



Prince Edward Island

■ OVERVIEW

Prince Edward Island’s early learning and child care (ELCC) includes kindergarten, child care centres, and family child care (termed family home centres). All regulated ELCC programs are the responsibility of the Department of Education and Lifelong Learning (DELL).

Full school-day kindergarten is available to all age-eligible five-year-olds. Part-day prekindergarten at no parental fee during the school year is offered as licensed child care by regulated child care centres and is available for all four-year-olds. Kindergarten is compulsory; prekindergarten is not.

Licensed child care includes regulated early childhood centres, designated Early Years Centres (EYCs), preschool centres, school-age centres, and family home centres.

Family child care providers are individually licensed in Prince Edward Island. There is a small number of family home centres.

Child care centres are delivered by non-profit and for-profit operators, with 73% of full-day centre spaces for-profit. There is a very small number of centres delivered by public entities.

Eighty-nine percent of full-day centres are EYCs, which have some additional requirements beyond the minimum regulations. Parent fees in EYCs have been set by the provincial government since 2010. In January 2024, Prince Edward Island reduced its set parent fees to \$10/day for all children 0 – 5 in EYCs and licensed family home centres. As of January 1, 2022, centres that are not EYCs also began to receive operating funding to reduce parent fees.

A parent fee subsidy is available to eligible parents through the Child Care Subsidy Program and may be used at any licensed centre or home.

Early Years Centres have been required to use a provincial [wage grid](#) since 2010.

Prince Edward Island signed the Canada-Prince Edward Island Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (Multilateral Framework Agreement) on August 29, 2017. This agreement allocated \$10.6 million over three years; it was extended on September 16, 2020 with an additional \$3.5 million allocated to the 2020 – 2021 fiscal year, and renewed on August 5, 2021, allocating another \$16.2 million over four years.

The Canada-Prince Edward Island Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) Agreement was signed by Prince Edward Island on July 27, 2021, allocating nearly \$118 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	2,591	2,833	+242
Non-profit and public	1,183	1,288	+105
Total full-day spaces	3,774	4,121	+347
Percentage of full-day spaces that were for-profit	69%	69%	
Percentage of growth of full-day spaces that was for-profit			70%

Family child care spaces (2021, 2023)

	2021	2023
Family child care spaces	27	84

Note: The 2021 figure represents full-day enrolment, and the 2023 figure represents licensed capacity for all children 0 – 12 years. As a result, the two figures 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)

Age	Number of children (2023)
0	1,400
1	1,600
2	1,700
3	1,700
4	1,500
5	1,600
6	1,500
7	1,900
8	1,900
9	1,600
10	1,800
11	1,400
12	1,900
Total	21,600

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

<i>Age</i>	<i>Number of children (2023)</i>
0 – 2	4,700
3 – 5	4,800
6 – 12	12,000
Total	21,600

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

<i>Age</i>	<i>Number of children (2023)</i>
0	1,100
1	1,200
2	1,500
3	1,400
4	1,200
5	1,200
6	1,200
7	1,500
8	1,400
9	1,100
10	1,300
11	1,000
12	1,500
Total	16,500

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

<i>Age</i>	<i>Number of children (2023)</i>
0 – 2	3,800
3 – 5	3,800
6 – 12	9,000
Total	16,500

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	175	45	15	0	15
5 – 9	140	70	25	0	10
10 – 14	210	85	15	0	0
Total	525	200	55	0	25

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	4,300	86.0
4 – 5	1,300	81.3
0 – 5	5,700	86.4
6 – 12	4,400	86.3

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	5,645	1,040	855	180
5 – 9	6,240	1,740	1,360	370
10 – 14	6,530	2,105	1,630	475

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	6,175	80	360	135
5 – 9	7,380	115	425	170
10 – 14	7,960	120	530	175
Total	21,510	315	1,320	485

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>
\$89,000	\$45,200	\$43,200

KINDERGARTEN

Full school-day kindergarten enrolment (2023)

<i>Enrolment in public schools</i>	
Anglophone kindergarten for 5-year-olds	1,382
Francophone kindergarten for 5-year-olds	89
<i>Enrolment in independent/private school</i>	
Kindergarten for 5-year-olds	23
Total kindergarten enrolment	1,494

FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS, AND INUIT CHILD CARE

First Nations child care on reserves

Prince Edward Island licenses child care on First Nations reserves.

In 2023, there were two licensed child care centres (both designated Early Years Centres) in First Nations communities on reserve, operating a total of 92 full-day spaces. Prince Edward Island reported that both centres were operated by an Indigenous governing body.

There were no licensed family child care homes on reserve in Prince Edward Island.

Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve (AHSOR) programs are licensed by invitation. There were two AHSOR programs in Prince Edward Island, each located in one of the on-reserve Early Years Centres.

Indigenous child care other than on reserves

There was one licensed Indigenous-focused child care centre not on reserve in 2023. It was a designated Early Years Centre operating 12 full-day spaces.

This centre included an Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities (AHSUNC) part-day component. AHSUNC programs are not licensed in Prince Edward Island.

CHILD CARE SPACE STATISTICS

Number of regulated spaces (March 31, 2023)

Full-day centre spaces

Designated Early Years Centres

Infants (0 – <22 months)	474
Toddlers (22 months – <3 years) and preschool-age (3 – 5 years)	3,106

Non-designated centres

Infants (0 – <22 months)	21
Toddlers (22 months – <3 years) and preschool-age (3 – 5 years)	250

Total full-day centre spaces (children 0 – 5 years) 3,851

Part-day centre spaces

Toddlers (22 months – <3 years) and preschool-age (3 – 5 years)	152
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Total centre spaces (children 0 – 5 years) 4,003

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

Children in kindergarten and Grades 1 – 6	2,629
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Note: Before- and after-school spaces include 184 school-age spaces in designated Early Years Centres and 86 in non-designated early childhood centres.

Total centre spaces (children 0 – 12 years) 6,632

Regulated family child care (licensed capacity)

Total regulated family child care spaces 84

TOTAL REGULATED SPACES

(centre spaces and family child care licensed capacity)
6,716

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

Centre-based child care

Total number of centres 152

Centre-based programs

Number of designated Early Years Centres (full-day)	72
Number of non-designated centres providing a full-day program	9
Number of preschool centres (part-day)	11
Number of school-age centres (approximately 5 – 12 years)	60
Number of centres providing infant care (<22 months)	81
Number of centres providing toddler care (22 months – <3 years)	81
Number of centres providing preschool-age care (3 – 5 years)	92
Number of centres providing non-standard hours care (non-standard hours as defined by the province)	8
Number of centres in publicly delivered and funded schools (K – 12)	18

Regulated family child care

Number of family child care homes (active) 11

Participation in CWELCC

Number of child care centres 74

Number of family child care homes 11

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

Note: The town of Cornwall operates an Early Years Centre and the rural municipality of Kinkora operates one Early Years Centre and one school-age centre.

Auspice

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

	<i>Number of centres</i>
For-profit	91
Non-profit and public	61

Note: Of the 91 for-profit centres, 47 are designated Early Years Centres, part of the publicly managed system. They must meet a strict set of criteria including, but not limited to, integration of children with special needs and meeting higher quality standards including additional educational requirements for staff, use of the provincial curriculum, implementation of parent advisory committees, adherence to a wage grid, and charging standardized parent fees.

Note: Public centres reported by Prince Edward Island include three operated by municipalities, and two operated by Indigenous governing bodies.

Centre spaces by auspice

	<i>Full-day</i>	<i>Part-day¹</i>	<i>BASC²</i>	<i>Total</i>
For-profit	2,833	77	1,378	4,288
Non-profit and public	1,288	75	981	2,344

¹ Preschool centres.

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

Note: Full-day spaces include Early Years Centres and non-designated early childhood centres. Of the full-day spaces, 270 are school-age.

Note: Public spaces reported by Prince Edward Island include 45 operated by municipalities and 92 operated by Indigenous governing bodies.

Fee subsidies

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

Number of children 818

Disability support

Special needs/disability support (March 31, 2023)

Children in licensed child care receiving special needs/disability support funding 241

CHILD CARE ENROLMENT STATISTICS

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

Full-day centres

Infants (0 – <22 months)	425
Toddlers (22 months – <3 years)	810
Preschool-age (3 – 5 years)	1,993

Total centre enrolment (children 0 – 5 years) 3,228

Note: Prince Edward Island only tracks enrolment in designated Early Years Centres. Information on enrolment in non-designated centres and before- and after-school programs is not available.

PARENT FEES

In Prince Edward Island, parent fees are provincially set for centres with Early Years Centre (EYC) designation and family child care homes. Prince Edward Island previously had age-based set fees: infants \$34/day; toddlers \$28/day; and preschool-age \$27/day in 2021. The set fees were reduced to \$25/day in January 2022 across all age groups.

By January 2023, parent fees for infants and preschool-age children in child care facilities receiving operating grants were set at a maximum fee of \$20/day. On January 1, 2024, child care fees were further reduced to \$10/day in EYCs and licensed family home centres.

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

	<i>Full-time median monthly fee in Charlottetown (2021)</i>	<i>Provincially set monthly full-time fee (2023)</i>
Infant	\$738	\$434
Toddler	\$608	\$434
Preschool-age	\$586	\$434

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

Early Years Centres have been required to use a provincial [wage grid](#) since 2010.

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

Total fee subsidies \$4,646,000

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>
Early Years Centres	\$41,729,500
Quality Enhancement Grant	\$935,500
Special Need Grant	\$2,844,000
Autism Services (preschool and school-age)	\$2,263,100
Alternate Hours Demonstration Site Grant	\$500,000
Family Home Centre Operational Grant	\$355,500
Bridge Funding	\$306,000
Total operational funding	\$48,933,600

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>
Renovation Capital Grant Program	\$480,000
Family Home Centre Capital Grant	\$270,000

One-time funding – other

<i>Program</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Family Home Centre Licensing Incentive	\$45,000

Total one-time funding **\$795,000**

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) **\$54,374,600**

Other ELCC funding

<i>Program</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Home visiting program	\$1,396,100
Early Childhood Development Association	\$225,000
Early Childhood Education Grant	\$146,000
Steps to Success Program	\$25,000
L'Association des centres de la petite enfance	\$75,000
Francization funding	\$60,000
Newcomer training and support	\$26,000
Return to Profession Grant	\$50,000
Innovative Retention Grant	\$100,000
Total other funding	\$2,103,100

Federal transfers to Prince Edward Island

<i>Federal transfer</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework – Early Learning and Child Care Bilateral Agreements	\$4,185,003
Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care	\$20,140,000

Note: The federal transfers above represent the funds allocated to Prince Edward Island 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).