

The future role of government in supporting early childhood education and care in Ontario ^[1]

A Report to the Panel on the Role of Government in Ontario

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AVAILABILITY

- [Report in pdf](#) ^[2]

- [Appendix](#) ^[3]

Excerpts from the report:

An appropriate policy on Early Childhood Education and Care would be based on the following propositions or principles:

1. The early years are critical.
2. As a society, we are under-investing in the early years.
3. There are strong public benefits of well-designed ECEC programs.
4. Other countries are investing more in lifelong learning.
5. The quality of ECEC provided is fundamental to the public (and private) benefits gained.
6. Although there will be both universalist and targeted elements in any ECEC program, the fundamental objective should be to provide services to most or all children.
7. The design of early childhood education and care policies and services should facilitate parental employment.
8. Parenting matters most to the early development of children, so parenting and ECEC services must be complements rather than substitutes.

There are two fundamental recommendations in this report. In combination, they are designed to establish a comprehensive system of early childhood education and care in the province of Ontario.

The first is that the Province of Ontario should mandate school boards to provide full-day senior and junior kindergarten, with lunchtime supervision included. Further, school boards should be responsible for developing complementary integrated services to provide care for children outside of school hours and outside of the school year.

The second principal recommendation of this report is that the Ontario Government should establish framework legislation and funding to provide for the development of a comprehensive network of good quality Early Childhood Education and Care services, initially for children at age 3 and gradually moving downwards to provide care to children of younger ages.

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