



New Brunswick

■ OVERVIEW

In New Brunswick, early learning and child care (ELCC) includes kindergarten, child care centres, school-age centres, and family child care homes. All ELCC provision is the responsibility of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

New Brunswick is officially a bilingual province with parallel English and French public education sectors delivering kindergarten at no fee for parents. Full school-day kindergarten is available for all five-year-olds and is compulsory. There is no kindergarten for four-year-olds.

Licensed child care includes “designated” New Brunswick Early Learning Centres and family child care homes, undesignated child care centres and family child care homes, and before- and after-school child care. In 2024, most eligible programs are “designated.”

Centre-based child care is delivered by non-profit and for-profit operators, with 72% of full-day spaces operated by for-profit operators. There is a small amount of public child care, with two municipalities operating three centres.

Regulated family child care is individually licensed. Family child care homes are termed “early learning and childcare homes” and spaces are termed “approved spaces.”

As of June 2022, New Brunswick has set parent fees in designated centres and family child care homes according to the [Standard Parent Fee Grid](#). The fees, which are between \$16/day and \$21/day for a full-day space, vary by age group and community type. Fees have not been reduced in before- and after-school care.

Fee subsidies for eligible parents using designated child care are accessed through the Parent Subsidy Program and through the Daycare Assistance Program for parents in non-designated child care.

New Brunswick introduced a [wage grid](#) in November 2022. Wages were increased effective April 1, 2023 and April 1, 2024.

New Brunswick signed the Canada-New Brunswick Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (Multilateral Framework Agreement) on August 30, 2017; it was extended on August 19, 2020 with an additional \$9.7 million allocated to the 2020 – 2021 fiscal year, and renewed on August 13, 2021 with another \$48.1 million allocated over four years.

The Canada-New Brunswick Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) agreement was signed by New Brunswick on December 10, 2021. It allocated \$492 million over five years. The Canada-wide agreement does not replace but runs parallel to the Multilateral Framework Agreement.

Net growth in full-day centre spaces for children 0 – 5 years since CWELCC

	2021	2023	Increase (decrease) 2021 – 2023
For-profit	10,182	11,196	+1,014
Non-profit and public	4,159	4,458	+299
Total full-day spaces	14,341	15,654	+1,313

Percentage of full-day spaces that were for-profit
71% 72% +0.5%

Note: The 2021 full-day space figures by auspice and by age group may have been calculated using different methods, resulting in an overcount of the auspice figures. The 2021 auspice figures have been recalculated for this report using the overall percentage of profit and non-profit spaces applied to the total full-day spaces by age group.

Percentage of growth of full-day spaces that was for-profit 77%

Family child care spaces (2021, 2023)

	2021	2023
Full-day family child care spaces (2021 licensed capacity, 2023 enrolment)	622	455

Note: The 2021 figures are licensed capacity. The 2023 figures are enrolment. As a result, the two are not comparable.

■ PROVINCIAL CONTEXT

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.

Number of children 0 – 12 years (2023 rounded estimate)

<i>Age</i>	<i>Number of children (2023)</i>
0	5,800
1	6,200
2	6,100
3	5,700
4	7,400
5	7,300
6	6,700
7	7,200
8	8,700
9	9,000
10	9,300
11	8,400
12	8,500
Total	96,300

Number of children 0 – 12 years (aggregated) (2023 rounded estimate)

<i>Age</i>	<i>Number of children (2023)</i>
0 – 2	18,100
3 – 5	20,400
6 – 12	57,800
Total	96,300

Number of children 0 – 12 years with employed mothers (2023 rounded estimate)

<i>Age</i>	<i>Number of children (2023)</i>
0	3,500
1	4,600
2	4,300
3	4,100
4	5,300
5	4,900
6	4,500
7	5,200
8	5,700
9	5,700
10	6,000
11	5,900
12	5,800
Total	65,500

Number of children 0 – 12 years with employed mothers (aggregated) (2023 rounded estimate)

<i>Age</i>	<i>Number of children (2023)</i>
0 – 2	12,400
3 – 5	14,300
6 – 12	38,800
Total	65,500

Number of children 0 – 14 years 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	1,445	335	90	25	55
5 – 9	1,705	455	75	30	75
10 – 14	1,825	690	50	70	70
Total	4,975	1,480	215	125	200

Workforce participation of mothers by age of youngest child (2023 rounded estimate)

<i>Age of youngest child</i>	<i>Number of mothers</i>	<i>Participation rate (%)</i>
0 – 3	14,000	80.0
4 – 5	5,700	83.8
0 – 5	19,600	80.3
6 – 12	21,500	82.7

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	25,465	6,265	5,280	990
5 – 9	28,165	9,345	7,375	1,970
10 – 14	28,480	11,215	8,800	2,420

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	23,005	7,180	1,100	950
5 – 9	27,050	8,690	1,240	1,190
10 – 14	28,440	9,670	1,260	1,175
Total	78,490	25,535	3,600	3,315

Median after-tax income among families with children 0 – 5 years (2020)

<i>Two-parent families</i>	<i>Male lone parent</i>	<i>Female lone parent</i>
\$90,000	\$44,400	\$43,200

KINDERGARTEN

Full school-day kindergarten enrolment (2023)

Anglophone kindergarten for 5-year-olds	4,853
Francophone kindergarten for 5-year-olds	2,174

Total kindergarten enrolment	7,027
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Note: Enrolment figures are for public schools only.

FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS, AND INUIT CHILD CARE

First Nations child care on reserves

New Brunswick licenses on-reserve child care for First Nations communities upon request.

In March 2023, there were six licensed full-day centres on First Nations reserves. New Brunswick reports that these six centres were operated by Indigenous governing bodies.

Licensed spaces on reserve

Full-day	194
Before- and after-school	54

Total licensed spaces	248
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The number of unlicensed child care centres on reserve is not available.

There were no regulated family child care providers on reserve.

Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve (AHSOR) is licensed on request. There were 15 AHSOR programs in New Brunswick.

Indigenous child care other than on reserves

Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities (AHSUNC) may be licensed by the province on request. There was one licensed AHSUNC program in 2023, with morning and afternoon sessions, each of which enrolled nine children.

CHILD CARE SPACE STATISTICS

Number of regulated spaces (March 31, 2023)

Full-day centre spaces

	Anglophone	Francophone
Infants (0 – <2 years)	1,417	788
Preschool-age (2 – <5 years, not yet in school)	8,820	4,635

Total full-day centre spaces (children 0 – 5 years)	10,237	5,423
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Part-day centre spaces

	Anglophone	Francophone
Preschool-age (2 – <5 years, not yet in school)	594	122

Total centre spaces (children 0 – 5 years)	10,831	5,545
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Total anglophone and francophone centre spaces (children 0 – 5 years)	16,376
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Before- and after-school care centre spaces (licensed or regulated)

	Anglophone	Francophone
Children in kindergarten and Grades 1 – 6	10,103	6,460

Total anglophone and francophone centre spaces (children 0 – 12 years)	32,939
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Regulated family child care (enrolment)

	Anglophone	Francophone
Full-day (children not yet in school)	263	192
Part-day (children attending school)	77	50

Total regulated family child care spaces	340	242
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Note: Family child care providers are not required to report on enrolment for school-age and for non-designated facilities. As a result, total enrolment in family child care may be higher than the numbers reported above.

TOTAL REGULATED SPACES
(centre spaces and family child care enrolment) 33,521

Number of child care centres and family child care homes (March 31, 2023)

Centre-based child care

	Anglophone	Francophone
Total number of centres	462	258

Total number of centres	720
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Centre-based programs

	Anglophone	Francophone
Number of centres providing a full-day program	291	157
Number of centres providing a part-day (nursery or preschool) program	32	7
Number of centres providing a part-day program for children attending school (approximately 5 – 12 years)	163	99
Number of centres that are designated NB Early Learning Centres	301	156
Number of centres providing infant care (0 – <2 years)	148	86
Number of centres providing preschool-age care (2 – <5 years)	317	158
Number of centres providing non-standard hours care (non-standard hours as defined by the province)	15	2
Number of centres in publicly delivered and funded schools (K – 12)	60	86

Regulated family child care

Number of francophone early learning and child care homes	53
Number of anglophone early learning and child care homes	74

Total number of family child care homes	127
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Participation in CWELCC

	Anglophone	Francophone
Number of child care centres	301	156
Number of family child care homes	64	46

Note: Provision for children older than 0 – 5 years in school-age centres is not eligible for CWELCC funding.

Municipal delivery

Number of municipalities or municipal entities operating child care centres (i.e. are the licence holder)	2
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Auspice

Full- and part-day programs by auspice (2023)

	Number of centres
For-profit	491
Non-profit and public	229

Note: Public facilities include three municipal centres and six operated by Indigenous governing bodies.

Centre spaces by auspice

	Full-day	Part-day ¹	BASC ²	Total
For-profit	11,196	300	10,337	21,833
Non-profit and public	4,458	422	6,226	11,106

¹ Nursery school/preschool.

² Before- and after-school care (children 5 – 12 years).

Note: The public spaces include 36 full-day and 50 before- and after-school spaces operated by municipalities, and 194 full-day and 54 before- and after-school spaces operated by Indigenous governing bodies.

Fee subsidies

Number of children receiving fee subsidies (March 31, 2023)

Daycare Assistance Program – total	2,016
Parent Subsidy Program – full subsidy	2,210
Parent Subsidy Program – partial subsidy	1,964
Total children receiving fee subsidies	6,190

Disability support

Special needs/disability support (March 31, 2023)

Children in licensed child care receiving special needs/disability support funding	524
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CHILD CARE ENROLMENT STATISTICS

Number of children enrolled in regulated centre-based programs (March 31, 2023)

	Anglophone	Francophone
Full-day centres		
Infants (0 – <2 years)	1,257	644
Preschool-age (2 – <5 years, not yet in school)	7,265	3,551
Part-day centres		
Preschool-age (2 – <5 years, not yet in school)	124	8
Total centre enrolment (children 0 – 5 years)	8,646	4,203
Before- and after-school care (licensed or regulated)		
Children in kindergarten and Grades 1 – 6	4,020	2,430

TOTAL ANGLOPHONE AND FRANCOPHONE

CENTRE ENROLMENT (children 0 – 12 years) 19,299

Note: It was optional for operators to report before- and after-school enrolment, therefore the number of children in kindergarten and Grades 1 – 6 enrolled in child care does not reflect the total number of enrolled children.

PARENT FEES

In 2022, the province moved from market fees to set fees, with a \$21/day fee for infants and \$18/day for preschool-age (aged 2 – 5) in large urban communities, with \$19/day for infants and \$16/day for preschool-age in small urban and rural communities.

Full-time median monthly fees for centres and family child care homes in New Brunswick (2021) and provincially set fees for centres and family child care homes participating in CWELCC (2023)

	Full-time median monthly fee (2022)	Provincially set full-time fee (2023)
Fredericton		
Infant	\$846	\$456
Toddler	\$749	\$391
Preschool-age	\$735	\$391
Moncton		
Infant	\$868	\$456
Toddler	\$781	\$391
Preschool-age	\$759	\$391
Saint John		
Infant	\$885	\$456
Toddler	\$738	\$391
Preschool-age	\$738	\$391

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

Sources: Macdonald, D., & Friendly, M. (2023). *Measuring Matters: Assessing Canada's progress toward \$10-a-day child care for all*. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

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

■ WORKFORCE

New Brunswick introduced a [wage grid](#) in November 2022. Wages were increased effective April 1, 2023 and April 1, 2024.

■ FUNDING FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE (Fiscal year 2022 – 2023)

The funding figures in each category represent provincial spending, which may include both provincial funds and federal funds transferred under bilateral agreements, Canada-wide ELCC agreements, or other federal programs used for early learning and child care.

Fee subsidies	
<i>Program</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Daycare Assistance Program (DAP)	\$7,372,175
Parent Subsidy Program	\$13,224,799
Total fee subsidies	\$20,596,974

Note: These are fee subsidies in licensed, regulated, or approved child care. The subsidies are associated with an individual child and family. There are provincial eligibility criteria. Fee subsidies are sent to service providers, not to parents.

Operational funding	
<i>Program</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Operational Grant	\$11,722,446
Wage Support Program	\$71,468,899
Inclusion Support Program	\$10,101,409
Parent Fee Reduction Subsidy	\$43,019,982
Fund for vulnerable children to access quality early learning	\$104,713
Total operational funding	\$136,417,450

Note: Operational funding includes regularly paid public funding that contributes to the ongoing operation of the child care service. It may include: operating grants or formula-based funding, family child care agency operating funds, wage grants/enhancement, special needs funding, and other grants/funding that is paid on a recurring basis.

One-time funding	
<i>Program</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Inflation adjustment grant	\$3,708,125
Transitional funding	\$1,812,630
Innovative professional learning	\$867,348
Recruitment and retention	\$59,336
Quality improvement grants	\$1,321,001
Total one-time funding	\$7,768,440

Note: One-time funding is paid occasionally or just once to a child care service and is not part of the regular operating budget. It may include: major capital, minor capital, start up, one time equipment, or repair funding.

TOTAL SPENDING FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE (fee subsidies, operational funding, and one-time funding)	\$164,782,863
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Other ELCC funding

<i>Program</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Early Learning and Child Care Tuition Reimbursement Program for child care staff	\$518,859
Association Francophone des Garderies Éducatives du NB	\$70,000
Family Resource Centres (New Brunswick Association of Family Resource Programs)	\$31,725
New Brunswick Institute for Research, Data and Training	\$260,000
Total other funding	\$880,584

Federal transfers to New Brunswick

<i>Federal transfer</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework – Early Learning and Child Care Bilateral Agreements	\$12,395,318.00
Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care	\$85,126,000.00

Note: The federal transfers above represent the funds allocated to New Brunswick for fiscal year 2022 – 2023. These funds may be slightly different from those included in the original agreements as they are updated in line with population estimates on an annual basis. They do not represent funds carried over from the previous fiscal year or carried into the next fiscal year.

Source: Early Learning and Child Care Secretariat, Employment and Social Development Canada (2024).
