



# Northwest Territories

## ■ OVERVIEW

In the Northwest Territories, early learning and child care (ELCC) includes kindergarten, child care centres, before- and after-school care, and family child care (termed day homes). All ELCC programs are the responsibility of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

Kindergarten is a legislated entitlement for four- and five-year-olds; it is not compulsory. Kindergarten for five-year-olds is full school-day. For four-year-olds, it may be full- or part-day.

Licensed centre-based care includes full-day centres and before- and after-school programs. There are some part-day programs in the Northwest Territories but they are not categorized separately from full-day programs.

There are no for-profit child care centres in the Northwest Territories. Centre-based child care is operated by non-profit boards, municipalities, school authorities, and Indigenous governing bodies.

Family day homes are individually licensed.

In 2022, the Northwest Territories provided funds to child care programs to reduce their fees by an average of 50%. On April 1, 2023, the Northwest Territories increased funding to reduce fees by an average of 60% and on April 1, 2024 by an average of 74%. Annual fee increases are limited to a certain percent, depending on the current fees charged.

Limited parent fee subsidies are available through the Income Assistance program for both licensed and unlicensed child care.

Beginning in 2022 – 2023, the Northwest Territories provides [wage enhancement](#) for early childhood educators working in centre-based programs through the Retention Incentive. This two year transitional funding will be in place until a wage grid is implemented in 2024 – 2025.

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 6, 2021 allocating a further \$10.3 million over four years.

The Canada-Northwest Territories Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) 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. 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	0	0	
Non-profit and public	763	820	+57
<b>Total full-day spaces</b>	<b>763</b>	<b>820</b>	<b>+57</b>
Percentage of full-day spaces that were for-profit	0%	0%	
Percentage of growth of full-day spaces that was for-profit			<i>Not applicable</i>

Family child care spaces (2021, 2023)		
	2021	2023
Family child care spaces (enrolment of children not yet in school)	324	240

## ■ TERRITORIAL 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 (aggregated) (2023 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0 – 2	1,100
3 – 5	1,700
6 – 12	4,200
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,000</b>

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

Age	Number of children
0 – 2	700
3 – 5	1,200
6 – 12	3,200
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,100</b>

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

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

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

Not available

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

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

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

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

Note: In the Northwest Territories there are nine official languages that are recognized, including Northwest Territories Indigenous languages.

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

Two-parent families	Male lone parent	Female lone parent
\$140,000	\$56,000	\$52,000

## ■ KINDERGARTEN

### Kindergarten enrolment (2023)

#### Enrolment in public schools

Kindergarten for 5-year-olds	330
Kindergarten for 4-year-olds	268

**Total kindergarten enrolment** **598**

Note: Kindergarten for five-year-olds is full school-day. For four-year-olds, it may be full- or part-day.

## ■ FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS, AND INUIT CHILD CARE

The Northwest Territories includes First Nations, Métis, and Inuvialuit (Inuit) communities. Indigenous people make up approximately 50% of the total population overall; in smaller communities, the majority of residents are Indigenous.

The Northwest Territories has two reserves. In 2023, there was one licensed child care centre on the K'at'l'odeeche First Nation (KFN) Reserve, operated by the KFN and providing 40 licensed spaces. There was no licensed family child care on reserve.

In addition to the two reserves, the Northwest Territories is comprised of other traditional territories in which Indigenous governing bodies have formal agreements with the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Government of Canada. These agreements (land and resource, self-government, or a combination of the two) constitute Indigenous Lands. In 2023, there were 15 licensed early learning and child care centres in areas with finalized land and resource and/or self-government agreements, including on Inuit lands, with 439 total licensed spaces. There was one licensed family child care provider located in a community that is part of both the Inuvialuit Final Agreement (IFA) and the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement.

The territory licenses Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve (AHSOR) programs. There was one AHSOR program providing 10 spaces on the KFN Reserve operated by the District Education Authority.

The Northwest Territories also had eight Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities (AHSUNC) programs. Six were licensed ELCC programs and two (not licensed) offered family-centered programming for caregivers attending with children.

Licensed spaces are all included in the overall territorial space statistics.

#### Licensed child care spaces on Indigenous lands with existing agreements

	First Nations reserves	Other areas with finalized agreements <sup>1</sup>
Full-day	36	309
Before- and after-school	4	130
<b>Total licensed spaces</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>439</b>

Note: These numbers do not include licensed AHSOR or AHSUNC spaces.

<sup>1</sup> Groups with finalized agreements include the Inuvialuit, Gwich'in, Tłı̄ch̄o, Sahtu Dene and Métis, and Salt River First Nation.

## CHILD CARE SPACE STATISTICS

### Number of regulated spaces (March 31, 2023)

Full-day centre spaces	
Infants (<2 years)	196
Preschool-age (2 – 5 years, not yet in school)	624

**Total full-day centre spaces (children 0 – 5 years) 820**

Part-day centre spaces	
Children not yet in school	Not applicable

Note: All centres for children not yet in school are licensed as full-day; some may offer a part-day program.

### Before- and after-school care centre spaces (licensed or regulated)

Children in junior kindergarten, kindergarten, and Grades 1 – 6	792
---	-----

**Total centre spaces (children 0 – 12 years) 1,612**

### Regulated family child care (licensed capacity)

Full-day (children not yet in school)	240
Part-day (children in school)	80

**Total regulated family child care spaces 320**

**TOTAL REGULATED SPACES (centre spaces and family child care licensed capacity) 1,932**

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

### Centre-based child care

**Total number of centres** 67

### Centre-based programs

Number of centres providing a full-day program 35

Number of centres providing a part-day (nursery or preschool) program *Not applicable*

*Note: All centres for children not yet in school are licensed as full-day; some may offer a part-day program.*

Number of centres providing a part-day program for children attending school (approximately 4 – 12 years) 32

Number of centres providing infant care (<2 years) 21

Number of centres providing preschool-age care (2 – 5 years) 34

Number of centres providing non-standard hours care (non-standard hours as defined by the territory) *Not applicable*

Number of centres in publicly delivered and funded schools (K – 12) 29

### Regulated family child care

Number of individually licensed family child care homes (active) 40

### Participation in CWELCC

Number of child care centres 67

Number of family child care homes 40

*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)** 3

*Note: The hamlets of Sachs Harbour and Tsiigehtchic each operate one centre, and the town of Fort Smith operates two centres.*

## Auspice

### Full-day programs by auspice (2023)

*Number of centres*

For-profit 0  
Non-profit and public 67

*Note: Public centres include four operated by municipalities, seven by Yellowknife Catholic Schools, two by the Commission Scolaire Francophone - Territoires du Nord-Ouest (francophone school authority), and 22 by Indigenous governing bodies.*

*Note: All centres for children not yet in school are licensed as full-day; some may offer a part-day program.*

### Centre spaces by auspice

	Full-day <sup>1</sup>	BASC <sup>2</sup>	Total
For-profit	0	0	0
Non-profit and public	820	792	1612

<sup>1</sup> Children 0 – 5 years, not yet in school.

<sup>2</sup> Children 4 – 12 years.

*Note: Public spaces include 406 full-day and 85 before- and after-school spaces operated by Indigenous governing bodies, 42 full-day and 46 before- and after-school spaces operated by municipalities, and 155 before- and after-school spaces operated by school authorities*

## Fee subsidies

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

Through the Income Assistance program 4

## Disability support

### Special needs/disability support (March 31, 2023)

Children in licensed child care receiving special needs/disability support funding *Not available*

## CHILD CARE ENROLMENT STATISTICS

The Northwest Territories does not currently report on enrolment.

## ■ PARENT FEES

In 2022, the Northwest Territories provided funds to child care programs to reduce their fees by an average of 50%. On April 1, 2023, the Northwest Territories increased funding to reduce fees by an average of 60% and on April 1, 2024 by an average of 74%. Annual fee increases are limited to a certain percent, depending on the current fees charged. The territory does not have a set fee. Note that the CCPA Annual Fee Survey used in the table below preceded the April 2023 and 2024 fee reductions.

### Full-time median monthly fees for centres and family child care homes in Yellowknife participating in CWELCC (2021, 2023)

	<i>Full-time median monthly fee (2021)</i>	<i>Full-time median monthly fee (2023)</i>
Infant	\$1,035	\$512
Toddler	\$1,010	\$514
Preschool-age	\$930	\$346

*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

Beginning in 2022 – 2023, the Northwest Territories provides [wage enhancement](#) for early childhood educators working in centre-based programs through the Retention Incentive. This two year transitional funding will be in place until a wage grid is implemented in 2024 – 2025.

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

The funding figures in each category represent territorial spending, which may include both territorial 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

<b>Total fee subsidies</b>	<b>\$27,884</b>
----------------------------	-----------------

*Note: These are fee subsidies in licensed, regulated, or approved child care. The subsidies are associated with an individual child and family. There are territorial eligibility criteria. Fee subsidies are sent to service providers, not to parents. Note that the fee subsidy program is under Income Assistance.*

### Operational funding

<i>Program</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Early Childhood Program Operating Subsidy	\$4,532,909
Child Care Fee Reduction Subsidy	\$3,612,500
Program Sustainability Funding	\$537,196
Supporting Child Inclusion and Participation Additional Staff (One-to-One or One-to-Multiple staff to child support)	\$414,073
Supporting Child Inclusion and Participation (Quality Enhancement Funding)	\$298,154
<b>Total operational funding</b>	<b>\$9,394,832</b>

*Note: Funding for the Supporting Child Inclusion and Participation programs may be extended to some unregulated early childhood services. The amount of funding that supported regulated child care is not available.*

*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 – capital (major and minor)

<i>Program</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Early childhood infrastructure funding	\$261,081
New child care spaces funding	\$196,300

### One-time funding – other

<i>Program</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Retention Incentive	\$2,312,257
Health and Safety Funding	\$51,374
Program Quality Enhancement	\$15,300
<b>Total one-time funding</b>	<b>\$2,836,312</b>

*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) **\$12,259,028**

### Other ELCC funding

<i>Program</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Early Learning and Child Care Scholarship	\$177,000
Postsecondary Learning Opportunity	\$1,493,943
Family Literacy Support Funding (NWT Literacy Council Programming)	\$420,000
Professional Development and Training (Salaries and Operational Expenditure)	\$704,680
Supporting Child Inclusion and Participation (Community Initiatives)	\$827,830
Supporting Child Inclusion and Participation (Small Community Sustainability)	\$100,000
<b>Total other funding</b>	<b>\$3,723,453</b>

### Federal transfers to Northwest Territories

<i>Federal transfer</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework – Early Learning and Child Care Bilateral Agreements	\$2,583,797
Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care	\$8,504,000

*Note: The federal transfers above represent the funds allocated to Northwest Territories 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).