

# Land acknowledgement

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The CRRU team lives and works across Turtle Island, in the land we now call Canada. We publish *Early childhood education and care in Canada 2021* in what is known as downtown Toronto which is 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.

We acknowledge that this territory is covered by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, a treaty between the Three Fires Confederacy, the Iroquois Confederacy and allied nations promising to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

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“The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) calls on “the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families.” (Call to Action #12)

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With a mandate to work towards a universally accessible, publicly funded, inclusive early learning and child care system in Canada, CRRU acknowledges that this cannot be done without First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives defining what each aspect of this system means to Indigenous children, families and communities.

In the conception of this *ECEC in Canada* edition, CRRU has sought and gratefully received guidance from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit ELCC experts, especially on taking a distinctions-based approach to Indigenous-related data collection and representation.

As a policy research organization, CRRU commits to continuously examining and acting upon its role and responsibility in working proactively with Indigenous stakeholders and addressing systemic barriers preventing Inuit, First Nations, and Métis communities from participating in the education and care services anchored in their knowledge and ways of living.



# Table of Contents

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Land acknowledgement 3

Acknowledgements 8

**ABOUT** Childcare Resource and Research Unit 10

This document 11

**DATA SOURCES** 12

**THE STATE OF CANADIAN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE IN 2022** 14

Child care and the federal government: Early days through 2015 14

Post-2015: The Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and  
Child Care 16

A turning point for early learning and child care: The COVID-19  
pandemic 17

Laying the foundations of a Canada-wide early learning and child care  
system: The 2021 federal budget 19

Canada-wide agreements and action plans to 2023 22

Next steps to a Canada-wide early learning and child care system:  
Putting transformation in place 23

**HOW EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE IS ORGANIZED IN CANADA:**

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES** 24

The context of Canadian federalism 24

Federal government child care funding 25

How provinces/territories organize early learning and child care 27

**PARENTAL LEAVES AND BENEFITS** 31

Benefits: Canada outside Quebec 31

Leave provisions: Canada outside Quebec 33

Benefits and leave: Quebec 34

## **FEDERAL EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE PROGRAMS 41**

Child Care Expense Deduction 41

Care for Newcomer Children 42

## **FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS AND INUIT EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE 45**

First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities 45

The foundations of First Nations, Inuit and Métis early learning  
and child care 46

Transforming First Nations, Métis and Inuit early learning and child  
care 48

ELCC program provision and financing 51

Federally-funded Indigenous programs in individual provinces 53

## **NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR 55**

### **PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND 76**

### **NOVA SCOTIA 97**

### **NEW BRUNSWICK 116**

### **QUEBEC 138**

### **ONTARIO 161**

### **MANITOBA 184**

### **SASKATCHEWAN 205**

### **ALBERTA 227**

### **BRITISH COLUMBIA 247**

### **YUKON 273**

### **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES 290**

### **NUNAVUT 307**

## **COMPARATIVE TABLES**

### **THE STATE OF CANADIAN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE IN 2022**

**TABLE I** Two decades of federal child care initiatives 1984 – 2006. 15

**TABLE II** Initial child care policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic  
March – August 2020. Provinces/territories (2020). 17

## PARENTAL LEAVES AND BENEFITS

- TABLE III** Characteristics of Canadian and Quebec maternity and parental leave benefits (2022). 35
- TABLE IV** Duration of maternity, parental and adoption leave in weeks Provinces/territories (2022). 37
- TABLE V** Name, duration and timing of maternity leave Provinces/territories (2022). 38
- TABLE VI** Duration and timing of parental/adoption leave. Provinces/territories (2022). 39

## THE BIG PICTURE 322

- TABLE 1** Coverage: Number of regulated centre spaces full- and part-time by age category and kindergarten provision. Provinces/territories (2021). 324
- TABLE 2** Number of regulated spaces (child care centres, before- and after-school child care and family child care) and percent of children 0 – 12 for whom a regulated space was available. Province/territories (2021). 325
- TABLE 3** Number and percent of children 0 – 5 years for whom there was a full-day or part-day (nursery school/preschool) child care centre space. Provinces/territories/Canada (2021). 326
- TABLE 4** Number of full- and part-day spaces for children aged 0 – 12 and percent that were for-profit. Provinces/territories/Canada (2021). 327
- TABLE 5** Number and percent of centres and centre spaces for 0 – 12 year olds that were for-profit. Provinces/territories (2021). 328
- TABLE 6** Licensed capacity and enrolment by age grouping. Provinces/territories (2021). 329
- TABLE 7** Reported enrolment in regulated child care compared to pre-COVID. Provinces/territories (Pre-COVID, April 2020, May 2021). 330
- TABLE 8** Selected characteristics of regulated child care centres in each province/territory (2022). 331
- TABLE 9** Selected characteristics of kindergarten programs. Provinces/territories (2022). 337
- TABLE 10** Where are kindergarten-age children outside regular kindergarten hours? Provinces/territories (2022). 341
- TABLE 11** Minimum early childhood education (ECE) or training requirements for staff in full-day child care centres and kindergarten teachers. Provinces/territories (2022). 344
- TABLE 12** First Nations, Métis and Inuit licensed child care services on reserve/Inuit land and other than on reserve. (2022). 347
- TABLE 13** Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve (AHSOR) and Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities (AHSUNC) (2022). 348
- TABLE 14** Indigenous ECE post-secondary education/training and other P/T-specific Indigenous initiatives (2022). 349
- TABLE 15** Regulated family (home) child care: Administration, monitoring and minimum initial ECE training requirements. Provinces/territories (2022). 352

- TABLE 16** Selected characteristics of licensed, regulated, approved or authorized before- and after-school programs. Provinces/territories (2022). 354
- TABLE 17** Selected characteristics of unregulated child care. Provinces/territories (2022). 357
- TABLE 18** Employment income for Early Childhood Educators and Assistants working in child care services full-time, full-year. Provinces/territories/Canada (2020). 359
- TABLE 19** Eligibility criteria for child care fee subsidy and subsidy rates. Provinces/territories (2022). 360
- TABLE 20** Food provision in regulated full-time child care centres. Provinces/territories (2022). 363
- TABLE 21** Outdoor play requirements in regulated child care centres in Canada. Provinces/territories (2022). 366
- TABLE 22** Definitions and regulations/policies for non-standard hours child care in Canada. Provinces/territories (2022). 368
- TABLE 23** Inclusion supports in regulated child care in Canada. Provinces/territories (2022). 370

### THE LONG VIEW 373

- TABLE 24** Number of regulated child care spaces for children 0 – 12 years. Provinces/territories/Canada (1992 – 2021). 374
- TABLE 25** Percent of children 0 – 5 years for whom there was a regulated full- or part-time child care centre space. Provinces/territories/Canada (1992 – 2021). 375
- TABLE 26** Number of children (rounded estimates in 1000s). Provinces/territories/Canada (1992 – 2021). 376
- TABLE 27** Number of children with employed mothers (rounded estimate in 1000s). Provinces/territories/Canada (1995 – 2021). 378
- TABLE 28** Workforce participation rate of mothers by age of youngest child (rounded estimates 1000s). Provinces/Canada (1998 – 2021). 380
- TABLE 29** Total number of regulated child care centres. Provinces/territories/Canada (2004 – 2021). 383
- TABLE 30** Total number of active regulated family child care homes. Provinces/territories/Canada (2004 – 2021). 384
- TABLE 31** Total funding for regulated child care (unadjusted dollars, rounded in millions). Provinces/territories/Canada (1992 – 2021). 385
- TABLE 32** Percent of regulated part- and full-day centre spaces for 0 – 12 year olds that were for-profit. Provinces/territories/Canada (1992 – 2021). 386
- TABLE 33** Funding under Multilateral Agreements. Provinces/territories/Canada (2017 – 2025). 387
- TABLE 34** Funding under Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreements. Provinces/territories/Canada (2021 – 2026). 388
- TABLE 35** Median monthly parent fees for preschool-age children in Canada's large cities. Provinces/territories/Canada (2014 – 2021). 389



## Acknowledgements

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From its beginnings at the end of the 1980s, developing *ECEC in Canada* has been a collective effort, relying on the cooperation and expertise contributed by multiple individuals and organizations. This has been especially so with this 13th edition, which the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic and Canada's subsequent commitment to building a quality universal child care system made more challenging to execute than usual.

First and foremost among the contributors, we wish to acknowledge and thank the provincial/territorial early learning and child care officials who provided the core data and information, especially as our detailed data requests came at a hyper-busy time of rapid policy and provision change. As with other versions of *ECEC in Canada*, we underscore that this publication would not have been possible without the expertise and collaboration of these provincial and territorial officials. Many thanks to all of you professionally and personally.

With this edition of *ECEC in Canada*, we undertook to better align its content on First Nations, Métis and Inuit early learning and child care with the conceptions and aspirations of those distinct Indigenous communities. We were guided in this by several First Nations, Métis and Inuit ELCC experts, and hugely appreciate their input on content and process. We are also most appreciative of the contributions of the officials at the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Secretariat, Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) who generously shared the data, contacts and clarification reflected in several sections of the report. We would also like to recognize and thank the federal officials at Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) for funding, administering and supporting this edition of *ECEC in Canada*.

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The “team” at CRRU responsible for making this report happen included several key members who are no longer at CRRU: Rachel Vickerson, who played a big role in reconceptualizing and refining the initial data collection process, together with Sophia Mohamed, who continued to contribute to the project after leaving CRRU. We also appreciate the contributions to it by students Lin Velasco, Dakota Cherry and Stephanie Walker who were a pleasure to work with and mentor.

As well, we are most appreciative of our colleagues in the ELCC field upon whom we were able to call for data, for example, the International Parental Leave Networks Canadian team and David MacDonald of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, as well as other colleagues across Canada whose knowledge we were able to draw upon throughout for clarification or elaboration of specific information.

Finally—the group at CRRU and beyond directly responsible for this report includes Billie Carroll and Sonya V. Thursby, who have long contributed their stellar creative graphic and web site work to CRRU. Their physical locations – one facing the Pacific in B.C., the other facing out over the Atlantic in Newfoundland – so symbolize not only the coast-to-coast nature of *ECEC in Canada* but the Canada-wide ELCC project more broadly.

— *Martha Friendly, Jane Beach, Ngoc Tho (Tegan) Nguyễn, Matthew Taylor, Patrícia Borges Nogueira, Laurel Rothman and Barry Forer*

# Childcare Resource and Research Unit

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The Childcare Resource and Research Unit (CRRU) is an independent, non-partisan, policy research institute that focuses on early childhood education and care (ECEC) and social and family policy. CRRU has a mandate to work towards to a universal, high quality, publicly funded, and inclusive ECEC system. We work collaboratively with other researchers, non-governmental organizations, advocacy groups, and government policy makers across multiple levels of government and the early childhood education community on ECEC and family policy.

CRRU operates on the premise that the best possible evidence about policy and practice, drawn from multidisciplinary research and policy analysis, has a key role to play in informing, developing, and interpreting public policy.

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# This document

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## ■ BACKGROUND

Between 1992 and 2023, the Childcare Resource and Research Unit (CRRU) has developed thirteen versions of *Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada*. The report series has reliably served as Canada’s sole source of consistently collected and presented cross-Canada, longitudinal data and information about regulated child care, kindergarten and parental leave. The publications provide profiles of ECEC services and policies in each province/ territory—information on kindergarten, child care—spaces by age, type and auspice, funding, regulations, the workforce, governance, parental leave and much more. A series of summary tables present key information and data across Canada and over time, covering the period 1992 to the present. For further details, see [the online Backgrounder](#).

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“The [CRRU report series](#) has reliably served as Canada’s sole source of consistently collected and presented cross-Canada, longitudinal data and information about regulated child care, kindergarten and parental leave.”

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The present report covers the period 2020 – 2023. Like previous editions, the numerical data are specific (as much as possible) to the snapshot date, which was March 2021 for this report. However, the descriptions and policy content cover the whole period from the previous edition of the report right up to publication of this edition to be as up-to-date as possible.

This edition of *ECEC in Canada* has proven to be especially challenging in this time of unprecedented change in early childhood education and care. In trying to capture what was often a “moving target”, the report user will find a “before” and “after” on some topics. For example, although data on parent fees is included for 2021, in most provinces/ territories, additional information is included outlining the reductions to parent fees that were the focus of federal/provincial/territorial Agreements and Action Plans Canada-wide throughout 2022, even extending into early 2023.

The time frame of this edition of *ECEC in Canada* also means new data uncertainties. For example, provinces/territories have long provided us with breakdowns of child care funding for a specified fiscal year. But this time, child care closures due to the pandemic and subsequent low enrolment meant that the expected spending (for example, on fee subsidies or operational funding) was not as usual, with jurisdictions addressing these changes in child care financing in a variety of ways at that time. Additionally, earmarked federal funds for child care through Safe Restart were transferred to provinces/territories but may or may not have all been used in fiscal year 2020 – 2021. It should also be noted that while our target fiscal year (2020 – 2021) precedes transfer of significant new federal funds through the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care agreements (CWELCC), improvements to child care after 2021 that came as a result of the CWELCC funding (such as, for example, wage enhancements and introduction of wage grids) are identified.

Our assessment of provincial/territorial child care financing during this period lead to our conclusion that the best approach would be to include each jurisdiction's funding for regulated child care plus that jurisdiction's share of Safe Restart child care funds, along with a caveat that this anomalous fiscal year should not be compared to financial data from previous versions of *ECEC in Canada*.

With this edition of *ECEC in Canada*, CRRU considerably improved some parts of our collection of provincial/territorial data and information, providing clearer information in some areas both numerical and textual than we had had previously. One example of this was the use of a short topical questionnaire to ask jurisdictions about their approach to First Nations, Métis and Inuit ELCC – one factor that improved information about Indigenous ELCC.

Finally, it is of note that this edition of *ECEC in Canada* has been developed right at the beginning of the new Canada-wide early learning and child care program—during the initial year. As such, it is hoped that it can serve as a benchmark for the many changes yet to come.

## ■ DATA SOURCES

In addition to the sources listed below, most provincial/territorial data in this report was provided by provincial/territorial officials or obtained from publicly available sources. The sources for any other data or information are included as notes throughout the document.

### **Number of children 0-12 years**

Special tabulation based on the *Labour Force Survey, 2021 Annual Average*.  
Conducted by Statistics Canada.

### **Children 0-12 years with employed mothers**

Special tabulation based on the *Labour Force Survey, 2021 Annual Average*.  
Conducted by Statistics Canada.

### **Workforce participation of mothers by age of youngest child**

Statistics Canada, *Labour Force Survey (2020 annual)*, Table 14-10-0120-01.

Statistics Canada, *Labour Force Survey (2021 annual)*, Table 14-10-0396-01.

### **Median after tax income among families with children aged 0 – 5 years (2015) (\$)**

Statistics Canada, *2021 Census*, Table 98-10-0075-01.

### **Living arrangements by age child by number of parents (2016)**

Children 0-14 years by marital status of family

Statistics Canada, *2021 Census*, Table 98-10-0135-01.

### **Children 0-14 years identifying with an Indigenous group**

Statistics Canada, *2021 Census*, Table 98-10-0264-01

### **Children 0-14 years by language spoken most often at home**

Statistics Canada, *2021 Census*, Table 98-10-0169-01.

## **STAFF WAGES**

### **Median annual employment income and median hourly wage rate for Early Childhood Educators and Assistants working in day care services full-time, full-year.**

Special tabulation based on the *2021 Census*. Conducted by Statistics Canada.

*Note: These data include Early Childhood Educators and Assistants, as defined in NOC 4214 and “working in the day care services industry in centre-based environments with children aged 0 – 12 years”, as defined in NAICS 6244. Included are individuals who worked full-time (30+ hours/week) and full-year (48+ weeks/year), did not work at home, and were not self-employed. Included are supervisors but not managers. Employment income refers to income from all jobs if the Early Childhood Educator or Assistant holds a second job providing a wage, salary or commissions.*

## **PARENT FEES**

Macdonald, D., & Friendly, M. (2021). *Game changer: Will provinces and territories meet the new federal child care fee targets?* Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

## **FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS AND INUIT EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE**

The Public Health Agency of Canada, Indigenous Services Canada, First Nations Health Authority (British Columbia), the Indigenous ELCC Secretariat, Employment and Social Development Canada and provincial/territorial officials.

## **COVID-19 AND CHILD CARE**

Friendly, M., Forer, B., Vickerson, R., & Mohamed, S. S. (2021). COVID-19 and Childcare in Canada: A Tale of Ten Provinces and Three Territories. *Journal of Childhood Studies*, 46(3), 42-52. <https://doi.org/10.18357/jcs463202120030>