and more than 25 per cent of young children were on a wait list. Many children are in child care for several hours per day and multiple days per week. Parents control children's nighttime sleep but rely on early learning and child-care providers to help children safely meet sleep needs during the day.

But what direction are Canadian licensed childcare facilities receiving from government statutes and regulations about young children's sleep? Evidence indicates no guidance from statutes, and inconsistent and lacking sleep regulations for licensed child care in Canada, resulting in neglect of children's sleep needs.

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## Child-care providers need more guidance

Lack of specificity in regulations creates gaps in guidance for child-care providers who decide how much sleep children need.

Sleep duration needs are constantly changing between the ages of four months and 18 years. Providing appropriate regulations for sleep/rest periods that fit children's developmental stages can avoid inappropriate mandates by child-care facilities for children's sleep. For example, many centres provide only one rest period per day. One period may not meet infants' needs, or may exceed the needs of three- to four-year-olds.

Lack of consistent regulations for naps in licensed child-care facilities across Canada may increase inequity. Research has shown that children who live in socio-economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods have shorter nighttime sleep and take longer to fall asleep at night. Naps may be important for children from lower socio-economic backgrounds to compensate for poor nighttime sleep.

Some jurisdictions produce manuals to help interpret statutes and regulations, but many manuals are years out of date.

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**Related link:** The babies who nap in sub-zero temperatures <sup>[3]</sup>

**Region:** Canada <sup>[4]</sup>

**Tags:** advocacy <sup>[5]</sup>

child development <sup>[6]</sup>

infant <sup>[7]</sup>

**Source URL (modified on 12 Nov 2024):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/24/11/lack-sleep-regulations-canada%E2%80%99s-licensed-child-care>

## Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/24/11/lack-sleep-regulations-canada%E2%80%99s-licensed-child-care> <sup>[2]</sup>

<https://theconversation.com/lack-of-sleep-regulations-in-canadas-licensed-child-care-facilities-puts-childrens-health-at-risk-242479> <sup>[3]</sup>

<https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/13/02/babies-who-nap-sub-zero-temperatures> <sup>[4]</sup>

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