

# Northwest Territories



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# Northwest Territories



## ■ OVERVIEW

In the Northwest Territories, early learning and child care includes full-school day or part-day junior kindergarten (JK), full-school day kindergarten (K), regulated child care centres, part-day preschool, family day homes, and out-of-school day care.

Kindergarten is the responsibility of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) under the *Education Act*. Territorial implementation of JK began in the 2017 – 2018 school year. Four schools offer Indigenous immersion programming in JK and K. Access to education is a legislated entitlement for all children who are four years old by December 31 of the respective school year.

Child care is the responsibility of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (DECE) and it is licensed under the *Child Day Care Act*. Licensed child care programs are operated by Indigenous governments, non-profit organizations, and individual family day home providers. There are no for-profit child care operators in the Northwest Territories and there are a number of publicly delivered child care programs.

Fees are set by the operators. Child care fee subsidies are available through a separate Income Assistance program.

Operational funding is provided to licensed programs through Early Childhood Program (ECP) funding, Early Childhood Staff Grant, Supporting Child Inclusion and Participation (SCIP).

The Northwest Territories signed the Canada-Northwest Territories Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (Multilateral Framework Agreement) on February 14, 2018. This agreement allocated almost \$7.4 million over three years; it was extended on January 13, 2021, with an additional \$2.4 million allocated to the 2020 – 2021 fiscal year, and renewed on August 6th, 2021 allocating a further \$10.3 million over four years.

The Canada-Northwest Territories Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement was signed by the Northwest Territories on December 14, 2021. Through this agreement, the federal government will provide \$51.1 million over five years to:

- reduce fees to an average of \$10/day by 2025 – 2026;
- create 230 licensed spaces in public and non-profit centres;
- address barriers to providing inclusive and flexible child care; and
- create and implement a territorial wage grid for early childhood educators.

The Canada-wide agreement does not replace but runs parallel to the Multilateral Framework Agreement.

## ■ TERRITORIAL CONTEXT

Please note that some of the following figures are rounded, while totals are based on exact figures and may therefore not equal the sum of the rounded figures shown here.

### Number of children 0 – 12 years (aggregated) (2021 rounded estimate)

<i>Age</i>	<i>Number of children</i>
0 – 2	1,200
3 – 5	2,200
6 – 12	4,000
Total	7,400

### Number of children 0 – 12 with employed mothers (aggregated) (2021 rounded estimate)

<i>Age</i>	<i>Number of children</i>
0 – 2	800
3 – 5	1,400
6 – 12	3,100
Total	5,300

### Number of children 0 – 14 identifying with an Indigenous group (2021)

<i>Age</i>	<i>First Nations</i>	<i>Métis</i>	<i>Inuk (Inuit)</i>	<i>Multiple</i>	<i>Other</i>
0 – 4	920	220	410	60	15
5 – 9	985	205	370	55	15
10 – 14	1,035	195	390	40	20
Total	2,940	620	1,170	155	50

### Workforce participation of mothers by age of youngest child (2021 rounded estimate)

Information not available

### Living arrangements by age of child by number of parents (2021)

<i>Age</i>	<i>Living with two parents</i>	<i>Living with one parent</i>	<i>Lone mother</i>	<i>Lone father</i>
0 – 4	2,160	600	450	150
5 – 9	2,005	735	555	175
10 – 14	1,885	810	625	185

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**Languages spoken most often at home (2021)**

<i>Age</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>French</i>	<i>Non-official</i>	<i>Multiple</i>
0 - 4	2,545	65	135	75
5 - 9	2,580	55	115	70
10 - 14	2,585	35	120	85
Total	7,715	155	370	225

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**Median after-tax income among families with children aged 0 - 5 (2020)**

<i>Two-parent families</i>	<i>Male lone-parent</i>	<i>Female lone-parent</i>
\$140,000	\$56,000	\$52,000

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**PARENTAL LEAVE AND BENEFITS**

Maternity and parental leave provisions in Canada outside Quebec are divided between federal and provincial/territorial governments. The federal government pays benefits under the Employment Insurance program (EI); provincial/territorial provisions for job-protected leave are established in each jurisdiction's employment standards legislation. EI is a contributory program; both employees and employers contribute.

**LEAVE PROVISIONS****Maternity leave**

17 weeks.

A pregnant employee who has been employed by the same employer for more than 6 months is eligible.

**Parental leave**

61 weeks for birth or adoption.

69 weeks if shared.

An employee who has been employed by the same employer for more than 6 months is eligible.

Parents can receive their weeks of benefits at the same time or one after another.

**PARENTAL LEAVE BENEFITS****Benefit options in 2022**

Employment Insurance (EI) covers 15 weeks of maternity leave for eligible employed birth mothers up to 12 weeks prior to the expected date of birth and up to 17 weeks following the date of birth.

**Two options for parental leave benefits**

*(parents must choose one)*

Until December 3, 2017, there was one option for parental leave benefits: 35 weeks of paid leave taken over 12 months, paid at 55% of average weekly insurable earnings (up to \$638/week in 2022). This option is now known as the Standard Parental Benefit.

As of December 3, 2017, EI benefits include an additional option, the Extended Parental Benefit. This pays 61 weeks of parental leave benefits taken over 18 months and paid at 33% of average weekly earnings (up to \$383/week in 2022).

As of March 17, 2019, the Parental Sharing Benefit also became available to non-birth/second parent. Under this additional benefit, five weeks of Standard Benefits is available if parents share Standard Parental Benefits (40 weeks total) or an additional eight weeks of Extended Benefits is available when parents share Extended Parental Benefits (69 weeks total).

Parents' access to paid parental leave requires that provinces/territories' leave provisions must match federal benefits.

*Note: For further details about the EI federal benefit, Quebec benefit and leave provisions, and provincial/territorial provisions for job-protected leave, see the PARENTAL LEAVE AND BENEFITS in the front section of this publication.*

## ■ KINDERGARTEN

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) is responsible for kindergarten and junior kindergarten under the authority of the *Education Act*. Eight school districts are responsible for the day-to-day operations of schools.

Access to education is a legislated entitlement for all children who are four years old by December 31 of the respective school year. Full-school day K is available to all five-year-olds.

Full-school day K is available to all five-year-olds. Part-day and/or full-school day JK is available to all four-year-olds depending on the community.

Four schools offer Indigenous immersion programming in junior kindergarten (JK) and kindergarten (K).

In 2018, the Department finalized a new *Northwest Territories JK to Grade 12 Indigenous Languages and Education Policy*. It is intended to support language and culture-based learning by promoting Indigenous worldviews, cultures, and languages of communities in which schools are located.

The NWT regulates but does not fund private schools.

### TERRITORIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR KINDERGARTEN

Department of Education, Culture and Employment  
Junior Kindergarten/Kindergarten Information  
PO Box 1320  
4501 Franklin Ave  
Yellowknife, NT, X1A 2L9  
Telephone: 1 (844) 698-5655  
Website: <https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/en/services/junior-kindergartenkindergarten>

### LEGISLATION

NWT. Legislative Assembly. *Education Act*.  
– RSNWT1995, C-28.

### KINDERGARTEN FOR FIVE-YEAR-OLDS

Kindergarten is a full-school day program available to all five-year-olds in the NWT.

### AGE ELIGIBILITY

In order to attend kindergarten, children must be five years of age by December 31 of the school year.

### COMPULSORY

Enrolment in kindergarten is not compulsory.

### ENTITLEMENT

All age-eligible children in the NWT have a legislated entitlement to kindergarten.

Kindergarten must be provided in every public elementary school and public denominational elementary school.

### INSTRUCTIONAL HOURS PER DAY/ TYPICAL LENGTH OF THE SCHOOL DAY

Kindergarten is a full-school day program. Education authorities are required to offer a minimum of 485 instructional hours per year for kindergarten programming, and no more than six hours instructional hours per day.

### CLASS SIZE

Class size is not regulated. Class sizes and configurations are determined at the discretion of the education authority and local school principal and vary across the territory.

### CURRICULUM OR CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

NWT mandates the use of the [NWT JK/K Curriculum JK/K](#) (EN) and [Programme d'études de la prématernelle et de la maternelle des TNO](#) (FR). This curriculum demonstrates a child-centered and play-based framework for learning.

### GENERAL TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS AND CERTIFICATION

A Bachelor of Education is required to teach kindergarten and teachers must apply to the Registrar for a teaching certificate prior to employment.

The Registrar may issue an Interim Standard Teaching Certificate to an individual who has successfully completed a teacher training program at an approved institution. The individual must then complete the courses required by the N.W.T. Teacher Qualification Service toward a Bachelor of Education degree and two academic years of teaching in a classroom during the term of the teaching certificate. A Standard Teaching Certificate may then be issued, and must be renewed every four years.

There are no specific ECE requirements to teach kindergarten.

## JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN FOR FOUR-YEAR-OLDS

Junior kindergarten is a full-school day or a part-day program for all four-year-olds. In 2014, it was established and offered in 23 communities. Since 2017 – 2018, JK has been extended to all 33 communities. Schools may offer full-school day or half-day JK depending on the needs in their communities, existing licensed child care and the number of children in the community.

### AGE ELIGIBILITY

In order to attend JK, children must be four years of age by December 31 of the school year.

### COMPULSORY

Enrolment in JK is not compulsory.

### ENTITLEMENT

All eligible children in the NWT have a legislated entitlement to JK.

JK must be provided in every public elementary school and public denominational elementary school.

### INSTRUCTIONAL HOURS PER DAY/TYPICAL LENGTH OF THE SCHOOL DAY

JK may be provided on a full-school day or part-day basis, at the discretion of the local District Education Authority. Education authorities are required to offer a minimum of 485 instructional hours per year for Kindergarten programming, and no more than six instructional hours per day.

### CLASS SIZE

Class sizes are not regulated. Class sizes and configurations are determined by the education authority and local school principal according to the needs of their specific circumstances including class size, multi-grade classrooms, and assistants and vary across the territory.

### CURRICULUM OR CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

The NWT mandates the use of the [NWT JK/K Curriculum](#) (EN) and [Programme d'études de la prématernelle et de la maternelle des TNO](#) (FR), which takes a child-centered and play-based approach to learning, in all schools.

## GENERAL TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS AND CERTIFICATION

A Bachelor of Education or a two-year diploma in early childhood from an accredited educational institution approved by the Registrar is required to teach JK. The Registrar may issue an Interim JK Teaching Certificate to individuals who have completed a two-year program in early childhood education. During the term of the interim certificate, the individual must complete two academic years of teaching in a classroom, after which time the Registrar may issue a JK Specialty Teaching Certificate. The teaching certificate has to be renewed every four years.

## TOTAL ENROLMENT (SCHOOL YEAR 2020 – 2021)

Kindergarten (five-year-olds)	
Full- and/or part-school-day	(head count) 602
Junior kindergarten (four-year-olds)	
Full- and/or part-school-day	(head count) 527
<b>Total enrolment for JK/K</b>	<b>(head count) 1,127</b>

## FINANCIAL (SCHOOL YEAR 2020 – 2021)

Spending on kindergarten (per child)	\$13,584
Spending on junior kindergarten (per child)	\$14,967
<b>Spending on kindergarten (total)</b>	<b>\$8,408,735</b>
<b>Spending on junior kindergarten (total)</b>	<b>\$7,827,762</b>

## CHILD CARE

### TERRITORIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILD CARE

Department of Education, Culture and Employment  
Early Learning and Child Care Division  
PO Box 1320  
4501 Franklin Ave  
Yellowknife, NT, XIA 2L9  
Telephone: 1 867-767-9354  
Website: <https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/en/elcc>

### LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS

NWT. Legislative Assembly. [Child Day Care Act](#). RSNWT1988, c. C-5. Amended 1991-92, C-17, 1997, C-8, 1998, C-17, 2012.  
NWT. Legislative Assembly. [Child Day Care Act – Child Day Care Standards and Regulations](#). – RNWT2012. Amended R-002-2021.

## CHILD CARE SERVICES

### UNREGULATED CHILD CARE

A maximum of four children up to 12 years old, including the caregiver's own children, are permitted in unregulated family child care.

Additional exemptions can be found in the [Child Day Care Act](#).

### REGULATED CHILD CARE

#### Centre day care facility

Group care, instruction and supervision provided in a place other than a private residence. Full-time care is defined as more than five consecutive hours. Part-time is five consecutive hours or less.

#### Preschool day care

Part-time day care provided for a child between two and up to five years of age who is not enrolled for the full-day in a school operated under the *Education Act*.

#### Family day home

A child care facility where care is provided within the private residence of the operator. It may include up to eight children under 12 years including the caregiver's own children with the following restrictions: a maximum of six children six years and under, and a maximum of two children two years and under.

#### Out-of-school day care

Child care provided following completion of the daily school program for a child who is enrolled at a school operated under the *Education Act*. These programs provide care to children between 3.8 and 11 years of age.

## CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

In 2019, the Northwest Territories had developed a new draft curriculum framework titled *The early learning framework: Nurturing capable people from birth to school entry*.

In 2022 – 2023 the territory will be piloting a revised version, with implementation in 2023 – 2024 throughout the territory.

## CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

(NWT uses the term *children with disabilities*)

In NWT, children with special needs are referred to as children with disabilities and/or needing enhanced or individual supports. There is no formal definition for children with disabilities.

Operators of licensed programs are required to accept and include children with special needs to the extent possible.

The Supporting Child Inclusion and Participation (SCIP) program does not require diagnosis or documentation, but documentation from a health professional is required for a child to be funded through the ECP subsidy.

The SCIP funding supports community-based early learning and child care programming, professional learning and staffing supports (one-to-one or one-to-multiple) to support children's participation in early learning programs.

The SCIP program provides funding to hire staff to support children who otherwise could not safely attend, and to provide staff training and purchase resources to support children's participation. It also provides funding to create or enhance community unlicensed play-based early learning opportunities, such as "family-and-tot" programs.

The Early Childhood Program (ECP) Operating Subsidy provides increased daily rates for special needs spaces.

All licensed child care programs are eligible to receive funding to support children with special needs. The funding is child-specific; it may be provided for an individual child or targeted to benefit multiple children.

The territory also provides funding to the NWT Disabilities Council to provide early intervention services for children from birth to school entry who have disabilities and/or developmental delays.

The NWT's *Child Day Care Act* requires that programs modify their programming to support inclusion of children who require additional supports.

The NWT does not have any centres that are solely or primarily for children with special needs. There are no specific training requirements, ratios or group sizes for programs that support children with special needs.

## FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS AND INUIT CHILD CARE

The NWT is composed of Dene (First Nations), Métis and Inuvialuit (Inuit) communities. The majority of community-based programs are equally available to all children. Indigenous people in the NWT make up approximately 50% of the total population. This percentage is even higher in small communities, where the majority of residents are Indigenous.

There are two reserves in NWT. There is one licensed child care centre on reserve. It is located on the land owned by K'atlodeeche First Nation. The centre is licensed by the territory to provide 40 spaces, including eight spaces for infants, 28 preschool-age and 4 out-of-school spaces.

There are no licensed family child care on reserve.

Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve (AHSOR) is regulated. There is one AHSOR program in the NWT, located on K'atlodeeche First Nation Reserve.

There are eight Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities (AHSUNC) programs in the NWT that offer culturally appropriate child care programming. Six are licensed early learning and child care programs and two (not licensed) offer family-centered programming where caregivers attend with children.

Licensed child care centres are operated by Indigenous governments, as well as non-profit organizations.

### OTHER INDIGENOUS-SPECIFIC RESOURCES/ INITIATIVES

Funding through the federal ELCC agreements supports provision of NWT-based post-secondary education programs in early childhood. This includes both a face-to-face certificate and diploma program in Yellowknife, as well as a distance-based diploma program. The distance program allows for those living in small communities to better access post-secondary education. Although information is not formally collected, the majority of students enrolled in both the distance and face-to-face diploma program at Aurora College are Indigenous.

A one-time Cultural Resource Grant was provided to all existing licensed centres to be used to purchase culturally relevant materials and resources to support quality early learning.

## SPACE STATISTICS

### NUMBER OF REGULATED SPACES (March 31, 2021)

<i>Centre spaces</i>	
<i>Full day centres</i>	
Infants (0 - < 2 years)	179
Preschool-age (2 - 5 years) (not in school full-day)	584
<i>Part-day centres</i>	
Preschool-age (2 - 5 years) (not in school full-day)	Not available
<b>TOTAL CENTRE SPACES (0 - 5 years)</b>	<b>763</b>

### Before- and after-school care (licensed, regulated, approved or authorized)

Number of spaces in before- and after- school care for children in junior kindergarten and kindergarten	79
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*Note: These spaces are explicitly for JK/K students.*

Number of spaces in before- and after-school care for children in Grade 1 - 6	729
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*Note: Before- and after-school spaces for children in Grade 1 - 6 may also include JK/K students, in addition to those explicitly for JK/K.*

<b>Total number of spaces in before- and after-school care for children in junior kindergarten, kindergarten and Grade 1 - 6</b>	<b>808</b>
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<b>TOTAL CENTRE SPACES (0 - 12 years)</b>	<b>1,571</b>
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### Regulated family child care (March 31, 2021)

<i>Family day home spaces</i>	
Full-day (Children not in school)	324
Part-day (Children in school)	108
<b>Total regulated family child care spaces</b>	<b>432</b>

### TOTAL REGULATED SPACES (centres spaces and family child care enrolment) 2,003

### Number of child care centres (2021)

<i>Centre-based programs</i>	
<b>Total number of centres</b>	
Number of centres providing a full-day program	34
Number of centres providing a part-day (nursery or preschool) program	Not available
Number of centres providing a part-day program for children attending school (approx 4 - 12 years)	42
Number of centres providing infant care (0 - < 2 years)	19
Number of centres providing preschool-age care (2 - 5 years)	34



Number of centres providing non-standard hours care	<i>Not available</i>			
Number of centres in publicly delivered and funded schools	48			
<i>For a definition of non-standard hours care in the Northwest Territories, see <a href="#">Non-standard work and child care in Canada (pg. 89)</a>.</i>				
<b>Number of regulated family child care homes</b>				
Number of licensed family day homes	51			
<b>Municipal delivery</b>				
Number of municipalities or municipal entities operating child care centres (i.e. are the licence holder)	3			
<i>Note: The Town of Fort Smith, and the hamlets of Enterprise and Tuktoyaktuk operate a total of four licensed centres.</i>				
<b>Centres by auspice (2021)</b>				
<i>Centres</i>	<i>Number of centres</i>			
For-profit	0			
Non-profit	54			
Publicly operated <sup>1</sup>	10			
<sup>1</sup> Municipality/municipal entity, school authority, other government agency, or Indigenous governance organization				
<i>Note: These include four municipal centres and six licensed Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve.</i>				
<b>Centre spaces by auspice</b>				
	<i>Full-day spaces</i>	<i>Part-day spaces<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>BASC spaces<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>Total spaces</i>
For-profit <sup>3</sup>	-	-	-	-
Non-profit <sup>4</sup>	763	NA <sup>5</sup>	808	2,003
<sup>1</sup> Nursery/preschool				
<sup>2</sup> Before- and after-school care spaces (4 - 12 years)				
<sup>3</sup> There are no for-profit programs in the NWT.				
<sup>4</sup> Including publicly operated				
<sup>5</sup> Not available				
<i>Note: For a profile of child care auspice in the Northwest Territories, see <a href="#">Risky Business</a>.</i>				

## FEE SUBSIDIES

**Number of children whose licensed child care cost is supported by the Income Assistance program (March 31, 2021)** *Not available*

## SPECIAL NEEDS/DISABILITY SUPPORT FUNDING

**Children in licensed, regulated or approved child care being supported by special needs/disability support funding (March 31, 2021)** *Not available*

For a list of all licensed programs and services in the Northwest Territories, see this [directory](#).

## ENROLMENT STATISTICS

Enrolment data is not available

## PARENT FEES

Child care fees in the NWT are not territorially set. Program fees are set by individual operators and providers.

### TERRITORIAL FEE DATA

Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) did not track fees in 2021.

### Median monthly fees in Northwest Territories:

#### Annual Fee Survey

In 2021, a national survey of child care fees in Canada's large cities included Yellowknife:

#### Median monthly fees for full-time child care

Infant	Toddler	Preschooler
\$1,035	\$1,010	\$930

Source: Macdonald, D., & Friendly, M. (2022). *Game Changer: Will provinces and territories meet the new federal child care fee targets? Canadian child care fees 2021*. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

*Note: These median monthly figures include fees from centre-based child care and home child care.*

In January, 2022, the NWT introduced the Child Care Fee Reduction (CCFR) Subsidy intended to reduce the cost of child care by an average of 50% in licensed programs that opt into the CCFR Subsidy.

Fee reductions apply to children five years of age and younger. The actual reduction in the amount families can expect to pay for child care fees will depend on the current fee the family is paying and the age of the child.

In February 2023, the NWT increased the Child Care Fee Reduction to cover 60% of parent fees. As well, licensed programs below school-age will be permitted to increase fees by 2 - 6%, depending on fees being charged. For more information, see [Child Care Fee Reduction Subsidy 2023 - 24 Increases](#).

## WORKFORCE

### EARLY CHILDHOOD CERTIFICATION

There is no territorial early childhood certification process.

As part of its commitments under the Canada-Northwest Territories Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care agreement, the NWT will develop an early childhood educator certification process by 2024 – 2025.

[Aurora College](#) offers in-person and distance delivery of post-secondary Early Learning and Child Care certificate and diploma programming.

### STAFF WAGES

Wages and benefits of early childhood educators and child care workers are set by each employer.

Until September 30, 2022, the NWT provided an Early Childhood Staff Grant based on hours worked paid directly to the staff. Quarterly grant amounts ranged from \$600 to \$3000/year depending on the number of hours worked and their level of education.

In 2022, the Early Childhood Staff Grant was merged with the Retention Incentive to streamline staff wage enhancement.

### Retention Incentive Funding

Beginning in 2022 – 2023, licensed child care centre operators are eligible to receive Retention Incentive funding for the early childhood educators working directly with children in their program. The funding is provided to operators of licensed centre-based programs to distribute to early childhood educators.

Licensed centre-based programs will receive \$12,750 per full-time equivalent (FTE) in 2022 – 2023 and \$16,250 per FTE in 2023 – 2024, based on staff to child ratios as required by legislation.

This two year transitional funding, retroactive to April 1, 2022, is to provide enhanced wages for early childhood educators in licensed centres until a wage grid is implemented in 2024 – 2025.

### Territorial wage data

Information not available.

### Median annual employment income (\$) and median hourly wage range (\$) for Early Childhood Educators and Assistants working in day care services full-time, full-year

<i>Median annual employment income</i>	\$50,800
<i>Median hourly employment income</i>	\$24.42 – 27.91

*Note: Calculated using 2,080 hours/year (40 hours/week) and 1,820 hours/year (35 hours/week).*

Source: *Canadian Census (2021)*. Special run 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.*

*Note: See Table 18 in this report for comparable data from other provinces/territories and Canada average.*

## STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

### REGULATED CHILD CARE CENTRES

#### Maximum centre size

Maximum centre size is not specified.

#### Staff:child ratio and maximum group size for single age

<i>Age group</i>	<i>Staff:child ratios</i>	<i>Maximum group size</i>
0 – 12 months	1:3	6
13 – 24 months	1:4	8
25 – 35 months	1:6	12
3 years	1:8	16
4 years	1:9	18
5 – 11 years	1:10	30

#### Staff:child ratio and maximum group size for mixed age groupings

<i>Age of group</i>	<i>Staff:child ratios</i>	<i>Maximum group size</i>
0 – 24 months	1:4	8
25 months – 5 years (child not enrolled in school full-day)	1:8	16
3 years 8 months – 11 years (child enrolled in school full-day)	1:10	30

*Note: The maximum group size does not apply when children are having meals, taking naps or taking part in special activities. Volunteers cannot be counted towards the minimum staff:child ratio.*

## Staffing requirements for centres

### *Early childhood requirements for staffing a centre*

This section describes the minimum staffing requirements for a regulated centre to operate. It includes early childhood qualification requirements for centre staff and centre supervisors/directors and other requirements (e.g., age, first aid, background check).

Primary staff (see qualifications below) are responsible for the care, instruction and supervision of children. Support staff assist a primary staff person with the daily program or the day-to-day operation of the centre.

In a centre-based program, 50% of the staff are expected to be primary staff, i.e., have a minimum of a post-secondary certificate in early childhood education. Support staff, while not required to have formal education, must always work with the primary staff, i.e., not be alone with children.

At least two staff persons must be on duty when more than six children are present at a child care facility. One of these two staff persons must have no responsibilities other than care of the children attending the facility.

Primary staff must have completed a post-secondary program (minimum Certificate-level) in early childhood development.

There is no early childhood qualification requirement for support staff.

Staff involved in the delivery of the daily program are required to participate in annual professional development, through courses, seminars or workshops.

### *Exemptions to early childhood qualification requirements of centre staff*

An individual may become primary staff without the required post-secondary qualifications if the person can demonstrate that they have, to the satisfaction of the Territorial Director, an understanding of developmentally appropriate practices with respect to children, and the ability to apply that understanding to the program.

### *Requirements for onsite centre supervisors/directors*

There must be one individual designated as the person in charge of the day-to-day operation of the centre. This individual must meet the requirements of a primary staff person.

### *Exemptions to requirements for on-site centre supervisors/directors*

There are currently no educational requirements for centre supervisors/directors.

### *Other staffing requirements*

Primary staff must be at least 19 years of age. Support staff must be at least 16 years of age and must be supervised by a primary staff at all times.

Primary staff must have first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR-C) certificates. The Director may allow a person to start work without the required first aid and CPR certifications and set a date by which the person must obtain those.

Before beginning work at a licensed program, all staff are required to have up-to-date immunizations and a tuberculosis test, a criminal record check, including a vulnerable sector search, and a Statement of Outstanding Criminal Charges. Criminal record checks must be updated every three years and Statement of Outstanding Criminal Charges must be completed annually.

## Licensing, monitoring and enforcement

Centre-based programs are licensed and regulated under the authority of the [Child Day Care Act](#) and [Child Day Care Standards and Regulations](#).

Regional Early Childhood Consultants licenses and monitors all licensed early learning and child care programs in the NWT. They work directly with child care operators and provide guidance through the licence application process. There is no fee required for a licence.

A licence is valid for a maximum of one year. A licence issued with terms and conditions requires the facility to meet certain requirements by an expiry date in order to keep its licence.

Annual inspections are required for licence renewal and are conducted by the Regional Early Childhood Consultant, Fire Inspector and Environmental Health Officer. The Director will automatically renew a licence if the inspection reports show that the operator and facility are in compliance with the *Act* and Regulations.

A centre can be inspected by the departments noted above at times other than the annual year licence renewal inspection.

For more detailed information, see [Understanding the Child Day Care Regulations: A Handbook for Early Childhood Programs](#) (Section 2: Licences).

### **Initiatives regarding assessing and improving quality**

The 2017 – 2021 *Canada-NWT Early Learning and Child Care Bilateral Agreement and action plan* focuses on improving the quality and accessibility of child care in the NWT. Through this agreement, the focus on quality in the NWT includes:

- supporting the development of a qualified early childhood workforce, by:
  - providing professional development opportunities;
  - access to post-secondary learning within the NWT; and
  - offering early childhood scholarships.
- offering grants and funding directly to licensed programs, including:
  - development and distribution of cultural resources;
  - needs-based health and safety funding for the costs of repairs and maintenance as per annual inspections; and
  - provider enhancement grant to assist with purchasing materials and resources.

### **REGULATED FAMILY CHILD CARE**

In the NWT, regulated family child care is called a family day home. Family day homes must be provided within the operator's personal residence.

#### **Model of organization**

Licensed family day homes are individually operated.

#### **Maximum capacity**

An operator of a family day home may care for a maximum of eight children under 12 years old, including the operator's own children. Additional age limitations include:

- no more than six of the children may be under six years old, and
- no more than two children may be younger than two years.

#### **Family day home provider requirements**

##### *Early childhood qualification requirements*

Family day home providers are not required to have early childhood qualifications.

Family day home providers must undertake annual professional learning in child development and care through courses, seminars or workshops. There is no specified number of hours required.

##### *Other requirements*

A family day home provider must be at least 19 years of age.

Family day home providers must have a criminal record check, including a vulnerable sector search, a Statement of Outstanding Criminal Charges, first aid and CPR-C certificates.

Criminal record checks, including a vulnerable sector search, and a Statement of Outstanding Criminal Charges are required for any adult over the age of 19 who resides in the private residence within which the child day care program operates.

#### **Licensing, monitoring, and enforcement**

Family day homes are licensed and regulated under the authority of the [Child Day Care Act](#) and [Child Day Care Standards and Regulations](#).

Education, Culture and Employment licenses and monitors all licensed early learning and child care programs in the NWT, including family day homes. Regional Early Childhood Consultants work directly with child care operators and provide guidance through the licence application process. There is no fee required for a licence.

A licence is valid for a maximum of one year. A licence issued with terms and conditions requires the facility to meet certain requirements by an expiry date in order to keep its licence.

Annual inspections are required for licence renewal and conducted by the Regional Early Childhood Consultant, Fire Inspector and Environmental Health Officer. The ELCC Director will automatically renew a licence if the inspection reports show that the operator is in compliance with the *Act* and Regulations.

A licensed family day home can be inspected by the departments noted above at times other than the annual year licence renewal inspection. Children attending a family day home must be supervised by the operator at all times or for short periods of time or in the case of an emergency, by a substitute who has been approved by the ELCC Director.

## ■ FUNDING FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE

### CHILD CARE SERVICES' ELIGIBILITY FOR FUNDING

Funding (operational, start-up and one-time) is available to all licensed not-for-profit child care centres (full- and part-day) and licensed family day home providers. (There is no for-profit child care in NWT).

### TYPES OF FUNDING

#### FEE SUBSIDIES

The NWT does not have a stand-alone child care subsidy program. The Income Assistance (IA) program offers financial support to IA applicants to assist with their child care expenses so they can participate in the labour force or pursue education and training opportunities in the NWT.

#### Income Assistance (fee support program)

Income Assistance funds can be used as fee subsidies in licensed and unlicensed child care.

The subsidy rate is the maximum amount paid by the territorial government to the service provider to cover all or part of the child care fees.

#### Income Assistance Program daily subsidy rates for child care

Age	Licensed	Unlicensed
Infant (0 – 1 year)	\$42	\$33
Child (2 – 12 years)	\$39	\$28
Preschool/pre-kindergarten-age		
with extended care (3 – 4 years)	\$39	NA
Part-time (0 – 5 years)	\$26	\$13
After-school (5 – 12 years)	\$15	\$8

#### OPERATIONAL FUNDING

#### Early Childhood Program (ECP) Funding – Operating Subsidy

The ECP Subsidy is an attendance-based quarterly contribution through which licensed programs (centres and family day homes) receive a fixed daily rate per attending child. Programs located at government-owned buildings are funded at 75% of the daily rate. All licensed child care programs are eligible for this funding.

Licensed early learning and child care programs submit applications for this funding to regional ECCs. Applications are reviewed and approved by the ECCs. Recipients are required to provide Program Contribution Attendance Report forms (indicating attendance per space and the number of days the licensed early childhood centre was open).

For further details see the [Early childhood program operating subsidy](#).

#### Full-time daily rates/child for the Early Childhood Program Operating Subsidy

	Zone A	Zone B
Infant/Special needs	\$33.75/child	\$49.66/child
Preschool-age	\$14.17/child	\$19.81/child
Out-of-school	\$4.72/child	\$5.01/child

*Note: Part-time spaces are funded at half the full-time rate.*

*Note: The 2017 – 2021 Canada-NWT Early Learning and Child Care Bilateral Agreement and action plan offers enhanced ECP funding for licensed centre-based programs with preschool and out-of-school spaces.*

#### Early Childhood Staff Grant

The [Early Childhood Staff Grant](#) was first established in 2014 and merged with the Retention Incentive Grant in 2022. It is a taxable wage supplement that provides quarterly payments directly to eligible early childhood educators working in licensed centre-based programs including daycares, preschools, and out-of-school programs. Quarterly grant amounts range from \$600 to \$3,000, depending on hours worked and early childhood qualifications.

Family day homes providers did not receive the Early Childhood Staff Grant.

Information about the [new Retention Incentive Grant](#) is available on the Department of Education, Culture & Employment website.

**Early Childhood Staff Grant amounts for eligible employees based on the amount of hours worked and ECE training (2022)**

	100 – 234 hours/ worked quarter (8 – 18 hours/week)	235 – 351 hours/ worked quarter (18.5 – 27 hours/week)	354 – 468 hours/ worked quarter (27.5 – 36 hours/week)	469+ hours/ worked quarter (37+ hours/week)
No early childhood PSE	\$600	\$900	\$1,200	\$1,500
Early childhood certificate	\$800	\$1,200	\$1,600	\$2,000
Early childhood diploma	\$1,000	\$1,500	\$2,000	\$2,500
Early childhood degree	\$1,200	\$1,800	\$2,400	\$3,000

*Note: For example, an employee who had not completed a post-secondary early childhood program and worked 35 hours/week during April – June would qualify for a grant of \$1,200 for the 1st quarter grant payment.*

**Supporting Child Inclusion and Participation (SCIP)**

The Supporting Child Inclusion and Participation (SCIP) Funding Program helps children with diverse needs, who are vulnerable or with specific developmental needs, to fully participate in early learning and child care programs in their community. Administered by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE), SCIP provides eligible applicants with financial support to reduce or eliminate barriers to early learning for children from birth to 6 years of age.

The following are eligible applicants for this program:

- licensed early learning and child care programs;
- indigenous governments and organizations;
- non-profit organizations; and
- community-based early childhood programs.

A total of \$1.7M in funding is allocated to applicants in a variety of funding streams.

**ONE-TIME FUNDING**

**Health and Safety Funding**

This funding is provided through the 2017 – 2021 Canada-NWT Early Learning and Child Care Bilateral Agreement and is an on-demand contribution capped at \$10,000 for licensed providers to help with the cost of repairs and maintenance required by annual health and fire safety inspections.

Family day homes may access this funding once during the start-up phase, whereas licensed centres may access the funds annually if required to address deficiencies noted as part of a fire or environmental health inspection.

This funding consists of two components:

- a maximum of \$5,000 can be used towards improvements required by environmental health inspections; and
- another \$5,000 maximum can be used towards improvements required by fire safety inspections.



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## New Child Care Spaces Fund

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The New Child Care Spaces funding was established in 2017 as part of the 2017 – 2021 *Canada-NWT Early Learning and Child Care Bilateral Agreement* to replace the former Start-up Subsidy. This application-based program assists with the creation of new licensed early learning and child care programs by providing funding for the purchase of equipment and supplies. This funding cannot be used towards staffing or lease payments. This funding is also available to licensed programs who wish to re-profile spaces based on community need (e.g., preschool-age to infant).

Licensed family day homes are eligible to receive a flat amount based on which zone they are in, whereas centre-based programs receive a fixed amount per type of space.

For information on communities by zone, see page 10 of the [Early Learning and Child Care Funding Programs Review](#).

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### *New Child Care Spaces Fund – Full-time*

	<i>Payment per centre space</i>	
	<i>Zone A</i>	<i>Zone B</i>
Infant/Special needs	\$2,500	\$4,200
Preschool-age	\$1,700	\$2,800
Out-of-school	\$500	\$1,000
<i>Flat rate payment</i>		
Family day home	\$3,000	\$4,500

*Note: Part-time spaces are funded at half the full-time rate.*

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## Early Childhood Infrastructure Funding

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The [Early Childhood Infrastructure Fund](#) (ECIF) provides funding for projects that preserve existing infrastructure of licensed centre-based child care spaces or create new licensed centre-based child care spaces in NWT communities.

To be eligible for funding, a centre must be a non-profit organization or operated by an Indigenous government. Priority for funding will be for communities that have limited or non-existent child care programming. For this fund, \$1M is allocated annually.

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## Early Childhood Program Enhancement Grants

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The following funding grants are available through the 2021 – 2025 Canada-NWT Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Bilateral Agreement:

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### Provider Enhancement Grant (PEG)

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This one-time funding was available to both licensed centre-based programs and family day homes. PEG assists licensed programs to purchase or replace equipment, such as high chairs, car seats, playground equipment, furniture, and other learning materials that support quality play-based environments.

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### Early Childhood Cultural Resource Grant

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The cultural resource grant provided licensed centre-based early learning and child care programs with funding to purchase culturally relevant materials and resources to support quality early learning.

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### Technology Grant

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The Technology Grant was provided as a one-time grant to licensed centre-based programs for the purchase of equipment such as computers and printers to support daily operations and participate in online learning opportunities. New licensed centre-based programs and/or programs that did not previously receive the Technology Grant were eligible for the funding in 2021 – 2022.

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## OTHER FUNDING

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### Right from the Start Early Childhood Scholarship

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The Right from the Start Early Childhood Scholarship was first introduced in 2014. It is designed to help offset the costs of attending full-time on-site diploma or degree programs in the field of early childhood development. Eligible students can apply for the \$5,000 scholarship each year for the duration of their studies. In 2020 – 2021, through the 2017 – 2021 Canada-NWT Early Learning and Child Care Bilateral Agreement, an additional 20 scholarships were supported, for a total of 30 scholarships. [Full program guidelines](#) are available on the ECE website.

Eligible applicants must be full-time students in a diploma or degree program in early childhood development at an accredited post-secondary institution.

Preference is given to those:

- enrolled in their first year of study;
- who have not previously received an ELCC scholarship;
- are from a small NWT community (any community other than Hay River, Fort Smith, Fort Simpson, Inuvik, Norman Wells, or Yellowknife); or
- are planning on returning to the NWT after graduation to pursue a career in early childhood development.

### TERRITORIAL FUNDING FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE (2020 – 2021)

**FEE SUBSIDIES** *Not available*

#### OPERATIONAL FUNDING

<i>Program</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Early Childhood Program Operating Subsidy	\$4,720,345
Supporting Child Inclusion and Participation (SCIP)	\$752,990
Early Childhood Staff Grant (Paid directly to ELCC Staff as wage enhancement)	\$1,000,193

*Note: The proposal-based SCIP funding to support inclusion in early childhood is available to both licensed and unlicensed programs. This amount reflects funding to licensed programs, including Emerging Needs funding provided throughout the year and the annual proposal-based funding.*

**Total operational funding** **\$6,473,529**

#### ONE-TIME FUNDING

##### One-time funding – capital (major and minor)

<i>Program</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Early childhood infrastructure funding	\$500,000

##### One-time funding – other

<i>Program</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Early learning and child care scholarship (\$5,000 scholarship paid to students attending post-secondary education programs related to early childhood education at the diploma level or higher)	\$135,000
Health and Safety Funding	\$104,930
Provider Enhancement Grant	\$60,000
New Child Care Spaces	\$21,000

**Total one-time funding** **\$820,930**

**TOTAL FUNDING FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE (operational funding, and one-time funding)** **\$7,294,460**

#### OTHER ELCC FUNDING

<i>Program</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Postsecondary Learning Opportunity (Paid directly to Aurora College to offset cost of programming to ELCC Staff)	\$683,569
Professional Development and Training (Salaries and Operational Expenditure)	\$362,670
Supporting Child Inclusion and Participation (SCIP Funding to Unlicensed Programming)	\$351,679
Supporting Child Inclusion and Participation (SCIP Funding to NWT Disability Council – Inclusion Support in Yukon)	\$308,000
Supporting Child Inclusion and Participation (SCIP Coordinator Cost – Support to System)	\$154,404
Cultural Resource Development (Translation and Printing of Cultural Resources)	\$13,945



## FEDERAL TRANSFERS TO TERRITORY

<i>Federal transfer</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework – Early Learning and Child Care Bilateral Agreements	\$2,419,151
Safe Restart	\$2,710,000

## COVID-19 RELATED SUPPORTS

COVID-19 Funding	\$1,967,356
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*Note: This included funding for wage enhancements, sustainability funding, cleaning and personal protective equipment (PPE). In addition, the Department continued to provide attendance-based Early Childhood Program (ECP) operating subsidy funding based on current or prior actuals (whichever was higher) to support sustainability.*

## OF INTEREST

### FAMILY RESOURCE PROGRAMS

#### Healthy Family Program

The [Healthy Family Program](#) (HFP) is a family resource program provided in multiple communities and managed by the NWT Health and Social Service Authorities. It has an objective of supporting and enhancing the development of children under the age of six. The Healthy Family Program is a universal, and free program open to all families with children 0 – 6 years and participation is voluntary. The HFP offers parenting groups and workshops; cultural programming; peer support; one-on-one in-person (home visiting/in office) support and one-on-one virtual support.

## TERRITORIAL ECEC ORGANIZATIONS AND ADVISORY GROUPS

[NWT Early Childhood Association](#)

