

Municipal child care in Alberta: An alternative approach to the funding and delivery of early learning and care for children and their families ^[1]

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Source: The Muttart Foundation

Format: Report

Publication Date: 1 Nov 2011

AVAILABILITY

Full report in pdf ^[2]

Excerpts from the introduction:

The majority of Alberta children 0 to 6 years of age now spend a significant portion of their early years in some form of non-parental care - much of which is provided outside of the family home. And as is the case in most Canadian provinces, many families in Alberta find it difficult to access highquality early learning and care. Despite significant recent increases in provincial funding, the demand for early learning and care continues to outstrip the supply. And where high quality learning and care is available it is often too expensive for families to afford.

Given these challenges a number of provinces have begun to reconsider how they approach the funding and delivery of early learning and care. Ontario and British Columbia, for example, have both taken bold steps in outlining new approaches and Ontario began the implementation of these in fall 2010. The respective provincial governments in the Maritimes and in Manitoba have each begun to consider how they can best support early learning and care. The result is a series of new initiatives that include the reorganization of existing service providers as well as the consolidation of programs to form more integrated service platforms.

Inspired by this work, the current discussion paper focuses on an often overlooked aspect of the funding and delivery of early childhood education and care - that of the role of municipalities. Specifically, it outlines some of the history of municipal involvement in early learning and care in Alberta, describes the current four municipal models in Beaumont, Jasper, Drayton Valley and the Municipal District (MD) of Opportunity, and presents a preliminary analysis of the key characteristics and features of these models.

Through its review of the role of municipalities in early learning and care, the paper aims both to present information on the current municipal models and to promote discussion on the potential for such models to play a greater role in the Alberta early learning and care landscape. As Alberta examines how it might best increase its own investments in early learning and care a discussion of possible enhanced roles for municipal service delivery models appears one option worthy of consideration.

Region: Alberta ^[3]

Tags: funding ^[4]

public management ^[5]

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