

Child care by the numbers: Safe and affordable daycare remains elusive^[1]

Author: CBC News

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EXCERPTS:

Child care has been in the news this month, and not always for the best of reasons.

In Ontario, the Ombudsman's office has a new investigation underway into how the province responds to public concerns about unlicensed daycare providers, following the death of a toddler at an unlicensed centre in Vaughan.

And on Monday police in Kitchener announced the arrest of a former home daycare operator, who was charged in the poisoning of two children.

Here are some numbers on early childhood care and education in Canada.

Demographics

Number of children, 0-4 years old on July 1, 2012: 1,928,762.

Number of children, 0-5 years with mothers in the labour force, 2009: 1,268,200.

Mother's labour force participation rate when her youngest child is 0-2 years: 69 per cent.

Child-care spaces

Per cent of children 0-5 years for whom there was a regulated centre-based child-care space in 2010: 21.8 per cent (up from 14.9 per cent in 2001).

Province with the highest share of regulated spaces: P.E.I., 41.6 per cent.

Province with the lowest share of regulated spaces: Saskatchewan, 10.5 per cent.

Per cent of children under six from poorest quartile of families who do not participate in out-of-home daycare: 65 per cent.

Per cent of children under six from the most affluent families who do not participate in out-of-home daycare: 30 per cent, according to a 2011 study by the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation.

Child-care funding and costs

Amount of provincial/territorial funding for regulated child care in 2009-2010: \$3.5 billion (up from \$1.9 billion in 2001).

Amount per child: \$752 (\$1,969 in Quebec).

Share of child-care spaces that were for-profit in 2010: 28 per cent. (For-profit spaces fell from 30 to 20 per cent during 1992 to 2004, then rose steadily.)

Number of provinces providing no funding or fee subsidies to for-profit child-care centres: 1 (Saskatchewan).

Number of provinces that have set maximum parent fees: 3 (Manitoba, P.E.I. and Quebec).

Average full-time monthly fees for a two-year-old, 2010, in Quebec: \$154 (the lowest for any province or territory).

Average full-time monthly fees for a two-year-old, 2010 in B.C.: \$850 (the highest for any province or territory).

Amount the federal government pays to families for each child under 6 years old, per month: \$100.

Early childhood education

Public expenditure on early childhood education services, as a share of GDP: 0.25 per cent. (That's the lowest share among comparable European and English-speaking countries, according to the OECD.)

Increase in annual public spending required on early childhood education for Canada to be at the OECD average: \$3-4 billion.

Average share of a province's or territory's budget spent on early childhood education: 1.53 per cent. (Quebec, 4.67 per cent, the highest share.)

Estimates of the benefits to the economy for every dollar spent on early childhood education: from \$1.49 to \$2.78.

Number of years since the Royal Commission on the Status of Women first recommended a national child-care program: 43.

Median income for full-time, qualified child-care program staff with a post-secondary qualification, 2006: \$27,000.

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