

CHILD CARE FOR WHOM?

A background paper for the
Inclusive child care for all project

Martha Friendly | Ngọc Thơ Nguyễn | Matthew Taylor

Childcare Resource and Research Unit, November 2023



We are most appreciative of the funding for the *Inclusive child care for all* project provided by Women and Gender Equality Canada. The views in this paper do not necessarily reflect those of the funder.

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Martha Friendly, Ngọc Thơ Nguyễn Matthew Taylor

Childcare Resource and Research Unit, Oxfam Canada and Child Care Now
November 2023. 56 pp.

ISBN: 978-1-896051-82-6

Childcare Resource and Research Unit
32 Heath St W. Toronto ON M4V 1T3 Canada
Telephone: 416-926-9264
Email: contactus@childcarecanada.org
Website: childcarecanada.org

Cover and Interior: Billie Carroll (UNIFOR Canadian Freelance Union)

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Child care for whom? Background paper for *Inclusive child care for all*

Martha Friendly et al.

1. Child care services—government policy—Canada;
 2. Early childhood education—government policy—Canada;
 3. Diversity;
 4. Inclusion;
 5. Race;
 6. Newcomers;
 4. Friendly, Martha;
 5. Childcare Resource and Research Unit
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Citation: Friendly, M., Nguyễn, N.T., Taylor, M. (2023). *Child care for whom? Background paper for Inclusive child care for all*. Childcare Resource and Research Unit.

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Land acknowledgement

The partners in this publication live and work across Turtle Island, the land we now call Canada.

The [Childcare Resource and Research Unit](#) is based in downtown Toronto, the land of the Anishinaabeg and the Haudenosaunee peoples, the Huron-Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca, and most recently the Mississaugas of the Credit. With a mandate to work towards an equitable, universally accessible, inclusive early learning and child care system in Canada, we acknowledge that this cannot be done without First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives defining what each aspect of this system means to Indigenous women, children, families and communities.

[Oxfam Canada](#)'s offices are located on the unceded, unsurrendered traditional territories of the Anishinabe Algonquin peoples. We recognize the privilege of operating on lands that these peoples have nurtured since time immemorial. As settlers on these lands, we commit to walking in solidarity with our host nations and according to Oxfam's values of equality, empowerment, solidarity, inclusiveness, accountability and courage.

[Child Care Now](#)'s office is located on the unceded Anishinaabe Algonquin territory but our organization is active on the lands and waters—ceded, unceded and contested—across Turtle Island. As a national advocacy organization, Child Care now respects and affirms the inherent and Treaty Rights of all Indigenous Peoples with whom we strive to work in solidarity. Child Care Now commits to the Truth and Reconciliation's 94 calls to action to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation. We note in particular Call #12 which calls upon all governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Indigenous families.

Preface

This paper was prepared for the *Inclusive child care for all* project, which was funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE) in 2022. The project partners, Oxfam Canada, Child Care Now and the Childcare Resource and Research Unit, have collaborated on a series of activities aiming to advance effective inclusive policy solutions to address barriers experienced by under-represented women in regulated child care, and to raise the participation of under-represented groups of women in the child care advocacy movement.

A draft version of this paper was circulated to participants at the *Inclusive child care for all* summit held in Ottawa May 4 and 5 2023. The approximately 90 summit participants came from almost all regions of Canada, drawn from groups under-represented in regulated child care and from the child care advocacy movement. Based on feedback from participants and a short report summarizing the two day summit, the draft paper has been modified and extended. The modified version and working recommendations drawn from the project’s toolkit make up this revised paper.

Context and purpose

Over the last three years, Canadian child care has undergone seismic changes. The crisis in child care provision created by the COVID-19 pandemic led to mainstream acceptance of the idea that child care is an essential service for the economy and, in 2021, to a historic federal government commitment to build an early learning and child care (ELCC) system “for all” – universal child care. This presents a unique opportunity to shape Canada-wide child care policy to meet the needs of women, children and families in new, and previously unachievable ways.

The commitments of federal and provincial/territorial governments to build a universal early learning and care system with “inclusivity” as one of five main principles opens up new possibilities for addressing unequal access to and exclusion from high quality, regulated child care

for under-represented groups of women, families and children. The purpose of this background paper is to explore these issues as part of identifying policy and community solutions to support formulation of actions aimed at putting these changes in place.

Times change: The Canadian child care context in 2023

When the global COVID-19 pandemic arrived in Canada early in the winter of 2020, it created an unprecedented crisis in child care provision as regulated child care services shut down by public health authorities lost their main source of revenue—parent fees. Parents—both those newly working from home, and those who continued to go out to work every day as essential workers—personal support workers, doctors, nurses, bus drivers, grocery store personnel, early childhood educators—found it difficult or impossible to work in the absence of child care.

As the child care struggles experienced by service providers and parents intensified and continued during the pandemic even after child care services re-opened in the spring and summer of 2020, women were disproportionately affected as they struggled to balance disrupted work and child care. As a result, recognition that reliable, accessible child care is an essential service in an economy that now relies heavily on the employment of mothers with young children has broadened beyond the usual advocates for child care. Without a doubt, the idea that child care is essential to a well-functioning economy has become mainstream.

Following the first wave of the pandemic, the federal government set out an economic recovery plan. It described the economic crisis as a “She-cession¹”, noting that “women have been hit hardest by COVID-19” (a perspective supported by research such as Qian & Fuller, 2020), especially low income women. In 2020, the federal Throne Speech stated:

It has been nearly 50 years since the Royal Commission on the Status of Women outlined the necessity of child care services for women’s social and economic equality. We have

1 This term coined by economist Armine Yalnizyan was widely used throughout the pandemic.

long understood that Canada cannot succeed if half of the population is held back. Canadians need more accessible, affordable, inclusive, and high quality child care. Recognizing the urgency of this challenge, the Government will make a significant, long-term, sustained investment to create a Canada-wide early learning and child care system.

The federal government came through in the 2021 budget. The budget was historic for child care, committing to the Canada-wide system “for all” long sought by child care advocates. Pledging to build a quality child care system in partnership with provincial-territorial governments, the federal government budgeted \$27.2 billion² between 2021 and 2026 to “transform” child care. The process would begin with agreements and action plans negotiated between each province and territory – which are responsible for shaping, developing and maintaining child care policy provision in the Canadian federation – and the federal government. The agreements and action plans³ covering the 2021 – 2023 period were all executed before the end of March 2022.

Prior to the federal government’s announcement of the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care initiative (CWELCC) in the 2021 budget, an Indigenous early learning and child care framework had been agreed to by the federal government, First Nations, Métis and Inuit governance bodies. The umbrella Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework (IELCC), released in 2018, set the stage for implementation parallel to CWELCC using three distinct First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples’ frameworks. IELCC and the three distinction-based frameworks shape development of early learning and child care policies, programs and services that First Nations, Inuit and Métis families in rural, remote and urban locations across Canada want and need. Recognition of these needs and appropriate responses to them are essential components of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and for compliance with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (UNDRIP), which became law in Canada in June 2021.

² This was in addition to ELCC funds through existing commitments.

³ Quebec came to an agreement with the federal government and received federal funds but the agreement is an asymmetrical agreement with no action plan required, as Quebec is solely responsible for its ELCC program.

The federal and provincial/territorial approaches to the child care initiative include three elements that can be useful in pressing to strengthen equitable access and inclusion. The first is that “inclusivity” is one of the five principles shaping the Canada-wide common vision, the bi-lateral agreements and the action plans. The child care system is to be shaped by these five principles⁴ — accessibility, affordability, high quality, flexibility and inclusivity.

A second useful element is that Bill C-35, the new federal child care legislation articulates a rights-based approach in its Preamble. *An Act respecting early learning and child care in Canada* reiterates that the vision is for all children in Canada to have access to early learning and child care and that the system as envisioned will help Canada meet international rights obligations, referencing:

...the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, to implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to meeting Canada’s international human rights obligations, including those under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Government of Canada, 2023).

It also articulates a commitment to inclusivity in the Principles guiding the uses of federal funding, stating the federal investments should

support the provision, including in rural and remote communities, of early learning and child care programs and services that are inclusive of children from systematically marginalized groups, including children with disabilities, and of children from English and French linguistic minority communities, that respect and value the diversity of all children and families and that respond to their varying needs (Government of Canada, 2023).

4 These five principles were originally set out in the 2017 federal/provincial/territorial Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care.

Third, provincial/territorial agreements and action plans⁵ identify under-represented groups as priorities for expansion of child care provision or other specific attention, some very specifically (“families more in need including lower-income, Indigenous, lone-parents, Black and racialized families”, “Black/ other racialized children”, “newcomers to Canada”) and some using less specific language (“equity and inclusion”, “vulnerable and diverse populations”, “vulnerable children not now in ELCC”) (See [Government of Canada, Early Learning and Child Care Agreements](#)). These priorities are consistent with the principle of inclusivity and provide levers for pressing to shape implementation to ensure inclusion of under-represented women, children and families as the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care program is rolled out.

Why this paper? Its purpose and organization

This background paper is part of the *Inclusive child care for all* project carried out in partnership by Oxfam Canada, Child Care Now and the Childcare Resource and Research Unit. Funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE), the project has two main objectives:

- to advance effective inclusive ELCC policy solutions to address barriers experienced by underrepresented women, primarily newcomers to Canada, racialized women and mothers with disabilities, and
- to raise the participation of under-represented groups of women in the child care advocacy movement.

The term “inclusive” is used in this paper differently from its usual use in the early childhood education and care field, which is to refer to full and equitable participation of children with disabilities in high quality programs as “inclusion”. As Kathryn Underwood, an expert on inclusion for children with disabilities in early childhood programs has framed it, “In order for all children to fully participate in education, care and community, they must have equitable access to programs” (Underwood, 2014, p. 1). This paper and the *Inclusive child care for all* project, however, use the term “inclusive” more broadly to mean that children and families

⁵ These are elaborated in further detail in a section of this paper.

of all races, ethnicities, gender identification, life styles and situations can access, and feel welcomed and invited into the space of a responsive, quality child care system for all. This is consistent with the interpretation of the term “inclusive” or “inclusivity” used by the federal government as one of the principles of the Canada-wide ELCC plan, the subsequent agreements and action plans with each province and territory and the federal ELCC legislation, Bill C-35.

While a number of demographic, employment-specific and geographical groups such as rural inhabitants, First Nations, Metis and Inuit people, non-standard hours and precarious workers, children with disabilities, and low-income families are believed or known to be under-represented in access to and use of high quality regulated child care, the *Inclusive child care for all* project is focusing primarily on newcomers to Canada, racialized women and families, and mothers with disabilities. Of course, there is substantial intersectionality among these groups and areas of disadvantage such as low income, lesser education and less favourable employment circumstances such as working non-standard hours, precarious work, under-employment and unemployment.

This background paper is intended to help inform the project and to contribute to meeting its objectives, as well as being a resource on this policy issue. The paper sets out to address two main research questions:

- Which groups of women are under-represented in regulated early learning and child care?
- What barriers do they face to more equitable representation?

After describing the early learning and child care context including Canada’s child care market, the paper discusses ways of understanding equal, and unequal, access to child care. Next, it explores the small pool of recent Canadian data on unequal access to child care, then identifies how and if provinces and territories (the level of government responsible for implementation of the Canada-wide ELCC plan) are addressing initiatives linked to the principle of “inclusivity” in their agreements and action plans. This is followed by a review of relevant Canadian literature. The documents include peer-reviewed articles and “grey” literature such as reports from organizations and government. The paper then discusses what we learned at the project summit in May 2023 and concludes with

working recommendations developed for the project. A table of relevant literature reviewed for this paper is included as an appendix.

What we have now: Child care markets and child care systems

The argument has been made again and again that the child care market-model approach used by Canada has been the main overarching factor responsible for Canada’s inadequate child care provision. A child care market, as British early childhood education and care experts Eva Lloyd and Helen Penn have defined it, is a “situation in which the state has relatively little influence on or interest in how services for young children are set up, maintained and delivered, rather than a public or publicly-managed system based on the ideas of communal obligations and social citizenship” (Lloyd & Penn, 2012: 19).

The Canadian child care situation has many characteristics of a child care market:

- The range and quality of early learning and child care (ELCC) services vary enormously by region and circumstances.
- Access is uncertain for families in all locales and all income groups but access is poorer in rural and remote locations, for low and modest income families, non-standard hours workers, newcomers to Canada, racialized families, Indigenous people and for children and parents with disabilities.
- Organized ELCC services across Canada are in short supply or – like public kindergarten – not designed to be sensitive to parents’ workforce needs.
- Regulated child care is often too costly for ordinary families, and mostly funded by parent fees⁶.
- Canadian child care – even regulated child care – is too often not reliably “high quality”.
- No region of Canada yet provides an accessible system of well-designed and funded early childhood education and care services to meet the needs of a majority of families and children (Friendly, 2019).

⁶ Note that Canadian child care fees have been significantly reduced since the paper cited here was written.

A 2018 paper—part of an international comparative study of unequal access to child care that included Canada—commented:

Overall, the Canadian situation is one of restricted access to ECEC for all families whatever their income, circumstances or residential area. This can be attributed to a combination of: inadequate supply of child care places (covering only 24% of 0 – 5-year-olds and uneven distribution); parental fees for child care that are unaffordable for many families; kindergarten provision that doesn't begin until age five for most children; and child care quality shown to be mediocre at best.

...In addition to the general scarcity, however, there are many reported inequalities: By community type (urban-rural), for Indigenous children, for children whose parents work non-standard hours, for newcomers to Canada (immigrants and refugees), for children with disabilities and for children living in low-income families (Japel & Friendly, 2018).

Ways of understanding the idea of equitable access and inclusion in child care services

In this section, we consider three analyses of the issue of unequal access and inclusion in early learning and child care. In an influential 2014 paper, Vandebroek and Lazzari analyzed policy, academic and practice literature, primarily from the European Union, to explore, analyze and identify the causes of unequal access in early childhood education and care. This analysis, based on a comprehensive review of “competent ECEC systems” for the European Union, was motivated by the “growing concern about the accessibility of ECEC for children from ethnic minority and low-income families” (2014, p. 328). Citing studies across multiple countries, Vandebroek and Lazzari noted that detailed data to document unequal access were not available for all countries but that there is substantial evidence that this is a global phenomenon, even in countries with more developed ECEC systems. Thus, there is some international research and analysis (which was not reviewed for this

paper) aimed at overcoming this situation in favour of more equitable provision.

Vandenbroeck and Lazzari observed that the issue of unequal access has often been studied from the perspective of parental choice, which they point out is “embedded in a neoliberal policy context” that treats social issues as matters of individual responsibility, while “public goods are commodified” (2014, p. 329). In response, these authors have developed a layered, integrated, ecological concept, identifying characteristics of three elements that, in combination, can lead to better understanding of equitable and inequitable access to high quality ECEC. Elaborated as a framework, Vandenbroeck and Lazzari’s paradigm, a slightly modified version of which is shown schematically on the next page, includes five quality criteria and three elements, or levels, each with its own set of characteristics: characteristics of policy, characteristics of service provision and characteristics of families.

Considering **characteristics of policy**, based on a variety of studies, these analysts observe “ECEC systems that operate on market principles, even when accompanied by a voucher system for poor families, are less effective in attracting poorer families”. They point out, however, that unequal access is not limited only to marketized ELCC systems (although it is more widespread in marketized systems) and recommend that “public policies that address issues of availability, entitlement and child care costs – within a general regulatory framework for quality – are the most effective in reducing inequalities in enrolment” (Vandenbroeck & Lazzari, 2014, pg. 329).

With regard to **characteristics of provision**, Vandenbroeck and Lazzari note that shortages or lack of adequate services (especially for the youngest children) often has the effect of disproportionately setting barriers for children from ethnic minority and low income families, often through seemingly neutral mechanisms such as prioritizing employed parents or using waitlists based on early sign-ups and first-come, first-served mechanisms. They point out that, for example, precarious and non-standard hour workers (who are more likely to be low income, racialized and immigrants) are unlikely to know their child

care needs much in advance, so lose out in wait list or first-sign-up arrangements.

Characteristics of families is the third level forming a multi-dimensional perspective on access to and inclusion in child care. Low income, lower education and immigrant families may have less access to information about child care and how to gain a space, or language comprehension issues may play a role. There may be technology barriers, such as lack of access to or unfamiliarity with, digital technology, as well as lack of trust in authorities based on experiences with discrimination and hostility, sometimes in education settings. Families' cultural views may also play a role, for example, parents from some cultures may be uncomfortable with play-based pedagogy or unfamiliar cultural values, do not see themselves represented in the staff or do not feel welcomed or included.

Five criteria that contribute to better child care accessibility for under-represented families constitute the basis for the 13 “good practices” in the table below. The five criteria are: availability, affordability, accessibility, usefulness and comprehensibility (comprehensibility meaning that “values, beliefs and educational practices of the services are negotiated with families and local communities” (Vandenbroeck & Lazzari, 2014, pg.330).

Based on what is known about how this affects accessibility, Vandenbroeck and Lazzari have come up with 13 “good practices” (such as public supply-side funding, an entitlement to ECEC, geared-to-income parent fees, democratic decision-making, a diverse ECEC workforce, and others) that together contribute to more equitable access. Table 1 shows these in short form.

TABLE 1 **Increasing access to ECEC services: A systemic perspective**

Policy level	Provision level	Parental level
1. Public supply-side funding	6. Democratic decision making	12. Parental involvement
2. Integration of education/care	7. Analysis of priority enrolment criteria and access obstacles	13. Accessible, meaningful information
3. Non-discriminatory, population-based entitlement within a universal system	8. Outreach	
4. Regulation of fees by income, not vouchers	9. Flexible opening hours matching diverse local needs	
5. Quality central monitoring of structural quality	10. Diverse workforce	
	11. Interagency cooperation providing effective community and family support	

Source: Adapted from Vandebroeck & Lazzari, 2014, pp. 331-332.

A second systemic analysis of unequal access to early childhood education and care is found in *The Equal Access Study*, a comparative study including Germany, Sweden and Canada. This multi-year study was carried out by the Deutsche Jugendinstitut (German Youth Institute), a Munich-based social science research institute. Drawing on the work of Vandebroeck and Lazzari, this study was particularly concerned with the effects on equal access to child care of different governance issues, especially those at the local (municipal) level. The analysis, however, recognized that local policies “should not be regarded as solely local products” but are embedded in policy at senior levels of government. The *Equal Access Study* identified and defined what the researchers called “access dimensions” using four categories of criteria for exploring inequality and barriers to access:

Availability: Are services/places available everywhere including disadvantaged and rural areas? What measures have been taken regarding the availability of childcare services?

Affordability: How affordable are ECEC services and how are they funded? Are all parents, regardless of social background, able to afford high-quality ECEC for their children? Are there other financial or social costs not included in the subsidised fees, for example, such social ‘costs’ as the stigmatisation of being in ‘need’)?

Accessibility: Are there implicit or explicit barriers such as selective enrolment procedures, procedures of space allocation or language barriers etc.? Do families benefit from existing measures such as income-related fees and subsidies in equal ways? Are there redistributive initiatives in place to safeguard equal access?

Adequacy: Are ECEC services attuned to the diverse social and cultural backgrounds? Is the system able to take diversity into account? Does the system allow for integrating families whose needs and demands are different from the majority population or more privileged families? (Erhard et al., 2018, p. 13)

A third relevant structural analysis of unequal access to ECEC was conducted in Quebec. Using a Quebec lens to study equality of access, Archambault, Côté and Raynault developed a framework categorizing the continuum of factors influencing access to quality ECEC for disadvantaged populations (defined in this study as low socioeconomic and/or new immigrant backgrounds). Their analysis highlights their view that it is access to quality child care – not merely access to child care per se – that must be the goal⁷. They note, citing a number of Quebec studies for support, “it is well documented in Quebec as well as in other western countries, that children from disadvantaged backgrounds are under-represented in quality ECEC programs such as CPEs⁸”. They note further that “In order to improve access for disadvantaged children to quality ECEC programs, it is important to understand the factors leading to these inequities”. The analysis of these Quebec researchers, like that of Vandebroek and Lazzari and the German comparative study, is based on an intersectional and multidimensional approach to the issue of unequal access. They suggest that “the framework...serves not only ...to

7 This is consistent with the point of view expressed by Adam Pokorny, an education expert with the European Commission: “It is increasingly clear that access without quality is of little merit” (In an article in *Children in Europe*, 2011).

8 Centres de la petite enfance, or publicly funded non-profit child care centres

understand the overlapping processes, factors, and stages affecting access to ECEC but also as a model to help decision makers...and maximize their impact towards more equity in access to quality early childhood education” (2019, p. 346).

Canadian data on accessibility and inclusion in child care

Data to answer key questions about early learning and child care, such as “which women or families use child care?” “What kinds of child care do they use?” “What routes do they use to access child care?” “What are the barriers?” has not regularly been collected or even asked in Canada. However, as child care has become a more mainstream issue, with considerable public funding committed to building child care provision Canada-wide, the need for good data as a tool for policy development and for monitoring the outcomes of policy initiatives has become more pressing, so some data from Statistics Canada and other sources has begun to be available.

Analysis of data from two recent surveys—one by Statistics Canada and one by the Institut de la statistique du Québec—are relevant to the research questions identified by the *Inclusive child care for all project*, although Statistics Canada’s reports include caveats about some of the findings. Linking demographic data from other Statistics Canada datasets to the 2019 *Survey of Early Learning and Child Care Arrangements* (SELCCA), one Statistics Canada study examined patterns of participation in child care among families with “potential socioeconomic disadvantages”. A second study, also used SELCCA data and data linkages to examine differences in child care participation between immigrant and non-immigrant families. Neither analysis included race nor mother’s disability as a variable.

The SELCCA is a Statistics Canada Rapid Survey, with a sampling frame of families with at least one child under six years. As a Rapid Survey, it is restricted to a relatively small number of questions, so relies on linkages with other Statistics Canada datasets to expand its scope to examine specific questions about, for example, “potential socioeconomic disadvantage” and immigration status. SELCCA has been conducted in

2019, 2020 and 2022. The 2019 version of SELCCA – used for the two studies discussed here – had a sample size of 7,548 and a response rate of 53% in the provinces and 41% in the territories.

The first SELCCA-based study used three indicators of families’ “potential socioeconomic disadvantage”: low income, parents with low education and lone-parent status. It found several statistically significant differences. The data show that participation in any kind of licensed or unlicensed non-parental care was much lower for both low income and low education parents, with no significant differences between lone-parent and two-parent families. Second, when looking at type of child care, parents with higher income and more education were more likely to use licensed centre-based child care. When controlling for relevant characteristics such as employment, immigration status and child age, the differences in use of regulated child care by family income and parents’ education levels were reduced but still statistically significant (Findlay et al., 2021).

The second study using data linkages and the 2019 SELCCA dataset assessed use of child care by immigrant families compared with non-immigrant families. In this analysis, an immigrant family was one in which either parent had immigrated to Canada within the past 10 years. The study noted that a higher proportion of immigrant families, compared to non-immigrant families, were also low income. It found that use of any kind of child care was lower for immigrant families than for non-immigrant families but that—unlike families in the low income and low education categories in the previous study described—immigrant families were more likely to use licensed centre-based and licensed child care as their main child care arrangement and less likely to use family child care or care by a relative. This was true both for Quebec and outside Quebec (although not statistically significant for Quebec). It also found that the reasons for not using child care were different for immigrant and non-immigrant parents, with a larger proportion of immigrant parents not using child care because of high cost, because they were not employed or had decided to stay home. Some parents responded that they had adjusted their schedule so as not to use non-parental child care (Kingsbury et al., 2021).

A related study was conducted in 2021 by Quebec’s data agency, Institut de la statistique du Québec. The *Quebec survey on the accessibility and use of childcare services 2021: A statistical portrait* is the most recent of a series of surveys (1998, 2000-2001, 2004, 2009) examining families’ child care needs and use. This survey, which had a sample size of 20,302 and used the child as the unit of the sampling frame, also collected family characteristics such as occupation, employment status, income, education and whether the parents were born in Canada. Data on race was not collected. The Quebec survey also collected extensive data on how and why parents sought to find a child care space and provides analysis of these data by family characteristics.

In this survey, the authors noted that a child was “considered economically or socially disadvantaged if they live in a low-income household, with parents who have little or no education (i.e. only one parent with a secondary school diploma), is from a single-parent family or has two parents not born in Canada). Remember that these characteristics often overlap. For example, foreign-born parents and single-parent families are more likely to be economically disadvantaged (Groleau & Aranibar Zeballos, 2022). The report discusses a number of other Quebec studies conducted by independent researchers over the past decade showing that children who were not in child care before kindergarten were more likely to have parents with low education and low income.

The Institut de la statistique du Québec survey found that although two-thirds of parents overall began looking for a child care space before the child was born, those who did not begin looking for a space until the child was a year old were more likely to be low income, low education (no high school diploma), a single parent and/or having both parents (or a single parent) born outside Canada. Similarly, socially and economically disadvantaged parents were more likely to want their children to enter child care later and less likely to be looking for child care for reasons related to their work or studies. In terms of preferences amongst types of child care they sought: families of all incomes and types were more likely to be seeking funded (subsidized) child care rather than unfunded. Centres de la petite enfance (CPEs), the non-profit,

“gold standard”, higher quality Quebec centres were the first choice of 74% of parents but parents who had more education, were in two-parent families and born outside Canada were more represented among those seeking a CPE space. Not surprisingly (although almost half of Quebec’s child care centres for 0 – 5-year-olds charged a set fee of \$8.50/day per child in 2021), the cost of child care was of most concern for low income and low education parents, as well as those born outside Canada.

In addition to including extensive analyses related to parents’ search for child care, including their use of a specific Quebec government outreach “one-stop” tool, La Place 0-5, the Quebec survey profiles which children attend regulated early learning and child care. Of interest for this paper is that the proportion of children who attended neither child care nor kindergarten was higher among low income households (38%) and higher (44%) among families with lower education (no high school diploma), families in which both parents or a single parent were born outside Canada (29%) or one parent was born outside Canada (28%), or where only one parent or neither parent identified employment as their main occupation (42% each).

In summary, the available recent survey data from Canada’s and Quebec’s statistical agencies corroborate that children from “socially and economically disadvantaged families – low income and low education, as well as newcomer families—are generally less represented in child care in Canada and—with the exception of the puzzling finding in the SELCCA study on immigrant parents⁹—were also less likely to use regulated child care. This was also true in the Quebec study, which included only regulated child care (both centres and family child care), had a much larger sample and response rates, collected demographic data and asked more questions about access. Provincial/territorial breakdowns are not available from the SELCCA analyses. Data on racialized families and those with a parent or mother with a disability are not available from either of these sources.

9 Note that this study defined “immigrant” as having come to Canada within the past ten years.

Review of selected literature

As part of developing this paper for the *Inclusive child care for all* project, a literature review was carried out to identify relevant research and other writing addressing the issue of access to regulated child care for newcomers to Canada, racialized women and families, and mothers with disabilities. The literature search was limited to Canada-specific literature. It included peer-reviewed journal articles, government reports, NGO reports and writings and published (including online) commentaries and was limited approximately to the past 15 years. Searches used Google Scholar and keyword searches using Google. Search terms included: Canada, child care, childcare, daycare, early childhood education and newcomers, immigrants, refugees, racialized, race, Black, mothers with disabilities, unequal access.

Documents identified were included if they included a mention of child care or early childhood education. Thirty-one reports and articles¹⁰ were eventually included. It should be noted that some research/analysis focusing on topics such as income, socio-economic status and “vulnerability” identified as intersecting with newcomer status, race and disability is included. The included literature is listed and linked (in the Appendix following) with abstracts or descriptions in a chronologically organized table to provide quick access.

What geographic areas did the included literature cover?

The documents included covered or focused on: all of Canada (14), Quebec (4), Toronto (4) Alberta (3), Nova Scotia (2), Saskatchewan (1), Ontario (1), Winnipeg (1).

What approaches were used?

The literature includes policy analysis, data analyses of Canada-wide and Quebec surveys, focus groups and interviews with parents, key informants and educators, examination of ECE’s accounts of racial

¹⁰ One recently published article was added to this version of the paper. See N. Fakhari et al (2023). Looking through the lens: a photovoice study examining access to services for newcomer children in the Appendix of reviewed articles.

incidents, personal story-telling and analysis of service delivery. Although there are some interesting and useful descriptions, data and analyses, the literature is more disparate than comprehensive. Only a few Canada-specific documents discuss the issue of unequal access systemically, although there are such analyses in the broader international early childhood education and child care literature for example, the Vandebroek and Lazzari article, and the work of the German Equal Access Project included in an earlier section of this paper. One

Canada-specific paper provides a systemic analysis of this issue: child care researchers Prentice and White reviewed child care policy and provision as well as the context of “cognate policies” – policies aimed at children and families such as parental leave and child benefits. This paper’s main thesis is that:

..a liberal welfare state tradition that historically has encouraged private and market based and gendered system of care, in the context of a relatively decentralised federal institutional system, drives distributional inequalities and makes coordinated policy-making challenging. (Prentice & White, 2018, p. 2)

What were the main focuses of the included literature?

Many (about half) of the documents have an intersectional focus, with a number focused on “vulnerable” or low socioeconomic status families but identifying that many of these were newcomers. There were also 17 documents focused primarily or entirely on newcomers, including refugees, asylum seekers or undocumented newcomers. Of note are the multi-interpretations of “newcomer”; it is noteworthy that the Statistics Canada studies defined a “newcomer” family as one in which either parent had immigrated within the past ten years, whereas the Quebec child care survey collected data to distinguish families in which both parents, a single parent, one parent in a couple, or none were born outside Canada.

Race was a lesser focus in the literature found, with five documents primarily focused on race, Black mothers/families or children in

particular. This may be exacerbated by the absence of race-based data—neither the Statistics Canada or the Quebec survey collected data on race—rather than lack of interest. It is noteworthy that there is very little literature, research or data focusing on, or even including, mothers with disabilities, and less on mothers with disabilities that included child care. Three documents with a focus on mothers with disabilities are included in the literature list in the Appendix.

What barriers to access were covered in the literature?

Barriers to access to child care were the most frequent topic covered in the included literature, with most of them addressing barriers either in detail or at a high level. Many of these were barriers to child care for newcomers, including outright exclusion via policy for asylum-seekers and undocumented newcomers, language barriers, unfamiliarity and discomfort with the systems for access, lack of culturally responsive practices, fear of leaving a child in child care for survivors of state-sanctioned violence, cost of child care and ineligibility for fee subsidies. Couillard (2023) discussed that the Quebec government does not allow asylum seekers to use publicly funded child care (i.e., funded centres de la petite enfance, or CPEs, or funded for-profit garderies) despite research evidence about the child development benefits of high quality child care such as a non-profit CPE for disadvantaged children.

Unequal or inequitable spatial distribution of regulated child care was considered as a barrier in only a few documents. A 2007 study by Prentice used spatial analysis to look at unequal distribution of regulated child care as a barrier in Winnipeg. She found that “inequity characterizes the distribution of child care in all neighbourhoods. Poorer and more Aboriginal neighbourhoods are particularly disadvantaged, having less access and fewer services than more affluent and suburban areas” (p. 1), which she attributes to “planning failure” (i.e., typically there is no planning for child care, as it is not treated as part of the social infrastructure). She notes that “few Canadian studies have examined territorial distribution of childcare service at the local scale”, citing the very few (older) local analyses that have done so.

Five documents focused specifically on barriers associated with racism or race were less barriers to financial or physical access than barriers to full inclusion in the sense of families feeling welcomed and respected. This may take the form of, for example, “colour blind” or biased approaches by staff and lack of accountability to identify and respond to racism.

The scanty literature about access to child care for mothers with disabilities identified multiple barriers to access to child care. A 2016 project conducted by West Coast LEAF focused on how the absence of adequate child care harmed women’s human rights, safety and well-being, using the lenses of constitutional and international law and human rights. The project included mothers with disabilities as one of six groups included in the analysis. The analysis found

“Mothers with disabilities experience disproportionate barriers to employment, higher rates of precarious employment and increased risks of involvement with the child protection system, making financial security and parenting more difficult. A lack of access to affordable child care services further threatens the economic security of these women, and can put their own health at serious risk by exacerbating their disabilities” (West Coast LEAF, 2016).

What solutions were considered?

A number of documents provided accounts of positive practices. A Montreal study focusing on families with children living in vulnerable situations used participatory research to open up dialogue and action contributing to policy change. A Toronto toolkit provided disaggregated data to be used to inform service and strategy development, while an account of an Alberta pilot project of an intercultural early childhood education program for refugee families involved parents in the development process. An analysis of Toronto’s municipal child care centres described their mandate to serve vulnerable families including immigrants and refugees, families living in shelters and other, highlighting the importance of a strong mandate to support inclusion.

At a policy level, Peters (2023) proposes a three-pronged approach to building a Canadian child care system to tackle systemic racism,

addressing some of the high level policy solutions proposed by Archambault, Côté and Raynault in Quebec, Vandebroek and Lazzari in their paradigm and by the German Equal Access project. Peters proposes that governments need to take on a larger role in planning and delivering child care, for example, ensuring that non-standard hours child care is accessible.

Commitments to inclusivity under CWELCC (2021 - 2023)

As we noted earlier, that the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care plan is in an early stage of implementation provides opportunities for addressing the issues of exclusion and marginalization discussed in this paper. It is of note that Bill C-35¹¹, *An Act respecting early learning and child care*, strengthens the principle of inclusivity by elaborating on it as a Guiding Principle in the Funding section:

7 (1) Federal investments respecting the establishment and maintenance of a Canada-wide early learning and child care system — as well as the efforts to enter into related agreements with the provinces and Indigenous peoples — must be guided by the principles by which early learning and child care programs and services should be accessible, affordable, inclusive and of high quality and must, therefore, aim to...

...(c) support the provision, including in rural and remote communities, of early learning and child care programs and services that are inclusive of children from systematically marginalized groups, including children with disabilities, and of children from English and French linguistic minority communities, that respect and value the diversity of all children and families and that respond to their varying needs; (See House of Commons, Canada).

Additionally, the principle of inclusivity is being operationalized in the bi-lateral agreements between Ottawa and each province/

11 At the time of writing, Bill C-35 had passed Third Reading in the House of Commons (unanimously) and was under review by the Senate committee before being passed into law.

territory and the first action plans¹² put in place to implement the first phase of building the Canada-wide early learning and child care system. Examination of the CWELCC agreements shows that all jurisdictions have broadly agreed to make early learning and child care more inclusive. The language is similar but not identical in all the agreements: most define “inclusivity” similarly, for example, “children with disabilities and children needing enhanced or individual supports, Indigenous children, Black and other racialized children, children of newcomers, and official language minorities” and all state the objective of reducing barriers to inclusivity. Some of the agreements state they will develop an inclusion plan or prioritize under-served groups and communities in expansion plans. All commit to producing a variety of detailed data (indicators) on space creation and participation by demographic groups and age.

Whereas the CWELCC agreements are quite similar to one another, the action plans are less so with regard to commitments on inclusivity; some are quite specific, with target numbers, and some are not. Nevertheless, just about all the provinces and territories have made more-or-less specific commitments vis-a-vis ELCC inclusivity. The inclusivity commitments and targets for each province and territory are provided in Table 2.

12 The first action plans with all provinces and territories covered the period through 2023 and are to be superseded by second action plans.

TABLE 2 **Inclusivity commitments and targets**

NL	<p>Will provide professional development on culturally responsive practice equity, inclusion and outdoor play</p> <p>Will offer an equity-seeking population bursary</p> <p>Will Survey to support inclusion of equity groups</p> <p>Additional spaces for rural, linguistic minority, Indigenous communities</p>
PE	<p>Will offer training on Truth and Reconciliation</p> <p>Will employ inclusion coordinators</p> <p>Will consult with low income, Indigenous, Black and other racialized communities, newcomers to Canada, official language minorities and underserved populations represented through PEI's local organizations, to develop an inclusion plan which is culturally inclusive for both programming and human resource practices.</p> <p>Will increase workforce participation proportionately representing the diverse populations we are serving</p> <p>Will increase proportionately children benefiting from resources and programs designed to serve low income, Indigenous, Black and other racialized communities, newcomers to Canada, official language minorities and underserved populations.</p>
NS	<p>Will provide free school-based programming for three year olds with priority access to families identifying as equity seeking (First Nations/Indigenous, African NS, children with disabilities, newcomers, 2SLBGTQ+) and children from vulnerable families (low income, racialized).</p> <p>Will offer opportunities for under-represented groups to pursue an ECE diploma, targeted to Black/African Nova Scotians, Mi'kmaq/Indigenous, persons with disabilities, Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex Plus (2SLGBTI+), Francophone/Acadian, and newcomer/immigrant populations.</p> <p>Will offer an accelerated diploma with three training institutions with designated places for newcomers, Black/African Nova Scotian, Mi'kmaq/ Indigenous, Francophone/Acadians, and persons with disabilities.</p> <p>Will provide additional PSE tuition support for same groups.</p> <p>Will develop professional development related to culturally responsive practice, equity and inclusion (2023).</p> <p>Will prioritize Indigenous children, Black and other racialized children, children of newcomers, and official language minorities in planning new space expansion.</p>

TABLE 2 **Inclusivity commitments and targets** *continued*

NB	<p>Will explore ways to continue to further remove barriers to equitable access for vulnerable children and children from diverse populations to high quality affordable early learning as an equalizer to create engaged and well-prepared young learners. Vulnerable children and children from diverse populations include, but are not limited to, lower-income families, Indigenous families, lone-parent families, and families in underserved communities, including Black and racialized families; families of children with disabilities and children needing enhanced or individual supports; and families with caregivers who are working non-standard hours.</p> <p>Will use a low-income prototype to target 100 four-year-old children from low-income families or families who would not otherwise have access.</p>
QC	<p>Under the asymmetrical agreement between the federal government and Quebec, Quebec is not required to have an action plan.</p>
ON	<p>Will undertake engagement to develop an inclusion plan that supports child care access to low income children, vulnerable children, children from diverse communities, children with special needs, Francophone children, and Indigenous children.</p> <p>Will develop a plan that supports child care access for low income children, vulnerable children, children from diverse communities and Francophone and Indigenous children</p> <p>Will work with partners to gather data and conduct assessments on barriers to access for children of diverse populations and children with varying abilities to implement targeted strategies that support equitable access for these children in licensed child care.</p> <p>Will collaborate with Indigenous partners, including First Nation and Métis Nation governments and Indigenous organizations, to develop a collaborative plan to ensure that Indigenous children have access to affordable, high-quality and culturally appropriate.</p>
MB	<p>Will develop a comprehensive, integrated and culturally responsive curriculum framework promoting inclusive programming will also set the stage of supporting culturally-based programs and ensuring learning experiences encouraging acceptance of diversity and the histories and cultures of Indigenous peoples in all programs.</p> <p>Will support responsive, integrated and culturally receptive child care programming and services.</p> <p>Will develop and fund a plan to ensure that vulnerable communities, including children with disabilities and children needing enhanced or individual supports, Indigenous children, Black and other racialized children, children of newcomers, and official language minorities, have equitable access to regulated child care spaces with consideration to their assessed need for child care as part Manitoba's enhanced public planning efforts to implement a Canada-wide system.</p> <p>A sub-committee (of the Minister's Consultation Table) on Indigenous child care will be established to identify opportunities for partnership to advance delivery of culturally based programs.</p>

TABLE 2 **Inclusivity commitments and targets** *continued*

SK	<p>Will Increase number of Indigenous children under age 6 years in regulated ELCC spaces, where possible broken down by distinction-based</p>
	<p>Will Increase number of racialized Canadian children, including Black Canadian children under age 6 in regulated ELCC spaces</p>
	<p>To facilitate parental choice and relevant child care options, will invest in fiscal year 2021 to 2022 and fiscal year 2022 to 2023 in defining a range of child care options that best meets the needs and interests of our diverse population. This range of options will inform the space development for vulnerable families such as newcomers to Canada, Black and racialized children, and official language minorities, to ensure that the choices are flexible yet responsive to families who may not be best served by traditional child care models in later years of the agreement.</p>
	<p>In fiscal year 2021 to 2022 and fiscal year 2022 to 2023, will invest in engaging with First Nations and Métis organizations to develop a plan for a coordinated system that reflects the needs and demands of Saskatchewan’s First Nations and Métis peoples that is centered on children, grounded in culture, guided by leaders in indigenous early learning and child care in the province.</p>
AB	<p>Will develop and fund a plan to ensure that vulnerable children and children from diverse populations, including but not limited to children living in low income; Indigenous children; Black and other racialized children; children of newcomers to Canada, and official language minorities, have equitable access to regulated child care spaces, in proportion to their presence in the population.</p>
	<p>Will work toward inclusive and equitable spaces that are responsive to Alberta’s diverse communities and will fund a plan of new space creation through operational grants and other targeted cultural programming supports to existing programs.</p>
	<p>Will also work towards providing children with specific cultural or support needs with equitable access to regulated child care spaces.</p>
BC	<p>By combining some federal contributions to provincial contributions will provide expanded supports for children with support needs, and Indigenous-led child care, in order to:</p>
	<p>develop a plan and make progress to ensure vulnerable children and children from diverse populations, including but not limited to children living in low income; Indigenous children; Black and other racialized children; children with disabilities and children needing enhanced or individual supports; children of newcomers to Canada; and official language minorities, have equitable access to regulated child care spaces, in proportion to their presence in the population.</p>
	<p>develop a collaborative plan with relevant First Nations and Métis Nation organizations in BC to ensure that Indigenous children will have access to affordable, quality and culturally appropriate ELCC.</p>
	<p>space creation projects will continue to be prioritized for funding based on need, including a focus on projects serving vulnerable children and children from diverse populations such as children with disabilities and/or support needs, Indigenous children, Black and other racialized children, children of newcomers, and official language minorities.</p>

TABLE 2 **Inclusivity commitments and targets** *continued*

YT	<p>Will develop and fund a plan to ensure that vulnerable children and children from diverse populations, have equitable access to regulated child care spaces, in proportion to their presence in Yukon’s population. This will include, but not limited to, children living in low income, First Nations children, Black and other racialized children, children of newcomers to Canada, and official language minorities.</p> <p>Will develop and fund a plan to ensure that new space creation ensures diverse and/or vulnerable children and families, including children with disabilities and children needing enhanced or individual supports, Indigenous children, Black and other racialized children, children of newcomers, and official language minorities, have spaces equivalent to or greater than their share of the population in the Yukon.</p> <p>Federal investments will be directed to create a fund that enables child care operators to develop and offer culturally inclusive programming, with a target of at least 250 children benefiting from cultural programming annually.</p>
NT	<p>Will develop and fund a plan to ensure that new space creation ensures diverse and/or vulnerable children and families, including children with disabilities and children needing enhanced or individual supports, Indigenous children, Black and other racialized children, children of newcomers, and official language minorities, have spaces equivalent to or greater than their share of the population in the territory.</p>
NU	<p>Will develop and fund a plan to ensure that vulnerable children and children from diverse populations have equitable access to regulated child care spaces, in proportion to their presence in the population.</p> <p>By the end of fiscal year 2025 to 2026, all vulnerable children and children from diverse populations, no matter where in the province or territory they live, have increased access to regulated child care.</p> <p>Is committed to ensuring that obligations in Article 32 of the Nunavut Agreement are met effectively and constantly, through meaningful engagement and collaboration with Nunavut Inuit and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated to ensure enhanced social and cultural well-being of Nunavut. This commitment was reinforced in the Katujjiqatigiiniq Protocol signed in 2020. This means that the GN ELCC division is dedicated to working together with NTI and the Regional Inuit Associations (RIAs) to ensure Inuit children are respected and appropriately represented in this Action Plan for the ELCC Agreement. This means adopting Inuit-centred principles for inclusion and equity in ELCC in Nunavut, in relation to Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit.</p>

Source: [Canada: Early learning and child care agreements \(2021, 2022\)](#).

The *Inclusive child care for all* summit: What we heard

As we noted earlier, a draft of this paper was circulated for the summit held in Ottawa by the *Inclusive child care for all* project in May 2023. The summit brought together representatives from the child care movement from across Canada and women representing the groups with which

the project is concerned – newcomers to Canada, racialized women and mothers with disabilities. The two day event featured information-sharing, presentations by participating groups about their work which included research, outreach, service provision and advocacy, and discussed solutions to the issues of exclusion and under-representation in regulated child care identified.

Overall, what we heard about the scope and nature of barriers to child care for newcomers to Canada, racialized women and mothers with disabilities, based on lived experience, corroborated the research, data and analysis included in this report. The information in this section is drawn from notes, recordings and the summit’s summary report but provides only a flavour of the very rich discussion. The summit output is followed by a set of working recommendations aimed at ensuring that as Canada moves forward on its first Canada-wide child care policy, the principle of “inclusion” will be fully embraced and operationalized.

The summit report summarized some of the number of major challenges for newcomers and racialized families, as reported and discussed:

- limited availability of child care spaces
- particular lack of availability of non-standard hours child care;
- long waiting lists;
- complex fee subsidy applications;
- lack of timely relevant information and support in the complex process of securing a space;
- difficulty finding child care programs to meet cultural needs.

Other issues raised were the need to monitor and address racism in ELCC, as well as the importance of collecting data to inform the issue of inclusion and inequality of access. It was noted, for example, that non-profits delivering child care “may operate within racist and colonial systems that play a role in causing inequitable access to child care”.

The report noted the “unique and significant challenges in accessing licensed child care services” facing mothers with disabilities and that “lack of access to affordable and accessible child care services further threatens their economic security all the while putting them in unsafe

situations where they are left to care for their children without adequate support (Summit report: pg. 4). Summit participants also discussed that the lack of funding for Indigenous ELCC, especially for urban Indigenous families – the fastest growing Indigenous group – was a barrier to providing services. Participants also emphasized the importance of distinction-based child care for Inuit, Métis, and First Nations communities.

Under the heading *Advocating for change*, the summit showcased a variety of community projects attempting to overcome barriers to child care. Examples of these, which provide only a flavour, include the [Pacific Immigrant and Refugee Society](#)'s project, which allowed the group to bring immigrant women's voices to "decision-making tables, coalition gatherings, and policy spaces"; the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care's project focused on "strengthening the voice and decision-making capacity of racialized mothers and educators, and advancing inclusive policies and practices at all levels", a project of the YWCA of St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador focused on immigrant, refugee, and migrant women and the outcomes of a community survey by South Asian Women and Immigrant Services, which has been documenting how high fees, long waitlists and the fee subsidy system act as barriers to economic security for the women in its community for 15 years, were showcased.

Discussion

Overall, the issue of unequal access to regulated high quality child care for under-represented groups of women, families or children has been studied, analyzed or addressed surprisingly little in Canada¹³. Even being able to answer the *Inclusive child care for all*'s first research question "Which groups of women are under-represented in regulated early learning and child care?" using the available data is more suggestive than definitive. However, the belief that biases and barriers against newcomers, racialized and more vulnerable families is certainly supported by the available data and research and corroborated by locally

13 There is only limited data and research on many key child care topics, not only exclusion and unequal access. The federal government is developing a data and research strategy.

or regionally-based experience and research, although there are many more questions to be answered.

The information about barriers seems consistent throughout the available literature and the reporting from the groups participating at the summit. These identify that barriers to access to regulated child care run from downright exclusion, to too limited or physically unavailable services, to high costs for parents, to program-associated characteristics such as insufficient cultural responsiveness and waitlists, to family characteristics linked to families' own contexts and experiences. All these suggest, as Vandebroek and Lazzari's work discussed in the first part of this paper outlines, that if true inclusivity and more equal access to high quality early learning and child care is a goal, a comprehensive multi-layered approach encompassing policy, provision and family characteristics will be most successful. All this points to the importance of tackling the issues of unequal access and exclusion from high quality child care for under-represented groups of women in a proactive multi-pronged way, both as part of building a broad universal child care system and as a specific focus within it. The output from the summit including the diverse experiences of the projects presented support this perspective.

Working recommendations

We have noted that the most effective, or the only, way to address inequitable access and inclusion is for governments to develop and implement public policies that adequately address issues of availability, affordability and quality. As we see from Vandebroek and Lazzari's analysis, addressing unequal access and exclusion from high quality child care for under-represented groups of women begins — but does not end with — building a broad, affordable, equitable, universal child care system for all. The working recommendations that follow outline the Canada-wide child care movement's recommendations for transforming early learning and child care from an inequitable and patchwork market to a system to provide the foundation for equity and inclusion. The recommendations take the form of a roadmap leading

to child care for all developed by Child Care Now and its partners across Canada and used in the *Inclusive child care for all* project's toolkit. Beyond the roadmap, the literature reviewed suggest (especially Vandenbroeck and Lazzari's framework, the Institut de la statistique de Quebec's survey and presentations and discourse from the summit) that fully addressing unequal access and exclusion is likely to need further policy development and effective implementation to address inclusion of under-represented groups of women and children as specific focuses even in universal non-market child care systems.

The roadmap's 10 points encompass the policy needed to transform early learning and child care to an equitable inclusive system and are based on two fundamental changes governments must make:

- Private funding (such as parent fees) and private management of child care services must be replaced with public (government) funding and more public (government) management (such as wage scales for staff and set fees for parents).
- Concrete public strategies to increase the supply of not-for-profit and public operated child care must be developed.

1 Public management of ELCC provision

An important element in transforming child care to a well-functioning system must be a shift to public responsibility for planning, managing, maintaining and expanding regulated child care. This will mean moving some key responsibilities from private groups or individuals to provincial/territorial governments or other government bodies such as municipalities.

Planning and managing child care provision includes but is not limited to: assessing community need, determining the type, location and features of services, setting parent fees and staff compensation, developing and maintaining systems to ensure quality, collecting data and conducting research and evaluation and using results to make ongoing system improvements.

2 Direct and sufficient public funding of ELCC operational budgets

Child care programmes must be fully funded according to a formula that includes decent and fair compensation for staff (85-90% of a non-profit centre budget) and all other programme costs. The specific formulas for funding services and the system by which parents pay any required fees would be designed by each province/territory. To ensure the success of the transformation to universal child care, a full operational funding model, with parents paying up to a fee cap of \$10 a day, with geared-to-income fees from \$0 a day for lower income parents, needs to be established.

3 Public funding must come with conditions

All child care operators who choose to be part of the new publicly funded child care system – whether public, non-profit or for-profit – must be part of public accountability structures with conditions designed to ensure the best uses of public funds.

Provincial/territorial conditions for receiving public ELCC funds must include the following: The parent fee structure of the province/territory must be respected (extra-billing of any kind will be prohibited);

- Staff must be paid according to a competitive, provincial/territorial wage grid determined through consultation with representatives of those who work in the sector;
- Provincial/territorial pedagogical, regulatory and quality frameworks must be respected and implemented;
- Service providers must participate in quality and system improvement activities as determined by the province/territory;
- Parent advisory bodies with input into the operation of a centre or family child care service must be put in place;
- Cultural safety for First Nations, Métis and Inuit children and families must be ensured;
- Children with additional support needs must be fully included to participate in programmes;
- Children and families in all their diversities and identities,

including Indigenous children and families, children and families with differing abilities, racialized children and families, immigrant and refugee children and families and 2SLGBTQI+ children and families must be fully respected and included;

- Funded service providers must regularly provide the province/territory and delegated government entities with financial and other information required for accountability purposes;
- Funded service providers must participate in research, data collection and provision, and evaluation;
- Funded service providers must maintain transparency and accountability in financial and governance matters.

4 Publicly led and funded expansion

Publicly led and funded expansion is needed to end the mismatch between service supply and parental demand that has created shortages of services and inequitable access. Sufficient capital funding to support the costs of expanded public and non-profit ELCC facilities is required.

Historically, public responsibility and planning to ensure other essential services – such as schools, roads and sewers – has not yet been the norm in Canadian child care. Responsibility for developing new early learning and child care programmes — often including securing capital funds — has largely been a private responsibility in Canada with non-profit groups or entrepreneurs stepping up where they have the capacity and the interest. To ensure adequate expansion, child care expansion must become a public responsibility, rather than a private one.

5 Expansion plans and strategies

Development of a multifaceted expansion strategy must part of the action plan of each province/territory.

Provincial/territorial expansion strategies are likely to vary according to each jurisdiction's situation but each needs to include:

- Targets and timetables for meeting coverage goals;
- A capital planning and funding process to meet expansion

- targets;
- Integrating ELCC into public planning processes at all levels;
 - Strategies for expanding ELCC in existing and new publicly owned buildings, properties, and publicly owned land;
 - Strategies for ensuring that publicly funded capital assets regardless of where they are developed, or who develops them, remain in public hands;
 - Ensuring that there are designated local or regional public entities to assume responsibility for ELCC planning; for ensuring that new public and non-profit facilities are developed; for managing data collection, public reporting and liaising with provincial/territorial officials to ensure provincial/territorial expansion targets and timetables are met;
 - Ensuring that there is data collection, research, evaluation and reporting on all aspects of expansion.

6 Expansion of ELCC must be public and non-profit

To protect the transformed child care system and public resources, expansion of publicly funded ELCC must be limited to public and non-profit services.

In 2021, 29% of child care centre spaces Canada-wide were for-profit, with many families relying on the for-profit sector for child care. The agreed-upon policy solution would include operational funding of existing for-profit services while setting robust conditions for all ELCC operators receiving public operational funding.

There should be no further growth in the for-profit sector however. If Canada's aim is to build a publicly funded and managed, accessible, affordable, high quality and equitable early learning and child care system, expanding for-profit services is the wrong direction.

7 Workforce strategies

A well-qualified workforce is central to a high quality child care system. Without it, expansion will be hampered and quality will not be achieved. Child care workforce issues are complex, with layered interrelated

factors to be tackled through comprehensive workforce strategies

Workforce issues fall into five five interlinked concepts. A comprehensive workforce strategy will address all concepts:

- Recruitment and retention
- Compensation and benefits
- Education and training
- Working conditions
- Respect and recognition

8 Data and research

Building a quality ELCC system is an ongoing project requiring monitoring, ongoing quality improvement and system corrections based on experience, evidence and evaluation. A comprehensive data and research strategy is regarded as being a necessary part of public policy development and system building.

A collaborative Canada-wide data and research strategy including the federal government, with provincial/territorial/Indigenous partners, researchers and the child care community and data and research on related topics such as labour force participation, parental leave, poverty and social exclusion, and others is integral to transformation. A key element of this will be the commitment to making child care data and research widely available to the public, the ELCC sector and researchers and policy experts.

9 Public accountability

Governments must develop and publish annual and multi-year ELCC plans, monitor and report publicly on their progress and update plans based on lessons learned and the evolving ELCC needs and context.

A quality child care system built through the significant expenditure of public funds demands effective public accountability including:

- Publicly available plans, with targets and benchmarks;
- Annual public reports;

- Clear, comprehensive public reporting standards to ensure accessible, relevant, timely, consistent and comparable data and information on parent fees, compensation of early childhood educators, coverage, inclusion, access according to household income, race, Indigenous identity, geographic location and other factors;
- A defined role for legislators to receive, review, clarify and question reports and data;
- Citizen engagement in development of ELCC goals, plans and monitoring of results;
- Audited public financial reports.

10 Democratic participation

From parent advisory groups to child care sector engagement to citizen engagement processes at all levels of government, democratic participation should inform and support the implementation and ongoing operation of a high quality ELCC system.

An effective approach to democratic participation in building Canada's ELCC system will incorporate two fundamental principles:

Participation must be meaningful.

Participation must be valued.

The child care advocacy movement has relied on the largely volunteer work of advocates – mainly women. While volunteers will always play an important role in the movement, relying on women's unpaid/underpaid labour is a barrier to participation. Their time, energy and expertise should be resourced with core, long-term, organizational public funding prioritizing inclusion of diverse voices and multiple perspectives and experiences in the child care advocacy movement.

Conclusions

Today – as Canada is still much closer to the beginning of implementing the long-awaited, inclusive early learning and child care system for all

than to the end – advocates for access to better child care for all should be thinking about a suite of tools to use to achieve the truly inclusive universal child care system long envisioned. This means: strengthened, more focused, collaborative and diverse advocacy, more and better data and research, and — on the part of governments — more definitive policy making including targets and timetables, active monitoring of results, support for and inclusive participation of civil society actors at all levels.

As we observed at the outset in this paper, with commitments by federal and provincial/territorial governments to build a universal early learning and care system with inclusivity as a main principle, we have a unique opportunity to shape Canada-wide child care policy to meet the needs of women, children and families in new, and previously unachievable ways.

To do this, the principle of inclusive access must become more than words.

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Appendix: Table of literature reviewed

The table is organized by publication date, most recent first.

TITLE / AUTHOR / YEAR	TYPE	SUMMARY
Access to Early Childhood Services by Precarious Status Families: Negotiating Multiple Borders in a Sanctuary City, Toronto Canada Bernhard, J. K., Young, J. E. E. & Goldring, L. 2023 Toronto	Academic working paper	<p>Precarious status families include at least one member, parent or child, without authorized sociolegal status. U.S. based research analyzes the spill-over effect of a parental undocumented status on citizen children among mixed-status families. The authors consider whether such a process plays out in Canada as well by reviewing Sanctuary City policies meant to mitigate status-based exclusions by promoting access without fear. They examine policies and practices in Toronto related to services that families with young children require, focusing on what is specified in policies as well as discrepancies in how policies are applied and experiences of access in the areas of childbirth, childcare, parenting programs, and schooling. The paper is based on a review of literature and government documents, and information from key informants. Consistent with others, their analysis shows that the City's access agenda is entangled with policies from other levels of government or institutions that do not follow this agenda (e.g., police and border services). Combined with inadequate information and discretionary and uneven implementation, families experience a patchwork of access in practice across the four service areas. The authors conclude that despite the access agenda, spill-over is structured into the Sanctuary City, although it plays out unevenly thanks to points of access. This generates the conditions for multigenerational punishment for children and parents in precarious status families, regardless of place of birth or sociolegal status. Further research can address these dynamics in other contexts. Policy recommendations include municipal advocacy for status for all, and clear and consistent messaging across institutions and levels of government.</p>
Vulnérabilité à la maternelle: comment se portent les tout-petits issus de l'immigration? Couillard, K. 2023 Quebec	Popular article - early childhood field	<p>Due to Quebec Ministère de la Famille policy, the children of asylum seekers are not eligible for a space in a funded educational child care service, even if the parent has a work permit. Asylum seekers are however entitled to non-funded child care (i.e. unfunded garderies and non-recognized child care homes) and drop-in day care (haltes-garderies). The authors point out that this is despite data collected in Montreal in 2012 that shows that foreign-born children who exclusively attended a CPE (non-profit child care centre) were five times less likely to be vulnerable in at least one area of development than those who did not attend any type of child care.</p>

TITLE / AUTHOR / YEAR	TYPE	SUMMARY
Building an anti-racist child-care system in Canada Peters, K. 2023 Canada	Commentary	<p>In this article, Kaitlin Peters envisions a three-pronged approach to building a Canadian child care system that tackles systemic racism facing racialized children, families and child care workers, which involves: (1) ongoing, accessible anti-racism training for all child care workers; (2) delivery models that meet the needs of racialized families; and (3) a workforce strategy that retains and supports child care workers to deliver inclusive child care. The author claims that governments must take on a direct role in planning and delivering child care, especially to ensure that more non-standard hour child care is available for racialized parents employed in precarious work. The article notes that “low wages and poor working conditions must be understood as a symptom of systemic sexism and racism” in a child care workforce that is mostly women, many of whom are racialized and immigrant. To conclude, Peters calls on other provincial/territorial governments to set concrete timelines for when equality in child care coverage is to be achieved for racialized children.</p>
Journeys through early learning and child care in Edmonton: The experiences of ethnocultural families de Vos, P.F., Mukhi, N., Illumin, P., Chiu, Y., Gokiart, R., and the Multicultural Health Brokers Cooperative 2022 Alberta	Technical report by the Edmonton Council for Early Learning and Care and partners	<p>The Journeys Project (2021) conducted focus group and key informant interviews with 30 parents from 8 ethnocultural communities in Edmonton, who had children aged 0 – 5 in early learning and child care (ELCC) services. The report weaves together these interview findings into three composite narratives describing ethnocultural families’ experiences of navigating the ELCC system, and offers policy recommendations. The barriers to accessing child care for immigrant families, especially those from a visible minority group, were identified as: lack of culturally responsive practices in existing programs, difficulty navigating the system to find child care and/or to get subsidy due to lack of connections and language, financial barriers due to precarious employment and high parent fees. Possibilities for policy shifts to better serve ethnocultural families and children include: investing in wayfinding and system navigators to help parents access child care, addressing affordability, building a child care workforce who is culturally diverse and/or is capable of delivering culturally responsive child care programs.</p>
Enquête québécoise sur l’accessibilité et l’utilisation des services de garde 2021 - Portrait statistique. Groleau, A., & Aranibar Zeballos, A. 2022 Quebec	Institut de la statistique du Québec report	<p>This survey, sampling parents of more than 13,000 children under the age of five in Quebec, examines non-parental child care needs and use. The survey collected data on how parents sought and used child care services and provides analysis of these data by family characteristics such as occupation, employment status, income, education and whether the parents were born in Canada. The survey found that characteristics such as low income, low education, single parent, and foreign-born parent were more likely to be associated with encounters of obstacles to access child care, including seeking atypical hour child care, high concerns about the cost, delayed or difficult search for a space. Consistent with this, children with respective family backgrounds were overrepresented in those who did not attend child care or kindergarten. Parents’ use of La Place 0-5 (i.e. a “one-stop” tool for child care search and registration provided by the Quebec government) was also part of the study, revealing potential barriers facing families with an immigrant background in accessing child care information.</p>

TITLE / AUTHOR / YEAR	TYPE	SUMMARY
<p>Immigration status can exclude parents from childcare support</p> <p>Arce, F. 2022 Canada</p>	<p>Popular media aimed at immigrant issues</p>	<p>The author discusses how the immigration status of parents can impact their eligibility for childcare subsidies in Canada. Several of the provinces and territories have policies that limit eligibility for subsidies to permanent residents or Canadian citizens, which can make it difficult for immigrant families, including temporary foreign workers, international students, and refugee claimants, to afford child care. This lack of support can have a negative impact on their ability to participate fully in the workforce. The author advocates for more inclusive policies that recognize the diverse needs of immigrant families.</p>
<p>One chance to be a child: A data profile to inform a better future for child and youth well-being in Nova Scotia</p> <p>Department of Pediatrics and Healthy Populations Institute, Dalhousie University 2022 Nova Scotia</p>	<p>Technical report - Dalhousie University</p>	<p>This data profile presents the state of well-being of children and youth in precarious circumstances in Nova Scotia, based on data collected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The report notes that newcomer families' limited access to services may result from their distrust in government institutions, especially in the case of parents who have concerns about their precarious migration status. For example, newcomers who have experienced state-sanctioned trauma may experience heightened anxiety around leaving a child "at a daycare." In addition, the author highlights a shocking finding from the 2019 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Nova Scotia, that one in every two new immigrant children live in poverty compared to approximately one in five non-immigrant children. It is recommended that all essential services for newcomer children and families adopt a trauma-informed, culturally sensitive approach and be accompanied by universally accessible interpretation services.</p>
<p>Amplifying the Voices of Black Families and Educators in Nova Scotia</p> <p>Stirling-Cameron, E., Hamilton-Hinch, B., Watson, C., Hickens, N., Pimentel, M., & McIsaac, J.-L. 2022 Nova Scotia</p>	<p>Research report</p>	<p>This research focuses on the experiences of parents and early childhood educators in Nova Scotia who have and care for young Black children. While nearly every parent participant reported at least one incident of racism and discrimination toward their Black children in early childhood settings, the ECEs indicated feelings of unpreparedness in addressing such issues. The authors note that mainstream, colourblind approaches and ECEs' biases are creating "unsafe spaces" for Black children and families. The report concludes that inclusive and responsive frameworks, policies and practices to improve the cultural safety and needs of Black families need to be implemented to address the lack of universal procedures that "monitors, reports and challenges racism" in early childhood programs in Nova Scotia.</p>

TITLE / AUTHOR / YEAR	TYPE	SUMMARY
<p>Nothing, or almost nothing, to report: Early childhood educators and discursive constructions of colorblindness</p> <p>Berman, R., Daniel, B.-J., Butler, A., MacNevin, M. & Royer, N. 2022 Toronto</p>	Peer-reviewed article	<p>This study examined early childhood educators' accounts of "racial incidents" in child care programs, sampling 11 early childhood educators working at licensed child care centres in Toronto. The article notes that all licensed child care programs operating in the late 1990s in Toronto were required to implement an anti-racism policy and to report any "racial incidents" as a "Serious Occurrence" to the city's Children's Services Division. These operational criterias are, respectively, "no longer a priority" or removed without explanation, since the responsibility for child care licensing was moved to the Ministry of Education in 2015. All the educators in the study stated that they had never reported nor witnessed any incidents of racism in their work. The authors argued that this common tendency to minimize or negate the possibility of racial incidents in child care settings did not mean that there was actually "nothing to report." It rather signals a need for policy changes to address the lack of accountability to acknowledge racism as well as the lack of support for educators to identify and respond to racial incidents. Specifically, the authors recommended use of explicit language to name race and racism in provincial and municipal policies and guidelines, explicit definition and examples of acts of racism in centre-based policies, mandated documentation of racial incidents and educators' responses and sustained anti-racism and anti-bias curriculum in pre-service education and in-service professional development. The author discussed the problematic, then requirement to group racial incidents with other "Serious Occurrences" and to publicly post the "highly stigmatizing" reports—the mechanism to be replaced by some form of documentation shared between staff and the parents of children involved.</p>
<p>Understanding systemic barriers across the lifespan: a human rights inquiry into disability and mothering</p> <p>Smith, J. 2021 Canada</p>	PhD Thesis	<p>This study explored the many barriers to information and services that mothers with disabilities encounter across the lifespan by conducting interviews with mothers with disabilities and examining existing research. Participants in this study reported repeated negative experiences in and around schools and child care centres, citing structural and attitudinal barriers. Child care centres are often not located within physically accessible locations and following specific routines, such as where parents are asked to store strollers, may not be possible. Some participants felt that they were unjustly singled out by educators, and many more provided examples of programs failing or refusing to make accommodations. Important information, such as daily care reports in child care and report cards in school, are transmitted only in print, creating an accessibility barrier for parents with vision or processing disabilities. A majority of participants expressed feeling as though they had to continually educate people and institutions on how to create accessible spaces.</p>

TITLE / AUTHOR / YEAR	TYPE	SUMMARY
<p>Patterns of participation in early learning and child care among families with potential socioeconomic disadvantages in Canada</p> <p>Findlay, L., Wei, L. & Arim, R. 2021 Canada</p>	<p>Statistics Canada report</p>	<p>This study examines the patterns of ELCC participation among families with potential socioeconomic disadvantages in Canada, using a national survey on child care for children aged 0 – 5 years linked to socioeconomic information. Findings show that low-income families were about 20% less likely than families not in low income to use non-parental child care. After other sociodemographic characteristics were controlled for, the income-based gap in child care use shrank, but persisted. More than one-third of all parents who were using child care reported having difficulties finding a child care arrangement. Finding child care available in the local community and finding affordable child care were the two most frequently reported difficulties.</p>
<p>Differences in child care participation between immigrant and nonimmigrant families</p> <p>Kingsbury, M, Findlay, L, Arim, R. & Wei, L. 2021 Canada</p>	<p>Peer-reviewed article; Statistics Canada study</p>	<p>After adjusting for demographic factors, children from immigrant backgrounds (one parent arrived in Canada within 10 years) were less likely to be in nonparental child care but more likely to be in licensed care than those from nonimmigrant families.</p>
<p>Parents' use of child care services and differences in use by mothers' employment status</p> <p>Statistics Canada 2021 Canada</p>	<p>Statistics Canada report</p>	<p>This study examines child care usage among Canadian families, including types used, cost, reasons for selecting a given type, and reasons for not using care. Recognizing that use of child care and mothers' employment are linked, this study considers how use of child care varies in relation to characteristics of mothers' employment, including type of employment, work schedule, and sector of employment. The study found that geographic, demographic, and socioeconomic factors all play a role, and that mothers who were employed full-time with a regular schedule were more likely to use child care than mothers with part-time or irregular work. Understanding the association between parents' employment characteristics and child care use is particularly important in light of research, notably studies on Quebec's universal child care program, that show investments in child care can have a positive impact on mother's labour force participation.</p>

TITLE / AUTHOR / YEAR	TYPE	SUMMARY
<p>Review of Toronto Early Learning and Child Care Services: Their unique contribution to Toronto's equity, inclusion and poverty reduction goals</p> <p>City of Toronto Children's Services 2021 Toronto</p>	<p>Report on City of Toronto municipal centres</p>	<p>A study of Toronto's municipal child care centres conducted between June 2019 and January 2020 looks at the benefits that these city-run centres provide children, families, communities and the broader child care sector. The analysis found that municipally operated child care centres have a mandate and infrastructure in place to serve vulnerable families in underserved neighbourhoods, many of which are families with low income, living in shelters, escaping war, experiencing dislocation and trauma. Toronto's city-run child care centres adopt practices that play a significant role in supporting newcomer families: strong partnerships with other city and community social and health services relevant to navigating Canadian culture and climate and a more effective operational model to manage greater vacancies often associated with short-term enrolment of children in families living in shelters as they move out of the area to more permanent housing.</p> <p>"When mandates are clear and training is intentional, child care can open opportunities for more impactful inclusion in the design and delivery of programs." (p. 64)</p>
<p>What we heard: Educators supporting newcomer families</p> <p>Mardhani-Bayne, A., Freeborn, C. & Soetaert, C. 2021 Alberta</p>	<p>Research report</p>	<p>Researchers conducted focus groups with educators who serve newcomer families to discuss what newcomer families have communicated about their conceptions of quality child care, the barriers they encounter to accessing and participating in programs, and strategies that educators can use to support their settlement and integration. Participants discussed the fundamental necessity of building relationships with families as a prerequisite to effective collaboration, and described how inflexible or uncomfortable educators can create further barriers to inclusion. While all families have their own unique needs, many newcomer families appreciate multimodal communications, opportunities to volunteer in the program, and collaborating with educators that respect their knowledge and experience, and demonstrate willingness to try different approaches, including incorporating home practices into the program whenever possible.</p>
<p>"COVID-19-Inspired" Innovations in Early Learning and Care for Newcomer Children: A Rapid Evaluation</p> <p>Krupa, E. & Selvanandan, V. 2021 Canada</p>	<p>Evaluation report of Care for Newcomer Children services</p>	<p>This article describes an evaluation of the impact of COVID-19 on early learning and care services for newcomer families. The study aimed to understand the challenges that newcomer families faced in accessing these services during the pandemic and evaluate the effectiveness of innovative solutions developed in response. The evaluation found that many newcomer families encountered difficulties in accessing ELCC services such as language barriers, limited financial resources, lack of access to technology, limited digital literacy, and limited time to participate in the program outside of their work, language classes, caregiving and other responsibilities. The study also highlighted the effectiveness of innovative solutions such as virtual playgroups and online learning in overcoming these challenges and providing support to newcomer families. The findings underscore the importance of flexibility and innovation in responding to the needs of vulnerable populations during times of crisis, particularly for newcomer families who may face additional barriers in accessing essential services.</p>

TITLE / AUTHOR / YEAR	TYPE	SUMMARY
<p>Low-income racialized children and access to quality ECEC in Ontario</p> <p>Butler, A. 2021 Ontario</p>	<p>Book chapter</p> <p>Equity as Praxis in Early Childhood Education and Care Google Books. Chapter 2</p>	<p>In this chapter, the author identifies and organizes the barriers to high-quality ECEC programs that low-income racialized children and their families face into three main categories: financial, spatial, and cultural and racial. Financial barriers include the high costs of care, which lead to many low-income parents choosing low-quality, unregulated care. Spatial barriers include the lack of programs and services available in low-income areas, and a reliance on public transportation. Cultural and racial barriers include the lack of culturally relevant programming available to racialized and indigenous children, and the likelihood that racist incidents will go unreported. The number of Ontario residents who identify as a member of a racialized group is expected to continue to increase as the majority of immigrants continue to make Ontario their destination. Within this context, the author explores and emphasizes the need for coordinated and comprehensive policy initiatives that address the systemic barriers faced by these demographics and promotes equity in ECEC access and quality.</p>
<p>Early childhood education and care access for children from disadvantaged backgrounds: Using a framework to guide intervention</p> <p>Archambault, J., Côté, D. & Raynault, M.-F. Quebec 2020</p>	<p>Peer-reviewed article</p>	<p>In order to improve access to quality ECEC for children from marginalized backgrounds, it is important to understand the factors leading to these inequities. This paper is based on a synthesis of published literature on interventions aimed at improving access to ECEC. The authors propose a framework identifying the spectrum of factors influencing access to quality ECEC for disadvantaged populations, as well as different interventions that have been taken to improve access to ECEC opportunities for children from low socioeconomic and/or new immigrant backgrounds. They suggest that the framework proposed in this paper serves not only as a framework by which to understand the overlapping processes, factors, and stages affecting access to ECEC, but also as a model to help decision makers coordinate their efforts and maximize their impact towards more equity in access to quality early childhood education.</p>

TITLE / AUTHOR / YEAR	TYPE	SUMMARY
<p>Newcomer families' participation in early childhood education programs</p> <p>Massing, C., Kikulwe, D. & Ghadi, N. 2020 Saskatchewan</p>	Peer reviewed article	<p>Massing et al. (2020) explored the challenges newcomers face when accessing child care in Regina, Saskatchewan, using focus groups and surveys with newcomers and stakeholders working with newcomers. Participants identified three tensions related to accessing ECEC programs: social networks, necessity and opportunity, and socialization goals. The study found several factors that make accessing child care more difficult for newcomer families, including: the loss of familial and social networks, long waitlists, high parent fees, and issues with subsidy. Only a quarter of the newcomers in the study had subsidized child care, noting challenges such as strict eligibility criteria, complicated application process, and insufficient amount of subsidy. Education and employment opportunities for the parents were limited as a consequence of their difficulty accessing child care.</p> <p>Newcomers' child care choices were affected by both their cultural beliefs about child rearing and their aspiration for integration into the dominant society. The study reveals newcomer families' strong preference for child care arrangements that favoured home language and culture preservation, but many also considered finding child care spaces as 'an opportunity to construct new social networks.'</p>
<p>Childcare deserts and distributional disadvantages: the legacies of split childcare policies and programmes in Canada</p> <p>Prentice, S. & White, L. A. 2019 Canada</p>	Peer reviewed article	<p>Prentice & White (2019) argue that distributional inequities in access to child care (i.e. child care deserts) resulted from the patchwork/mixed market of services that rely on the private sector and demand-side funding, in which governments lack direct mechanisms to "encourage service expansion in underserved areas, to promote quality, or to regulate costs" (p. 61). Authors' review of Canadian literature on regional/spatial inequities in child care access highlights that "the worst access was found where the poorest children lived" (p. 61).</p>
<p>How do mothers with disabilities experience the world?</p> <p>Disabled Women's Network of Canada 2017 Canada</p>	Interview	<p>In this interview, the experiences of mothers with disabilities and the unique challenges they face are discussed. There is a lack of accessibility and accommodation in healthcare, child care, and parenting resources. Support programs for mothers with disabilities are rare and some specifically exclude child care activities. Schools, parks, and child care centres are often not accessible. Parenting resources that provide strategies for specific circumstances (e.g. missing a limb, upper body weakness) should be developed to supplement currently existing resources which typically assume that a parent is able-bodied. Mothers with disabilities face attitudinal barriers, discrimination and societal stigma often leading to social exclusion and isolation, even from the workers and service providers intended to support them.</p>

TITLE / AUTHOR / YEAR	TYPE	SUMMARY
<p>Educating early childhood educators in Canada: A bridging program for immigrant and refugee childcare practitioners</p> <p>Kirova, A., Massing, C., Prochner, L. & Cleghorn, A. 2016 Canada</p>	Peer-reviewed article	<p>Increasing diversity in cities in North America in general and Canada in particular requires recruitment and training of early childhood educators representing those groups, including immigrant and refugee women who see child care work as accessible to newcomers. In the context of Canada where multiculturalism has been an official federal policy since 1985, Early Childhood Teacher Education (ECTE) programs aim to prepare students to work with culturally diverse children and their families. Paradoxically, however, students in ECTE programs who come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are not recognized as possessing cultural competence because their skills and knowledges are marginalized in the dominant discourse. Data from a Bridging program specifically designed both to meet immigrant and refugee participants' particular learning needs and to build on their strengths, are presented in order to demonstrate the main tensions between personal/cultural and professional knowledge the students experienced in the program as they encountered the dominant early childhood education (ECE) discourses as part of their courses. The findings elucidate issues and strategies that are most likely to be effective for teacher education programs in multiethnic/multicultural contexts. The research contributes to the body of literature that aims at reconceptualising the existing framework for ECTE so that students from diverse cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and religious backgrounds are seen as holders of knowledge alongside the theorists and experts in the field of ECE.</p>
<p>Helping immigrant children and families become new Canadians</p> <p><i>Interaction</i> 2016 Canada</p>	Magazine issue, Canadian Child Care Federation	<p>This issue continues a series of articles on newcomers to Canada connected, in some way, to access to or experience with early childhood education. Of particular interest is the article Bridging Between Cultural and Professional Practice in Diverse Early Childhood Settings. The authors proceed from the understanding that ECEC and "Developmentally Appropriate Practice" have been anchored in theories of development that advance only Euro-North American values, norms, and practices, and that newcomer children and families held against these norms are seen as lacking. The authors suggest that this as an opportunity for immigrant ECEs to make meaningful contributions based on their knowledge and lived experiences to post-secondary education and ECEC practice and discuss the benefits of doing so.</p>

TITLE / AUTHOR / YEAR	TYPE	SUMMARY
<p>High stakes: The impacts of child care on the human rights of women and children</p> <p>West Coast LEAF 2016 British Columbia</p>	Technical report	<p>As the culmination of the Right to Child Care project, this report features diverse women’s real-life stories in the form of affidavits, about how the inadequacy of the child care system has impacted them and their children—undermining their safety, well-being, and human rights. The report analyzes the legal implications of these harms through the lenses of human rights, constitutional, and international law. Among the six areas examined are immigration status and mothers with disabilities. As a result of Canadian immigration policy, access to child care services has a particular impact on women without legal immigration status who have fled violence. The financial insecurity that flows from an inability to access affordable and adequate care compounds with other aspects of vulnerability and undermines their ability to legally remain in Canada with their children. Mothers with disabilities experience disproportionate barriers to employment, higher rates of precarious employment and increased risks of involvement with the child protection system, making financial security and parenting more difficult. A lack of access to affordable child care services further threatens the economic security of these women, and can put their own health at serious risk by exacerbating their disabilities. The report calls on BC to take immediate steps to adopt and implement the \$10aDay Plan to make child care significantly more affordable for all, ensure free care for families with lower incomes, and ultimately improve access to high-quality care for every child in BC who needs it. It also recommends that the BC government take urgent action to provide free child care immediately to those families with the greatest need.</p>
<p>Settlement needs of newcomer children</p> <p>Valencia, M. 2015 Canada</p>	Technical report	<p>While newcomer families and ECE staff may have conflicting language priorities, the authors emphasize the benefits of promoting both second language acquisition and supporting the maintenance of the child’s home language. “Children feel frightened, isolated, and learning becomes more difficult” when their first language is not encouraged, and not learning the local language may lead to bullying, social rejection. Recognizing that the challenges faced by children settling in a new country are numerous, and the consequences of leaving them unaddressed may be profound and lifelong, the authors make policy and practice recommendations for ECE programs and staff who work with newcomer families to support the development, socialization, and well-being of these children. The authors conclude that, for newcomer children fortunate enough to find enrolment in an early childhood program, ECEs play a pivotal role in adjustment.</p>
<p>Portrait du parcours préscolaire des enfants montréalais</p> <p>Guay, D., Laurin, I., Bigras, N., Toussaint, P. & Fournier, M. 2015 Quebec</p>	Technical report by l’Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de Montréal	<p>This report paints a portrait of the preschool education pathways of Montreal children from birth to entry into kindergarten based on information collected in the 2012 Enquête montréalaise sur l’expérience préscolaire des enfants de maternelle (EMEP). A smaller proportion of children from low income families (75%) used non-parental child care compared to more affluent families (93%). Children from low-income families were significantly more likely to have both parents immigrated to Canada in the past five years (28.4% vs. 5.8%) and to have other family characteristics that may be an economic and/or social disadvantage such as overcrowded housing, unsafe neighborhood, lack of easy access to public resources (e.g. park, library, community centre). On transition from child care to kindergarten, the proportion of children from low-income families who left their child care programs to enter public four-year-old kindergarten was about three times higher than wealthier families (27% vs 10%).</p>

TITLE / AUTHOR / YEAR	TYPE	SUMMARY
<p><u>Working the second shift, settling in Canada and other struggles; narratives of working African immigrant mothers in Toronto</u></p> <p>Osman, M. M. 2014 Toronto</p>	<p>Major research paper, Ryerson U, Faculty of Social Work</p>	<p>The author uses a qualitative research method to collect and analyze data from interviews with working African-immigrant mothers in Toronto. The paper focuses on the challenges these women face in their daily lives, including balancing work and family responsibilities, navigating a new cultural and social environment, and dealing with systemic barriers to their integration into Canadian Society.</p> <p>The paper highlights the double burden faced by these mothers who have to work in low-paying jobs while also managing their households and taking care of their children. The author argues that these challenges are further compounded by system racism and discrimination that limit their access to education, employment, and other opportunities.</p> <p>The research paper also explores the coping strategies used by these mothers to overcome their challenges, including relying on their social networks, seeking help from the community organizations, and developing a sense of resilience and determination.</p> <p>The author calls for policy intervention that addresses the systemic barriers faced by these women and promotes their full participation in Canadian society.</p>
<p><u>Services de garde et clientèles vulnérables—Synthèse des connaissances sur l’accessibilité et l’utilisation des services de garde: leçons pour le Québec</u></p> <p>Raynault, M.-F., & Côté, D. 2014 Quebec</p>	<p>Research report for the Quebec Family Ministry (In French)</p>	<p>In this report, the authors identified an existing problem in the Quebec child care system: The children most likely to benefit from child care services are proportionally using it less. A literature review was completed to examine the barriers that explain this under-representation as well as measures to address them. The review reveals factors that hinder access to child care for immigrant families, including language, lack of information and delay in the registration process, lack of awareness regarding preparing children for kindergarten and little priority given to socializing their child(ren) while in “economic survival” mode. Importantly, the authors noted that “it is sometimes difficult to distinguish child care access issues of economically disadvantaged families from those of immigrant families, Indigenous or having a child with special needs, as lack of income is a common factor for many of these families.” Different studies reviewed pointed to some significant policies that could promote access to child care for immigrant families: support for language learning, better communication of important knowledge about the child care system and outreach to immigrant communities. One strategy that had been proven efficient in some countries was to offer free time slots in existing child care programs to immigrant children so their families can get started without concern about long-term commitment.</p>

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Classroom challenges in developing an intercultural early learning program for refugee children	Peer-reviewed article	<p>Describes the challenges and lessons learned from the pilot of a part-day intercultural early learning program developed to meet the needs of refugee families with preschool-aged children. The authors discuss the necessity of developing such programs in collaboration with the communities that are intended to use them, and stress the importance of recognizing newcomers as “rich funds of knowledge”. Effectively involving families in the development process required that the inherent power imbalance present between service providers and users was addressed, and that families were presented with opportunities to participate in and take responsibility for the program in a way that was meaningful to and respectful of them and their culture. “When parents saw that their ideas were not only welcomed, but also actively sought and implemented in the classroom practice, most became eager to share their cultural knowledge and childrearing traditions.” The authors conclude that the development of effective intercultural programs requires ongoing reflection and collaboration among teachers, families, and community members.</p>
<p>Dachyshyn, D. & Kirova, A. 2011 Alberta</p>		
Child care use and child development in immigrant, lone mother, rural, and official language minority families in Canada	Technical report prepared for federal government	<p>Cleveland and Forer (2010) suggest that, accounting for income and SES variations, “living in a rural area, being a single parent, or having an immigrant or official language minority background may affect child care decisions (use/access) through differences in parental preferences or differences in the characteristics and availability of different types of care” (p. 5). Variables affecting the use of child care can be categorized into four sections: 1) characteristics of the care arrangements (including price, quality and availability or distance), 2) family resources (mother’s wage rate and other family income), 3) mother’s employment characteristics (hours of work and nonstandard work hours), and 4) factors affecting preferences (child’s age, number of siblings by age category, ethnic/racial background of parents, mother’s education, marital status, and region). Noted that mothers who work non-standards hours are less likely to use centre-based care.</p>
<p>Cleveland, G. & Forer, B. 2010 Canada</p>		

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Raising the Village Equity Development Instrument Toronto	Data analysis tool	<p>The purpose of this toolkit is to provide disaggregated data from the indicators used in Raising the Village that is broken down by population groups. This toolkit provides a deeper understanding of the factors that impact children’s well-being. When data is reported for the city’s population as a whole, that data can hide important differences in the experiences of particular groups. By using data that is broken down by socio-demographic groups, it is possible to more effectively target resources at populations that need them most.</p> <p>On the other hand, disaggregated data does not always reveal the cause of inequities. Many external and intersecting factors contribute to certain outcomes that data cannot fully explain. Moreover, while data can uncover issues that need addressing, it does not necessarily offer a clear path forward.</p> <p>Communities, system leaders, direct-service providers, teachers, parents and children can use this data to inform the development of programs, services and strategies that address inequities. Understanding patterns, trends and differences in outcomes across gender, race and other factors can inform targeted outreach, needs assessments, and actions that address structural inequities at all levels. We encourage children, families, service providers and communities to use this data in the ways that make sense for them. Most importantly, this data can be used by children, families, service providers and communities in the ways that make sense for them and that best meet their needs.</p>
Qu’en pensons-nous? Des groupes de parents s’expriment Laurin, I., René, J.-F., Dallaire, N., Ouellet, F., Devault, A., & Turcotte, G. 2008 Quebec	Technical report by the Direction de santé publique de Montréal Report in French, abstract in English	<p><i>Services intégrés en périnatalité et pour la petite enfance¹ à l’intention des familles vivant en contexte de vulnérabilité (SIPPE)</i>, provided by the Direction de santé publique de Montréal, is an intervention program aimed at families with young children living in vulnerable situations. 16 parents from two Montreal neighborhoods (i.e. Hochelaga and Saint-Michel) who participated in SIPPE activities were invited to a participatory research to “share their family and social concerns, give their point of view on the neighborhood, reflect together on their involvement or their contribution to change things in their neighborhood and discover their capacity to act as parent and citizen.” An important observation made in this research process was the well-being of vulnerable families is influenced by their ability to take action and having “open, courageous and continuous” dialogue with their community stakeholders, especially in matters that contribute to the implementation of public policies.</p>
Quebec day care: Access for all? Halperin, V. 2007 Quebec	Unpublished master’s thesis, Concordia University (Montréal)	<p>While the 1997 reform made day care in Quebec more affordable, access remains uncertain due to the high demand and insufficient supply of spaces. The author focuses on the issue of differential access to care, as socioeconomically vulnerable families in Quebec are least likely to have access to care. The author conducted interviews with day care directors, parents, and Local Community Service Centre workers, and analyzed government documentation and secondary sources to better understand the role that community plays in enabling access for economically challenged families. The author also discusses how the uncertainty of access particularly impacts families who are economically challenged and without alternative child care options.</p>

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<p>Childcare, justice and the city: A case study of planning failure in Winnipeg</p> <p>Prentice, S. 2007 Winnipeg</p>	Article	<p>This paper explores the city-childcare connection. It analyzes licensed childcare spaces in Winnipeg, finding that inequity characterizes the distribution of childcare in all neighbourhoods. Poorer and more Aboriginal neighbourhoods are particularly disadvantaged, having less access and fewer services than more affluent and suburban areas. Overall, the distribution of spaces and services reveals systemic dysfunctions in the current childcare architecture. This failure is multiscalar: while experienced at the local level, the originating causes are with higher orders of government. Urban justice is denied by childcare policy and delivery that reproduces and compounds neighbourhood dis/advantage. The conclusion problematizes both voluntary sector reliance and local political inaction, each of which carries implications for planners.</p>