



Quebec

■ OVERVIEW

In Quebec, early learning and child care (ELCC) includes kindergarten, kindergarten for four-year-olds, regulated child care centres, family child care, and before- and after-school child care.

The Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement Supérieur (MEES) is responsible for kindergarten. Kindergarten for four- and five-year-olds (termed *maternelle 4 ans* and *maternelle 5 ans*) is referred to as the preschool cycle. Full school-day kindergarten is a legislated entitlement for all five-year-olds. Four-year-old kindergarten is currently being phased in. MEES is also responsible for before- and after-school child care for children aged four to 12, which is delivered by school boards.

The Ministère de la Famille is responsible for centre-based and family child care (termed recognized family child care or educational home child care services) for preschool-aged children. Centre-based child care is delivered by non-profit and for-profit operators. Operationally funded (sometimes referred to as “subsidized”) non-profit child care centres are called *Centres de la petite enfance (CPEs)*. Centres called *garderies* (or daycares, in English) are almost always for-profit; some are operationally funded and some are not. Other than Indigenous child care on reserves and Inuit lands, there is no publicly delivered full-day child care.

Part-day centres opened before 2005 are not required to be licensed.

Recognized family child care operates under an agency model. Agencies are called *bureaux coordonnateurs de la garde éducative en milieu familial*, or home child care coordinating offices (CCCOs) in English. Licensed homes with one educational child care provider assisted by another person can accommodate a larger number of children.

For-profit child care spaces (funded and unfunded) comprise 52% of centre-based child care provision for children younger than kindergarten-age. Provision of funded *garderies* has been increasing as the Quebec government has been converting unfunded for-profit provision, mostly to funded for-profit provision.

Parent fees at funded child care services (CPEs, funded garderies, and recognized family child care) have been set by the Quebec government since 2000, when the fee was \$5/day. The provincially set parent fees are indexed, adjusted annually each January 1. In 2024, set fees were \$9.10/day.

Unfunded garderies set their own daily rates. A refundable tax credit is available for parents using unfunded garderies.

Quebec has not used individual parent fee subsidies since it introduced set fees. Some Quebec parents, including social assistance recipients, pay no fees when using publicly funded child care.

A provincial [wage grid](#) for the child care workforce has been in place in Quebec for funded CPEs and garderies since 2006. Quebec has a substantial unionized child care workforce, with about half of those working in licensed child care represented by one of three unions. Many of Quebec’s family child care providers are also unionized.

In 2018, Quebec signed the Asymmetrical Agreement – Early Learning and Child Care Component. Under this agreement, Quebec will continue to develop its own child care system. This allocated \$262 million over three years 2017 – 2020, with an estimated total of \$1.2 billion between 2017 and 2028.

Quebec signed the 2021 – 2026 Asymmetrical Agreement (Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Component) in August 2021. As under previous early learning and child care agreements, Quebec will use the funding to continue to develop its own child care system. This agreement allocated \$5.96 billion over five years. The Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) agreement does not replace but runs parallel to the previously existing asymmetrical agreement.

While the Quebec government subscribes to the general principles of the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care, it has not adhered to this framework, as it intends to retain exclusive responsibility in this area within its territory. It does, however, expect to receive its share of federal funding, and will continue to invest significant sums to provide programs and services for families and children.

Net growth in full-day centre spaces for children 0 – 5 years since CWELCC			
	2021	2023	Increase (decrease) 2021 – 2023
For-profit	118,041	120,589	+2,548
Non-profit and public	96,127	104,662	+8,535
Total full-day spaces	214,168	225,251	+11,083
Percentage of full-day spaces that were			
for-profit	55%	54%	-1.6%
Percentage of growth of full-day spaces that was			
for-profit			23%

Family child care spaces (2021, 2023)		
	2021	2023
Family child care spaces (0 – 5 years enrolment)	65,281	65,454

■ 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	75,200
1	81,100
2	84,300
3	83,100
4	83,200
5	82,000
6	91,300
7	97,200
8	95,600
9	94,500
10	95,000
11	96,300
12	101,400
Total	1,160,100

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

<i>Age</i>	<i>Number of children (2023)</i>
0 – 2	240,600
3 – 5	248,300
6 – 12	671,300
Total	1,160,100

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

<i>Age</i>	<i>Number of children (2023)</i>
0	57,100
1	62,400
2	65,100
3	63,700
4	64,100
5	61,900
6	67,100
7	73,500
8	72,600
9 – 7	6,900
10	72,800
11	73,500
12	79,500
Total	890,100

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

<i>Age</i>	<i>Number of children (2023)</i>
0 – 2	184,600
3 – 5	189,700
6 – 12	515,900
Total	890,100

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	7,075	3,265	1,965	215	460
5 – 9	8,105	3,810	1,740	205	445
10 – 14	9,040	4,295	1,720	240	530
Total	24,220	11,370	5,425	660	1,435

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	210,400	84.2
4 – 5	74,000	88.5
0 – 5	284,400	85.3
6 – 12	264,600	90.4

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	365,185	53,765	43,155	10,615
5 – 9	374,500	99,175	73,075	26,105
10 – 14	358,790	123,610	89,780	33,835

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	41,795	321,235	36,795	22,955
5 – 9	47,860	369,050	34,625	27,240
10 – 14	49,570	377,360	33,655	28,335
Total	139,225	1,067,650	105,075	78,525

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>
\$98,000	\$51,200	\$49,200

KINDERGARTEN

Kindergarten enrolment (2023)

<i>Enrolment in public schools</i>	<i>Full school-day</i>	<i>Part-day</i>
Kindergarten for 5-year-olds	81,177	
Kindergarten for 4-year-olds	18,205	6,544
<i>Enrolment in government schools</i>		
Kindergarten for 5-year-olds	144	
Kindergarten for 4-year-olds		40
<i>Enrolment in independent/private schools</i>		
Kindergarten for 5-year-olds	5,201	
Kindergarten for 4-year-olds	651	

Total kindergarten enrolment for 5-year-olds 86,522

Total kindergarten enrolment for 4-year-olds 18,856 6,584

FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS, AND INUIT CHILD CARE

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit child care on reserves and Inuit Lands

All full-day child care centres on First Nations reserves and in Inuit communities in Quebec are licensed.

In March 2023, there were 46 licensed full-day child care centres on First Nations reserves in Quebec, operating 2,834 spaces. There were 20 full-day centres on Inuit lands, with 1,018 spaces. Quebec reported that all 66 of these centres were operated by Indigenous governing bodies.

There was one regulated family child care agency on a reserve, and one on Inuit land.

Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve (AHSOR) is not licensed. There were 41 AHSOR programs in Quebec in March 2023.

Indigenous child care other than on reserves or Inuit lands

As of March 2023, there were 10 First Nations-led or focused full-day child care centres not located on reserves or Inuit lands, operating a total of 492 spaces. There was also one Indigenous-led or focused family child care agency located off-reserve in an urban centre, overseeing six family child care providers and 32 total spaces.

Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities (AHSUNC) programs are not licensed. There were 28 AHSUNC programs in Quebec in March 2023.

CHILD CARE SPACE STATISTICS

Number of regulated spaces (March 31, 2023)

Centre spaces

Centres de la petite enfance (CPEs)	104,662
Publicly funded garderies	55,236
Unfunded garderies	65,353

Note: CPEs are non-profit child care centres. Both publicly funded and unfunded garderies are primarily for-profit.

Total centre spaces (children 0 – 5 years) 225,251

Full-day centre spaces by age

	<i>CPEs</i>	<i>Publicly funded garderies</i>	<i>Unfunded garderies</i>	<i>Total</i>
<18 months	14,559	7,403	10,558	32,520
18 months – 5 years (not yet in school)	90,103	47,833	54,795	192,731

Note: CPEs are non-profit child care centres. Both publicly funded and unfunded garderies are primarily for-profit.

Before- and after-school care centre enrolment (regulated)

Children in 4- and 5-year-old kindergarten	59,884
Children in Grades 1 – 6	202,727

Total before- and after-school care spaces 262,611

Note: Before- and after-school programs in Quebec are regulated but not licensed for a particular number of children. These numbers reflect the number of children enrolled in before- and after-school programs in public schools only.

Note: In 2022, Quebec changed the way they calculated before- and after-school spaces. As a result, the 2023 figures are not comparable to previous years.

Total centre spaces (children 0 – 12 years) 487,862

Regulated family child care (enrolment)

<12 months	12,318
1 – 2 years	31,445
3 – 5 years (not yet in school)	21,691

Total regulated family child care spaces 65,454

TOTAL REGULATED SPACES (centre spaces and family child care enrolment) 553,316

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

Centre-based child care

Total number of centres (children 0 – 5 not yet in school) 3,683

Centre-based programs

Number of centres providing a full-day program	3,683
Number of centres providing a part-day program	Not available
Number of centres providing a part-day program for children attending school (approximately 4 – 12 years)	Not available
Number of centres providing infant care (<12 months)	Not available
Number of centres providing toddler care (12 – <24 months)	Not available

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

Number of centres in publicly delivered and funded schools (K – 11) *Not available*

Regulated family child care

Number of family child care homes (active)	11,251
Number of Home Child Care Coordinating Offices (CCCCOs)	160

Municipal delivery

Number of municipalities or municipal entities operating child care centres (i.e. are the licence holder) 0

Auspice

Full-day programs by auspice (2023)

	<i>Number of centres</i>
Publicly funded garderies (for-profit)	809
Unfunded garderies (for-profit)	1,170
Non-profit and public (CPEs or facilities that are part of CPEs)	1,704

Note: The public centres include 66 operated by an Indigenous governing body.

Centre spaces by auspice

	<i>Full-day</i>	<i>Part-day</i>	<i>BASC¹</i>	<i>Total</i>
For-profit	120,589	Not available		120,589
Non-profit and public	104,662	Not available		104,662
School authority			262,611	262,611

¹ Before- and after-school care (children 4 – 12 years).

Home Child Care Coordinating Offices

Non-profit	160
For-profit	0

Fee subsidies

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

Not applicable because Quebec does not use individual parent fee subsidies.

Disability support

Special needs/disability support (March 31, 2023)

Children in licensed child care receiving special needs/disability support funding 13,793

CHILD CARE ENROLMENT STATISTICS

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

	CPEs (child care centres)	Funded garderies	Unfunded garderies
Full-day centres			
<12 months	7,284	4,387	6,738
1 year	18,098	10,415	11,866
2 years	22,563	12,836	11,541
3 years	26,142	13,814	11,759
4 years	25,425	11,435	9,171
Total centre enrolment (children 0 – 5 years)	99,512	52,887	51,075

Before- and after-school care (regulated)

Children in 4- and 5-year-old kindergarten 59,884
Children in Grades 1 – 6 202,727

Total number of children in 4- and 5-year-old kindergarten and Grades 1 – 6 enrolled in before- and after-school care 262,611

TOTAL CENTRE ENROLMENT (0 – 12 years) 466,085

PARENT FEES

Note that Quebec’s asymmetrical CWELCC agreement with the federal government does not require it to set or meet federal targets.

Quebec has set province-wide parent fees for all publicly funded (termed “reduced contribution”) child care services since September 1, 1997. Quebec’s set fees are indexed annually on January 1. The parent contribution (fee) is paid directly to the child care service.

The basic parent contribution (fee) per child in funded centres and regulated home child care was \$8.70/day in 2022 and \$8.85/day in 2023, regardless of child’s age or parents’ income. As of January 1, 2024, the set fee increased to \$9.10/day.

Unfunded garderies are not required to charge a provincially set parent fee and can set their own market fee. Parents using these centres may apply for a rebate in the form of a tax credit from the Quebec government. A [calculator](#) is available on the Ministère des Finances website to enable families to calculate the net cost of a child care space in funded and unfunded programs.

In 2023, a national survey of child care fees in Canada’s large cities included the following Quebec cities: Gatineau, Laval, Longueuil, and Montréal.

In Quebec City, more than one third of centres aren’t part of the \$8.85 a day funded set-fee system and charge a market fee, which may be as high as \$900/month. Therefore, market fees exist in Quebec City and they are included in the medians published, but since more than 50% of the spaces in Quebec City (and other Quebec cities) are at the set fee, the median fee is the set fee.

Provincially set fees for centres and family child care homes (2021, 2023)

	Provincially set monthly full-time fee (2021)	Provincially set monthly full-time fee (2023)
Infant/toddler/preschool-age	\$189	\$192

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

A provincial [wage grid](#) for the child care workforce has been in place in Quebec for funded CPEs and garderies since 2006. Quebec has a substantial unionized child care workforce, with about half of those working in licensed child care represented by one of three unions. Many of Quebec's family child care providers are also unionized.

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

The funding figures in each category represent provincial spending. Since Quebec has been funding its own network of educational childcare services since 1997, the sums received from the federal government are paid directly to the Ministry of Finance. The Ministry then allocates the budget appropriations to each Quebec government department and agency, including the Ministère de la Famille.

Fee subsidies			
<i>Not applicable because Quebec does not use individual parent fee subsidies.</i>			
Operational funding			
<i>Program</i>	<i>Amount</i>		
Funding for CPEs and funded garderies	\$2,100,327,697	Preventive Withdrawal Plan for Operators of Educational Home Childcare Services	\$1,181,213
Funding for Home Child Care Coordinating Offices and family child care providers	\$572,592,928	Expenditure on school-age child care by MEES	<i>Not available</i>
Allowance for integration of children with disabilities (AIDC)	\$180,108,772	Call for projects to enhance the educational quality of family daycare services (April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023)	\$1,782,699
Pension and group insurance plans for employees in child care	\$154,227,662	Total operational funding	\$3,030,535,922
Financial incentive to offset the additional costs of up to 9 children cared for by a recognized Educational Home Child Care Service with two providers	\$14,891,000	<i>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.</i>	
Financial incentive to support the start-up of a family child care home	\$5,423,950	One-time funding – capital (major and minor)	
		<i>Program</i>	<i>Amount</i>
		Capital expenditures	\$4,865,417
		CPE Infrastructure Funding Program	\$167,683,875

One-time funding – other

<i>Program</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Program to support municipalities in developing an early childhood center	\$359,004
Total one-time funding	\$172,908,296

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)

\$3,203,444,218

Other ELCC funding

<i>Program</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Financial support for halte-garderies	\$12,384,997
Funding for child care associations	\$35,203
Frais de garde d'enfants	\$2,426,966
Funding for atypical daycare projects	\$537,152
Financial support for initiatives to promote early reading, writing and mathematics	\$219,456
Research	\$636,504
Evaluation and improvement of the educational quality of facility-based child care services (CPEs and garderies) for children 3 – 5 years	\$1,657,436
Assessment and improvement of the educational quality of facility-based child care services (CPEs and garderies) for children 0 – 5 years	\$2,839,966

Financial support program to improve the educational quality of child care services	\$490,140
---	-----------

Professional development for family child care providers	\$912,867
--	-----------

Exceptional funding for non subsidized daycare centers to replace defective faucets (lead testing)	\$26,970
--	----------

Total other funding **\$22,167,657**

Federal transfers to Quebec

<i>Federal transfer</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Asymmetrical Agreement	\$113,314,475
Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Asymmetrical Agreement	\$1,000,353,000

Note: The federal transfers above represent the funds allocated to Quebec 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).
