

Age profile of infants with child care subsidy in Toronto: Implications for policy formulation ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

See pdf attached below

| Attachment | Size |
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|  Varmuza & Perlman 2013.pdf ^[2] | 482.68 KB |

Summary of the issue

- Managing the flow of children in three separate age groups from infants (0-18 months) to toddlers (19-30 months) and then to preschoolers (31 months - up to 4 years 8 months) in child care programs is a complex task. The introduction of full-day kindergarten has skewed the age served by child care programs down increasing the extent to which programs have to manage this flow.
- The Modernizing Child Care discussion paper raised the possibility of re-visiting various provisions of DNA.
- Some child care operators and advocacy groups have proposed introduction of either flexible ratios or reforming the existing three age groups that cover pre-kindergarten children into two groups usually consisting of children below and above two years of age.
- One of the supporting arguments for this position is based on the perception that infants entering formal, centre-based child care are, on average, approximately 12-months of age and that the current infant age grouping of 0 – 18 months does not reflect the population served and results in children having to transition classrooms a short time after they enter child care.
- We recently analyzed the City of Toronto's subsidy wait list exploring when children receive care vs. when their parents need it. Our findings suggest that this age of entry statistic is misleading and provides an incomplete picture upon which to base policy recommendations on changing the current definition of age groups.

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Conclusion - for discussion purposes only

- Infants are entering child care at young ages (25% are younger than 9-months, 50% are younger than 12 months).
- The desired/requested start date suggests that parents need child care substantially earlier than when they are getting it (e.g., 25% requested a placement at 6 months or younger).
- Given appropriate access, the average age of entry into child care is likely to be substantially lower than the average of entry is today.
- The desired/requested start date is a better indicator of the need for infant child care spaces than actual uptake/usage and should be considered during any discussion of changes to age groups and ratios.
- The long wait times and the fact that some families never get the care they need and qualify for, clearly indicate that more funding is needed to create more infant child care spaces with a corresponding increase in fee subsidies.

Region: Ontario ^[3]

Tags: subsidy ^[4]

spaces ^[5]

infant/toddler ^[6]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/13/05/age-profile-infants-child-care-subsidy-toronto-implications>

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/13/05/age-profile-infants-child-care-subsidy-toronto-implications> [2]

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