

# Early childhood education and care in Canada<sup>[1]</sup>

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## Executive Summary

In Canada, the systems of early childhood education and care services are different from one province or territory to another; they differ significantly in their affordability, accessibility and rate of participation. These factors affect the labour force participation of parents of young children, particularly mothers. Currently, the federal government supports early childhood education and care services through various means, including transfer payments to the provinces and territories, and tax measures. However, many stakeholders believe that the federal government should do more in this area and help develop a national system for early childhood education and care. The federal government has already indicated that it wants to develop a Canada-wide system inspired by Quebec's educational child care services. Studies of the Quebec model have revealed successes, particularly in terms of the centres de la petite enfance [Quebec's early childhood care centres], and the increased rate of employment among women. These studies also revealed limitations, for example, the shortage of subsidized spaces and the poor quality of services in some child care settings where disadvantaged children are over-represented. Lastly, some factors are frequently raised with regard to a potentially greater federal commitment in this area, including the need for early childhood education and care services that take into account the diverse realities of families and that meet certain quality criteria.

**Related link:** [Ontario's early years and child care annual report 2024](#) <sup>[4]</sup>

**Region:** [Canada](#) <sup>[5]</sup>

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