



Alberta

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Alberta

■ OVERVIEW

In February 2024, responsibility for child care moved from the Ministry of Children and Family Services to the Ministry of Jobs, Economy, and Trade. In May 2025, it moved again when Alberta's Ministry of Education became the Ministry of Education and Childcare. The Ministry of Education and Childcare is responsible for regulated child care centres, preschools, family child care, group family child care, kindergarten, prekindergarten, and school-age child care.

Licensed child care includes full-day child care centres, part-day preschools, family child care, and before- and after-school programs (termed Out-Of-School Care).

Centre-based child care is delivered by for-profit and non-profit operators, with a number of publicly operated spaces. A majority of full-day spaces are for-profit.

Family child care homes (termed Family Day Homes) are agency-based. Licensed Family Day Home agencies may be non-profit, but a majority of agencies were for-profit in 2025. The province individually licenses group family child care homes (more than one provider); new group family child care homes are no longer being opened.

Prekindergarten is targeted to children who require additional or specialized support prior to entering kindergarten. Kindergarten for five-year-olds is part-day and not compulsory. Some school divisions offer full school-day kindergarten, but it is not provincially funded beyond the half day.

In April 2025, Alberta introduced a set fee of \$15/day for licensed child care and ended the Child Care Subsidy program. Fee subsidies remain in place for school-age children. Prior to this change, operators set their own fees, with fee increases limited by the provincial government, and parent fee subsidies for eligible low-income parents could be used in any licensed child care program.

Alberta does not have a wage grid or scale. The province provides long-standing wage top-up funding to licensed child care programs to support eligible certified staff and Family Day Home providers for eligible hours of work, up to 181 hours per month.

Alberta signed onto the first Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) agreement on November 14, 2021. This allocated nearly \$3.8 billion to the province over five years.

In March 2025, Alberta did not accept the federal government's offer to extend its bilateral agreement to 2031.

Net growth in full-day centre spaces for children 0 – 5 years (2021 – 2025)			
	<i>2021</i>	<i>2025</i>	<i>Increase (decrease) 2021 – 2025</i>
Non-profit and public	15,578	26,400	+10,822
For-profit	49,132	71,700	+22,568
Total full-day spaces	64,710	98,100	+33,390
Percentage of full-day spaces that were for-profit	76%	73%	-2.8%
Percentage of growth of full-day spaces that was for-profit	-	-	68%

■ PROVINCIAL CONTEXT

Some of the following figures are rounded; however, the totals are based on exact figures. Therefore, totals may not equal the sum of the rounded figures.

Number of children 0 – 12 years (2024 rounded estimate)

<i>Age</i>	<i>Number of children</i>
0	43,400
1	46,700
2	57,000
3	47,600
4	56,200
5	60,000
6	58,600
7	56,300
8	60,200
9	60,500
10	57,100
11	63,200
12	59,500
Total	726,200

Number of children 0 – 12 years (aggregated) (2024 rounded estimate)

<i>Age</i>	<i>Number of children</i>
0 – 2	147,100
3 – 5	163,800
6 – 12	415,400
Total	726,200

Number of children 0 – 12 years with employed mothers (2024 rounded estimate)

<i>Age</i>	<i>Number of children</i>
0	25,000
1	26,800
2	35,900
3	29,200
4	35,500
5	37,400
6	36,800
7	36,300
8	43,700
9	40,800
10	38,300
11	44,400
12	40,100
Total	470,300

Number of children 0 – 12 years with employed mothers (aggregated) (2024 rounded estimate)

<i>Age</i>	<i>Number of children</i>
0 – 2	87,700
3 – 5	102,100
6 – 12	280,400
Total	470,300

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	13,015	8,965	200	515	280
5 – 9	14,765	10,750	360	475	290
10 – 14	16,070	11,530	355	550	330
Total	43,850	31,245	915	1,540	900

Workforce participation of mothers by age of youngest child (2024 rounded estimate)

<i>Age of youngest child</i>	<i>Number of mothers</i>	<i>Participation rate (%)</i>
0 – 3	105,300	71.2
4 – 5	48,500	79.2
0 – 5	153,800	73.6
6 – 12	147,800	83.0

Living arrangements by age of child (2021)

<i>Age</i>	<i>Living with two parents</i>	<i>Living with one parent</i>		<i>Total</i>
		<i>Lone mother</i>	<i>Lone father</i>	
0 – 4	214,625	24,255	5,605	29,860
5 – 9	224,815	37,080	10,325	47,405
10 – 14	214,955	45,085	13,145	58,230

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	204,570	1,410	33,780	10,305
5 – 9	238,550	1,575	26,585	11,915
10 – 14	241,570	1,575	24,595	12,600
Total	684,685	4,565	84,965	34,805

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>
\$105,000	\$58,400	\$47,600

KINDERGARTEN POLICY, PROGRAMS, AND DATA

Kindergarten in Alberta is part of Early Childhood Services (ECS). ECS includes educational programming for children as young as 2 years 8 months.

Public, separate, public charter, private schools, and private/independent (non-profit) ECS operators may offer ECS programs. ECS programs offered by any school authority or approved ECS operator are fully funded. Private/independent ECS operators and accredited funded private schools must be non-profit entities and may only charge fees for ECS programming for hours of instruction above 475 instructional hours per school year.

KINDERGARTEN FOR FIVE-YEAR-OLDS AND PREKINDERGARTEN

Provincial responsibility

Ministry of Education and Childcare
Program and System Support Division

Phone: 780-427-7235

Email: edc.privateschools@gov.ab.ca

Website: alberta.ca/early-childhood-education

Legislation

Alberta. Legislative Assembly. [Education Act](#). – SA2012, C E-0.3.

Alberta. Legislative Assembly. [Education Act – Early Childhood Services Regulation](#). RA 87/2019.

Amended 44/2020.

[Ministerial Order: Student Learning](#). 028/2020.

Provision

Kindergarten provision

Definition Part-day ECS program for children in the year before Grade 1.

Eligibility Five years old by December 31 and less than six years old as of September 1.

Compulsory schooling Not compulsory.

Entitlement All eligible children may attend, but schools are not required to offer it.

Instructional hours per day Where provided, there must be a minimum of 475 instructional hours per school year.

Class size No set class sizes.

Prekindergarten provision

Definition Targeted ECS program for children who require additional support before kindergarten. Fees may be charged for hours of instruction above 475 hours per school year.

Eligibility Age two years eight months for children with a severe disability or a moderate or severe language delay.

Age three years eight months for all other eligible children.

Children are eligible if they are learning English as a second language, require francization, are gifted and talented, or are diagnosed with a mild, moderate, or severe disability or delay.

Compulsory schooling Not compulsory.

Entitlement No entitlement; schools are not required to offer it.

Instructional hours per day Minimum of 300 hours per school year for children two years eight months to three years seven months.

Minimum of 400 hours per school year for children three years eight months to four years seven months.

Minimum of 475 hours per school year for children four years eight months and older.

A school may operate a full-day educational program for a minimum of 800 hours of instruction per year.

Class size No set class sizes.

Teacher qualifications and certification

Kindergarten and prekindergarten teachers in Alberta must hold a valid Alberta teaching certificate based on a four-year university degree that includes a basic teacher preparation program (Bachelor of Education) or a bachelor's degree supplemented with a teacher preparation program (two-year post-degree for teacher course work and practicum).

Kindergarten teachers are not required to have an early childhood qualification.

CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

[Alberta's K – 6 Curriculum](#) is a mandatory curriculum framework for all kindergarten and prekindergarten programs in Alberta.

ENROLMENT

Kindergarten enrolment (2024 – 2025 school year)

Enrolment in public schools

Kindergarten for 5-year-olds 47,591

Prekindergarten for 2 – 4 year olds 5,146

Enrolment in private/independent schools

Kindergarten for 5-year-olds 4,256

Prekindergarten for 2 – 4 year olds 1,061

Enrolment in privately operated ECS programs

Kindergarten for 5-year-olds 2,305

Prekindergarten for 2 – 4 year olds 5,910

Total kindergarten enrolment 66,269

RECENT OR ANTICIPATED DEVELOPMENTS

Home education kindergarten pilot

The [home education kindergarten pilot](#) has been extended to the 2025 – 2026 school year. It is available to parents choosing a home education program that is supervised by a school authority.

CHILD CARE POLICY AND PROGRAMS

■ ADMINISTRATION

Provincial responsibility

Ministry of Education and Childcare
Childcare Strategy and Policy Division
Childcare Delivery Division
Phone: See alberta.ca/contacts-for-child-care-programs-and-educators
Email: childcare@gov.ab.ca
Website: alberta.ca/child-care.aspx

Legislation

Alberta. Legislative Assembly. [*Early Learning and Child Care Act*](#). SA 2007, c. E-0.1.

Alberta. Legislative Assembly. [*Early Learning and Child Care Act – Early Learning and Child Care Regulation*](#). Alta Reg 143/2008.

Service descriptions

UNREGULATED CHILD CARE

There are no health, safety, or training requirements or provision for public oversight in unregulated child care. There may be attention by public officials on a complaint basis.

Six children, not including the provider's own, can be cared for in unregulated child care.

REGULATED CHILD CARE

Under February 2021 regulations, there are two types of licence: facility-based programs and Family Day Homes (approved by a licensed Family Day Home agency).

Facility-based licences include Daycares, preschools, and Out-Of-School Care programs.

Since February 1, 2021, Alberta no longer licenses new group family child care programs and Innovative Child Care programs. However,

existing Innovative Child Care programs were granted open-ended licences and allowed to operate indefinitely under the former *Child Care Licensing Act* and Child Care Licensing Regulation.

Child care centre

Child care centres (termed facility-based Daycares) are licensed child care programs providing care to infants, preschool-age children, and kindergarten-age children for four or more consecutive hours each day that the program is provided. Daycares may serve children from birth to kindergarten.

Preschool

Preschools are licensed child care programs providing care to preschool-age and kindergarten-age children for no more than four hours per child each day that the program is provided. Preschools may serve children from 19 months old to kindergarten-age.

School-age child care

School-age child care (termed Out-Of-School Care) is a licensed child care centre program providing care to kindergarten-age and school-age children in any or all of the following periods: before- and after-school, during the lunch hour, or when schools are closed. Out-Of-School Care programs may serve children from kindergarten up to 13 years of age, or a child of 13 or 14 years of age who requires care because of a special need.

Family child care

Family child care (termed a Family Day Home) is provided by an individual in their private residence. A Family Day Home program provides child care to no more than six children, not including the educator's own children. Family Day Homes may serve children from 0 – 12 years.

Group family child care

Since February 1, 2021, Alberta no longer licenses new group family child care programs. Group family child care homes are licensed child care programs providing care in the private residence of the licence holder to infants, preschool-age children, kindergarten-age children, and school-age children ages 0 – 12. Group family child care homes are required to have two providers. Group family child care is provided in the private residence of the license holder to a maximum of 10 children.

Innovative Child Care

Since February 1, 2021, Alberta no longer licenses new Innovative Child Care programs. However, existing Innovative Child Care programs were granted open-ended licences and allowed to operate indefinitely under the former *Child Care Licensing Act* and Child Care Licensing Regulation. Innovative Child Care programs are centre-based child care programs approved by the provincial government statutory director designed to meet the unique child care needs of the community in which it is provided.

■ CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

[*Flight: Alberta's Early Learning and Care Framework*](#) (2014) is a voluntary curriculum framework for licensed facility-based child care and Family Day Homes in Alberta. It focuses on children from birth to school entry.

■ CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Terminology and approach

Alberta uses the term “children requiring additional support” to encompass children with disabilities.

All types of licensed child care programs are eligible to receive inclusion funding.

Two programs are available for children requiring additional support: The Inclusive Child Care program provides inclusion funding to the whole centre, and the Family Support for Children with Disabilities program provides funding specific to the individual child.

There are no specific qualifications or requirements for staff who work with children with disabilities.

Programs supporting inclusion in ELCC

The [Inclusive Child Care](#) program was implemented in 2021, replacing regional Supported Child Care services. Delivered by community agencies, it assists child care programs and educators with building their capacity and confidence to include children with extra support needs, increasing families’ access to inclusive child care, and preventing exclusion or removal of children from child care programs. It provides a range of resources and supports to licensed child care programs, including on-site consultation, professional development delivered with coaching support, and short-term funding for staff engagement.

The [Family Support for Children with Disabilities](#) program, administered by the Ministry of Assisted Living and Social Services (previously named the Ministry of Seniors, Community, and Social Services), works with families to develop a service plan that identifies strategies, services, and supports to address each child’s and family’s unique circumstances. The funding can address extraordinary child care needs, such as aide support in licensed child care programs.

Alberta also provides Early Childhood Services for children in kindergarten and prekindergarten who require additional supports. See Alberta’s [“Kindergarten policy, programs, and data”](#) section for more information.

Access to inclusive ELCC

Child care programs are not required to accept children with disabilities.

A diagnosis is required to access Early Childhood Services and the Family Support for Children with Disabilities program. A diagnosis is not required to attend a child care program that accesses Inclusive Child Care program supports.

Newly constructed or renovated facilities are not required to be fully accessible and barrier-free. However, in 2024 – 2025, Alberta launched the Inclusive Spaces Program Grant, which provides funding for renovations, equipment, and resources to support inclusion and improve the accessibility of existing child care programs. See Alberta’s “[Types of funding](#)” section for more information.

In Alberta, there is no wait for supports through the Inclusive Child Care program, although there may be a wait, delay, or administrative barrier for receiving some types of disability-specific inclusion funding. For example, aide funding through the Family Support for Children with Disabilities program is determined through the application process and may take time to put in place.

■ FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS, AND INUIT CHILD CARE

In Alberta, 6.8% of the total population identified as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit in the most recent census (2021). There are 138 First Nations reserves and eight Métis Settlements in the province. Almost 64% of First Nations people in Alberta do not live on reserve.

First Nations child care on reserve and Métis Settlements

First Nations child care may be licensed under the *Early Learning and Child Care Act* by invitation.

Licensed centres are eligible for the same funding as other provincially licensed centres.

A First Nation may request licensing staff to assess an unlicensed program. If the program meets provincial licensing standards, it is eligible to receive federal funding.

The provincial government reported that as of April 17, 2025, there were six licensed centres on First Nations reserves in Alberta, including four full-day, two part-day, and one before- and after-school centre-based program.

Licensed spaces on reserve

<i>Program type</i>	<i>Number of spaces</i>
Full-day	157
Part-day (children 0 – 5 years)	48
Before- and after-school care	8
Total licensed spaces	213

The number of unlicensed child care centres on reserve is not available.

There were no licensed Family Day Home agencies on reserve.

Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve (AHSOR) programs may be licensed by invitation. There were 49 AHSOR programs in Alberta in 2025.

Indigenous child care other than on reserve

As of April 17, 2025, 22 licensed child care centres in Alberta were Indigenous-led or focused (based on program plans directed toward Indigenous populations) and not located on a reserve.

These included 10 full-day programs, 12 part-day preschool programs, and three before- and after-school programs.

Licensed spaces not on reserve (2025)

<i>Program type</i>	<i>Number of spaces</i>
Full-day	396
Part-day (children 0 – 5 years)	270
Before- and after-school care	48
Total licensed spaces	714

Some Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities (AHSUNC) programs are licensed. In 2025, there were 16 licensed AHSUNC programs operating 363 spaces for preschool-age children and four unlicensed AHSUNC programs.

Indigenous-specific resources/initiatives

The Ministry of Education and Childcare has a number of initiatives intended to support access to cultural resources for all child care staff and programs and to support affordable, quality, safe, and inclusive programs. These initiatives aim to increase understanding of the important role of culture, language, and heritage, and to improve access to child care for diverse communities, including Indigenous, racialized, and Francophone communities.

The Alberta Childcare Community Needs Assessment and the Spark Guide support advisory tables to develop a culturally responsive workforce framework for Alberta’s child care sector, as well

as implementation and scaling up of existing evidence-informed resources, training, and professional development in partnership with diverse communities.

PARENT FEES

Alberta introduced a set fee for licensed child care on April 1, 2025.

Average full-day daily parent fees (2021 – 2022, prior to fee reductions)

<i>Age group</i>	<i>Child care centres</i>	<i>Family Day Homes</i>
Infant	\$54.94	\$39.08
Toddler	\$48.28	\$39.08
Preschool-age	\$44.60	\$38.39
School-age (school year)	\$26.21	\$26.21

On January 1, 2022, affordability grants were provided to centres to reduce market fees for infants, toddlers, and preschool-age children (including children also attending part-day kindergarten). Operators were required to reduce parent fees by the amount of the grant.

Affordability grants were increased effective January 1, 2024, to further reduce fees to an average of \$15/day.

Amount of monthly fee reduction in full-day child care (2022 and 2024)

<i>Age group</i>	<i>Child care centres</i>		<i>Family Day Homes</i>	
	<i>2022</i>	<i>2024</i>	<i>2022</i>	<i>2024</i>
Infant	\$635	\$883	\$350	\$487
Toddler	\$510	\$709	\$325	\$452
Preschool-age	\$450	\$626	\$300	\$417

On April 1, 2025, Alberta introduced a new approach to affordability funding – a set fee.

A flat monthly fee of \$326.25 (\$15/day) was introduced for all children 0 – 5 years in full-time licensed Daycares and Family Day Homes.

A flat monthly fee of \$230 was introduced for all children 0 – 5 years in part-time licensed child care and Family Day Homes.

Parents with children in preschools have a reduction of up to \$100 off their preschool program’s stated monthly fees.

Fees for school-age child care continue to be set by operators.

Additional fees

Child care operators are permitted to charge waitlist fees and optional fees for food, transportation, extended hours, field trips, extracurricular activities, diapers, registration, and other services.

There are no restrictions to the amounts charged for these services, as long as they are optional. Operators are required to report on these services and the associated fees. A parent declining the services cannot be denied access to the program.

Parent fee subsidies

On April 1, 2025, Alberta ended the Child Care Subsidy program in Daycares, Family Day Homes, and preschools for children up to kindergarten-age requiring child care during regular school hours. Fee subsidies remain in place for school-age children and may be used in non-profit, public, and for-profit Out-Of-School centres and Family Day Homes.

The Child Care Subsidy program information below was in effect until March 31, 2025.

Fee subsidy payments were made directly to child care service providers on behalf of subsidized parents. All eligible families were entitled to a fee subsidy; there was no waitlist for a subsidy.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible for a fee subsidy, parents were required to be working, looking for work (maximum four-month approval of subsidy in a 12-month time period per applicant), or attending school. Parents with a disability or with a child with a disability were eligible for a fee subsidy.

FINANCIAL CRITERIA

Income eligibility was determined by the family’s annual gross income and the age of the child receiving care.

Income eligibility for fee subsidy (2024)

<i>Age group</i>	<i>Maximum annual gross income for full subsidy</i>	<i>Annual gross income at which partial subsidy ends</i>
Birth – kindergarten-age (in kindergarten and attending child care during regular school hours)	\$119,999	\$180,000
Full-day kindergarten – Grade 6 (only enrolled in child care outside school hours)	\$49,999	\$90,000
Part-day preschool		All income levels up to \$180,000

SUBSIDY RATES

The maximum subsidy rate was the amount the government paid a facility-based Daycare or licensed Family Day Home on behalf of a fully subsidized parent to cover all or part of the parent fee.

The subsidy rates for children in full-day child care were reduced in January 2022.

Maximum subsidy monthly rates in licensed child care (2024)

Age group	Centres	Family Day Homes
Birth to kindergarten-age (in kindergarten and attending child care during regular school hours)	\$266	\$266
Children enrolled in full-day kindergarten enrolled in child care outside of regular school hours (attendance of 100+ hours)	\$644	\$516
School-age Grades 1 – 6 (attendance of 50+ hours)	\$366	\$366
Part-day preschool	Flat rate of \$125	Not available

Families with children in full-day kindergarten to Grade 6 attending licensed Out-Of-School Care or Family Day Homes continue to be eligible for fee subsidies through the Child Care Subsidy. The subsidy rates and eligibility requirements, including a household income threshold of under \$90,000 per year, remain the same as in the above tables.

WORKFORCE

Child care centre staff wages

PROVINCIAL WAGE DATA

Alberta does not have a wage grid or scale. Individual operators set wages and benefits of early childhood educators and child care workers.

The province provides long-standing wage top-up funding to licensed child care programs to support eligible certified staff and Family Day Home providers.

Average Alberta child care staff wages (December 2024)

Certification level	Average wage before top-up
Level 1	\$17.29
Level 2	\$18.35
Level 3	\$20.53

PROVINCIAL WAGE TOP-UP FOR CENTRES AND FAMILY DAY HOME PROVIDERS

Effective January 2023, wage top-ups were increased by certification level to provide an additional \$2.64 per hour for Level 1 ECEs, \$5.05 per hour for Level 2 ECEs, and \$8.62 per hour for Level 3 ECEs above the employer paid wage.

Mean average wages and top-up rates by certification level (2024)

Certification level	Average employer-paid wage	Provincial top-up rates per hour	Mean wage including top-up (December 2024)
Level 1	\$17.29	\$2.64	\$19.93
Level 2	\$18.35	\$5.05	\$23.40
Level 3	\$20.53	\$8.62	\$29.15

The Alberta wage top-up funding is allocated to child care programs as a grant to administer additional pay for certified staff and to Family Day Home providers. For the operator to qualify, staff must be paid at least the provincial minimum wage before the top-up is applied.

Wage top-ups are available to frontline certified paid staff and contracted Family Day Home providers who:

- Provide direct child care, including program supervisors and alternate supervisors (as defined in the Child Care Licensing Regulation), as well as people hired in the role of family child care consultants/coordinators with a licensed Family Day Home agency;
- Are certified as a Level 1, 2, or 3; and
- Meet the hour eligibility requirements.

Eligible hours for wage top-ups are defined as direct child care hours by staff in licensed centre-based programs and Family Day Home providers, as well as administrative hours by program supervisors in facility-based programs and agency coordinators and home visitors/consultants employed at a Family Day Home agency.

See [Alberta Child Care Grant Funding Guide: For Wage Top-Up and Professional Development Funding](#) for more information.

Staff benefits

Alberta does not provide or fund province-wide benefits to child care staff or programs.

Early childhood certification

Certification is required for all staff working in licensed child care programs in Alberta. This applies to facility-based programs and Family Day Homes operating under a licensed agency. Staff must be certified within six months of being hired, and staff who have not received certification cannot be left alone to supervise children.

Early childhood education is a regulated profession in Alberta. The Alberta government has legislative authority to certify child care staff. The Alberta Child Care Staff Certification Office administers the certification program.

The *Early Learning and Child Care Act* authorizes the Minister to set standards respecting the skills, training, and other qualifications that an individual must have for each level of certification and the conduct requirements an individual must meet to maintain certification.

The Early Learning and Child Care Regulation addresses child care certification, including establishing three levels of child care certification in Alberta and giving authority to the statutory director to certify applicants that meet applicable standards for that level.

Alberta's certification system is education-focused ECE. It assesses credentials and coursework based on post-secondary credits for certificates, diplomas, and degrees in early learning and child care and related programs to work in licensed child care in Alberta. Official transcripts from educational institutions are required for Levels 2 and 3. Original official language proficiency scores must also be provided, if applicable.

There are three levels of early childhood certification: Levels 1, 2, and 3.

An individual is eligible to receive a Level 1 ECE (formerly Child Development Assistant) certificate by completing one of the following:

- A 45-hour, three-credit post-secondary course in early learning and child care;
- Alberta ECE orientation course;
- Alberta high school courses in child care studies (CCS 3110 – 31500);
- Family Child Care Training Program through an approved Alberta Family Day Home Agency registered with the Alberta Family Child Care Association; or
- Level 1 ELCC coursework equivalencies as approved by the Ministry of Education and Childcare.

The Alberta Child Care Orientation Course is for eligible Alberta residents aged 16 years and up with no formal post-secondary education in early learning and child care.

An individual is eligible for a Level 2 ECE certificate upon completion of either:

- A one-year, 30-credit certificate in early learning and child care through an approved post-secondary institution; or
- An approved educational equivalency.

An individual is eligible to receive a Level 3 ECE certificate upon completion of either:

- A two-year, 60-credit diploma in early learning and child care through an approved post-secondary institution; or
- An approved educational equivalency.

Professional development is not a requirement to remain certified, and there are no renewal requirements for certified early childhood educators. However, if it is determined that an applicant or certified ECE has a reportable occurrence, the statutory director may impose terms, suspend, or cancel their certification, or refuse to certify in the case of a new applicant.

The [Certification Guide for Early Childhood Educators](#) includes a full list of post-secondary institutions (Appendix D) and equivalencies (Appendix B) approved for certification as an early childhood educator.

■ STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

Child care centres and family child care homes must adhere to standards and regulations regarding staffing requirements, grouping of children, and licensing. Some additional key elements of child care standards and regulations, such as physical environments and food provision,

are covered in the comparative tables in this publication, while others may be found in the [Early Learning and Child Care Act](#) and the [Early Learning and Child Care Act – Early Learning and Child Care Regulations](#).

Regulated child care centres

Child care centres (termed facility-based child care programs) are licensed under the [Early Learning and Child Care Act](#) and the [Early Learning and Child Care Act – Early Learning and Child Care Regulations](#). The *Child Care Licensing Act* was amended to the *Early Learning and Child Care Act* in 2021. Both the Act and Regulations were again amended in 2025.

STAFF:CHILD RATIO AND GROUP SIZE

Alberta does not specify a maximum number of children permitted in a child care centre.

Staff:child ratio and maximum group size

<i>Program type</i>	<i>Age group</i>	<i>Staff:child ratio</i>	<i>Maximum group size</i>
Full-day (more than 4 hours)	Infant (<12 months)	1:3	6
	Infant (12 months – <19 months)	1:4	8
	Toddler (19 months – <3 years)	1:6	12
	Preschool-age (3 years – <4 years)	1:8	16
	Preschool-age (4 years and older)	1:10	20
Out-Of-School Care	Kindergarten-age and older	1:15	30
Part-day preschool	Toddler (19 months – <3 years)	1:6	No maximum
	Preschool-age (3 years and older)	1:12	No maximum

Note: A centre (Daycares and Out-Of-School Care programs) is permitted to mix children of different age groups (older than 19 months) throughout the day between the hours of 8:30 am and 4:30 pm. Ratios for mixed-age groups are determined based on the age of the majority of children in the group.

Note: Parent volunteers are allowed to act as staff members in the staff:child ratio for preschool programs.

Note: When seven or more children are receiving care in any program, at least two staff must be present, with at least one being a primary staff.

STAFFING REQUIREMENTS FOR CENTRES

Qualification requirements for staffing a centre

In Alberta, staff qualification requirements are specified at the centre level.

“Primary staff member” means a staff member of a centre who is 16 years of age or older, whose primary duty is child care, and who is actively engaged in the supervision of children in the program.

In a full-day Daycare, at all times between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm, at least one in every three primary staff members must be certified at Level 2. The remaining primary staff must be certified at Level 1 or higher. At all other times, every primary staff member must be certified at least at Level 1.

In an Out-Of-School Care program or preschool program, at least one of every four staff members involved in providing care must be certified at Level 2, and the remaining staff members must be certified at Level 1 or higher.

In a Daycare or Out-Of-School Care program, a primary staff member may be hired before obtaining Level 1 certification but must become certified within six months of employment.

In a preschool, a staff member may be hired before obtaining a Level 1 certification and must become certified within six months of employment.

Qualification requirements for on-site centre directors/supervisors

All full-day centres must have a program supervisor who is certified as a Level 3 early childhood educator. A designated program supervisor must be on duty at all times when children receiving care are on the program premises.

School-age-only programs are required to have a designated program supervisor, but that position has no certification requirements beyond a Level 1.

Other requirements

One in two primary staff members must have first aid certification. At least one staff member with

first aid certification must be on duty at all times. The first aid certification does not have to include CPR or child CPR.

Each staff member and volunteer must have a criminal record check, including a vulnerable sector search. The criminal record check and vulnerable sector search must not be dated earlier than six months prior to the date of application.

A criminal record check can be provided within eight weeks of employment provided that the person does not have unsupervised access to children during that time.

The regulated minimum age for staff is 16 years old. An adult certified with at least Level 2 certification must directly supervise 16- and 17-year-old staff.

LICENSING AND MONITORING OF REGULATED CHILD CARE CENTRES

The [Child Care Licensing Handbook: Facility-based Programs](#) guides prospective and licensed providers through the licensing process and provides information about the inspection and monitoring process.

An initial licence for a child care centre is valid for one to three years. After the initial license is renewed, the term of the licence is indefinite depending on the licence holder's history of non-compliance, complaints, incidents, or enforcement actions.

A minimum of two inspections must occur annually. For inspections conducted to determine licence issuance (either initial or renewal), the inspections are announced. All other inspections are unannounced. For a one-year licence, at least one unannounced inspection is conducted during the licence term.

If non-compliances are identified or incidents or complaints occur, licensing staff will complete additional inspections or an assessment as

required. A licensing officer may enter the premises of a licensed facility-based child care program at any time children are present and at any other reasonable time before or after the program's regular operating hours. Permission from the licence holder or program supervisor is not required.

Regulated family child care

In Alberta, regulated family child care homes (termed Family Day Homes) are regulated under the [Early Learning and Child Care Act](#), the [Early Learning and Child Care Act – Early Learning and Child Care Regulations](#), and the [Family Day Homes Standards Manual for Alberta](#).

Family Day Home providers must provide the child care in their personal residence.

MODEL OF ORGANIZATION

Alberta uses an agency model. Since April 1, 2021, the Alberta government licenses family child care agencies. Family Day Homes continue to operate as “approved” under their licensed agencies.

A Family Day Home agency is responsible for complying with and monitoring providers' compliance with provider standards, incidents, and complaints.

Family Day Home agencies may be non-profit or for-profit.

MAXIMUM CAPACITY

A Family Day Home provider may provide care for up to six children ages 0 – 12, not including the provider's own children.

There must not be more than two children under the age of two, including the provider's own children, or more than three children under the age of three, including the provider's own children.

FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDER REQUIREMENTS

Family child care providers (termed Family Day Home educators) must hold a minimum ECE Level 1 certification within six months of operation.

Providers must be at least 18 years old and have a criminal record check with a vulnerable sector search, first aid certification, personal references, and a physician's note stating the applicant is mentally and physically able to care for children. The first aid certification does not have to include CPR or child CPR.

Other adults who reside in the residence where the Family Day Home operates must complete a criminal reference check with a vulnerable sector check. This must be updated every three years.

Family Day Home agencies are required to bring providers together at least six times each year for training, consultation, information sharing, or problem solving to reduce provider isolation.

LICENSING AND MONITORING OF REGULATED FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES

The Alberta government issues an agency licence to a Family Day Home agency for between one and three years, and it may be renewed for an additional term. Family Day Home providers sign a contract with a Family Day Home agency in their community. The agency determines the length of the Family Day Home contract; there is no regulated standard term.

Agencies are required to make scheduled and unscheduled visits to each Family Day Home at least six times per year. Ministry licensing staff monitor each agency's operations, activities, and records, and conduct a minimum of one in-person visit to each contracted agency annually. Ministry staff also visit a minimum of 10% of each agency's active homes annually.

■ OF INTEREST

Municipal role

Historically, municipalities in Alberta played a significant but unofficial role in child care delivery. [At one point](#), they both operated public child care and supported non-profit child care providers. Between the 1970s and 1990s, Alberta municipalities funded 11 public child care centres and provided support to over 60 centres across the province.

Today, several smaller municipalities – Beaumont, Jasper, Drayton Valley, the Municipal District of Opportunity, and others – provide child care. In addition, a number of municipalities and school boards are licensed to operate part-day preschools and before- and after-school care.

From January to September 2025, Deloitte Inc. conducted a community needs assessment to gather input from municipalities, First Nations, and Métis Settlements to understand localized needs for licensed child care spaces, particularly for children from diverse and vulnerable communities. The assessment estimated the number of child care spaces needed to meet modelled coverage levels and the number of children who would likely use licensed care if a suitable space were available. The provincial-level and community-level reports will inform Alberta's planning efforts to meet CWELCC requirements.

Family Resource Networks

[Family Resource Networks](#) (FRNs) in Alberta are operated by non-profit, community-based organizations. There are 70 FRNs in Alberta, including 35 serving rural communities, 10 Indigenous hubs, and one Francophone hub that supports both urban and rural areas. Together, they help coordinate services across 136 agencies or providers, offering both in-person and virtual programs. FRNs provide prevention and early intervention services and supports for children



and youth aged 0 – 18, as well as support for their families. Services include home visitation, parent support groups, and early childhood development programs focused on early learning and play.

CHILD CARE DATA

REGULATED CHILD CARE SPACE STATISTICS

Number of spaces (2024, 2025)

	2024	2025
Full-day centre spaces		
Infant (<12 months)	2,900	3,000
Infant (12 - <19 months)	10,000	11,500
Toddler (19 months - <3 years)	23,600	27,000
Preschool-age (3 - <4 years)	21,200	25,300
Preschool-age (4 - 5 years)	27,900	31,400
Total full-day centre spaces (children 0 – 5 years)	85,600	98,200
Part-day centre spaces		
Preschool-age (19 months - <3 years)	1,200	1,100
Preschool-age (3 - 5 years)	13,700	13,500
Total part-day centre spaces (children 0 – 5 years)	14,900	14,600
Other centre spaces		
Innovative Child Care (no age grouping)	490	480
Total centre spaces (children 0 – 5 years)	100,990	113,280
Before- and after-school care centre spaces (licensed or regulated)		
Kindergarten and Grades 1 – 6	58,700	62,500
Total centre spaces (children 0 – 12 years)	159,690	175,780
Family child care licensed capacity		
<i>Family Day Homes</i>		
Full- and part-day (0 – 12 years)	17,100	18,700
<i>Group family child care (more than one provider)</i>		
Full-day (not yet in kindergarten or school)	120	100
Part-day (attending kindergarten or school)	35	30
Total family child care spaces	17,255	18,830
TOTAL REGULATED SPACES (centre spaces and family child care licensed capacity)	176,945	194,610

Number of child care centres and family child care homes (2024)

Centre-based child care

Total number of centres	2,500
Total number of licences	1,700

Note: The number of licence holders was reported instead of the total number of licences.

Centre-based programs

Centres providing a full-day program	1,500
Centres providing a part-day (preschool/nursery school) program	610
Centres providing a before- and after-school program for children attending kindergarten or school (approximately 5 – 12 years)	1,400
Centres providing infant care (<19 months)	1,100
Centres providing toddler care (19 months – <3 years)	1,300

Note: For ECEC in Canada 2023, 1,400 centres were reported. However, the correct number of centres providing toddler care in 2023 was 1,200.

Centres providing preschool-age care (3 – 5 years)	1,500
Centres providing non-standard hours care (as defined by the province)	79
Centres in publicly delivered and funded schools (K – Grade 12)	<i>Not available</i>

Regulated family child care

Family child care homes (Family Day Homes) (active)	2,600
Group family child care homes	15
Total number of family child care homes	2,615
Family child care agencies	82

Participation in CWELCC

Total number of child care centres receiving CWELCC funding	2,500
Total number of child care agencies receiving CWELCC funding	82
Total number of group family child care homes receiving CWELCC funding	15

Auspice (2024)

Centres by auspice

<i>Auspice</i>	<i>Number of centres</i>
For-profit	1,400
Non-profit and public	1,100

Centre spaces by auspice

<i>Auspice</i>	<i>Full-day</i>	<i>Part-day¹</i>	<i>BASC²</i>	<i>Total</i>
For-profit	62,600	5,400	35,000	103,000
Non-profit and public	23,000	9,500	23,800	56,300

Note: Alberta's 490 Innovative Child Care spaces are not included in this table.

Note: Numbers in this table have been rounded and may not equal the sum of centre spaces by age groups.

¹ Preschool.

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

Family child care agencies by auspice

<i>Auspice</i>	<i>Number of agencies</i>
For-profit	53
Non-profit and public	29

Auspice (2025)

Centre spaces by auspice

<i>Auspice</i>	<i>Full-day</i>	<i>Part-day¹</i>	<i>BASC²</i>	<i>Total</i>
For-profit	71,700	5,400	37,600	114,700
Non-profit and public	26,400	9,200	24,900	60,500

Note: Alberta's 480 Innovative Child Care spaces are not included in this table.

Note: Numbers in this table have been rounded and may not equal the sum of centre spaces by age groups.

¹ Preschool.

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

Publicly operated child care (2024)

There are a number of publicly operated child care centres in Alberta, but a breakdown of public spaces is not available. See Alberta's "[Of interest](#)" section for more information.

Fee subsidies (2024)

Number of children receiving fee subsidies

Full subsidy	47,000
Partial subsidy	35,700
Total children receiving fee subsidies	82,700

Disability support (2024)

Number of children receiving disability support

Children in licensed child care receiving disability support funding	<i>Not available</i>
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■ REGULATED CHILD CARE ENROLMENT STATISTICS

Number of children enrolled (2024)

Full-day centre enrolment

Infant (<12 months)	1,000
Infant (12 – <19 months)	6,200
Toddler (19 months – <3 years)	23,700
Preschool-age (3 years – <4 years)	19,000
Preschool-age (4 – 5 years)	24,700
Total full-day centre enrolment (children 0 – 5 years)	74,600

Part-day centre enrolment

Preschool-age (19 months – <3 years)	590
Preschool-age (3 years – <4 years)	17,900

Other enrolment

Innovative Child Care (no age grouping) *Not available*

Total centre enrolment (children 0 – 5 years) **93,090**

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

Kindergarten 9,000

Grades 1 – 6 33,200

Total before- and after-school care enrolment **42,200**

Total centre enrolment (children 0 – 12 years) **135,290**

Full-day family child care enrolment**Family Day Homes**

Not attending kindergarten or school 13,400

Group family child care (more than one provider)

Not attending kindergarten or school 140

Total full-day family child care enrolment (children 0 – 5 years) **13,540**

Part-day family child care enrolment**Family Day Home**

Attending kindergarten or school 2,400

Group family child care (more than one provider)

Attending kindergarten or school 6

Total part-day family child care enrolment (children 4 – 12 years) **2,406**

Total family child care enrolment (children 0 – 12 years) **15,946**

TOTAL REGULATED ENROLMENT (centre and family child care enrolment) **151,236**

CHILD CARE FUNDING

The types of funding available for child care services in Alberta include operational funding, one-time funding, fee subsidies, and other ELCC funding programs.

■ ELIGIBILITY FOR CWELCC FUNDING

The CWELCC plan provides federal funds to provinces and territories for early learning and child care operational and one-time funding and fee subsidies for licensed child care for children aged 0 – 5. Funded new child care expansion is to be public and non-profit unless otherwise specified in the jurisdiction’s agreement. Provinces and territories also contribute their own funds and design their own policies and provision within this framework.

In Alberta, the following are eligible for operational funding under CWELCC:

- Licensed full-day centres;
- Licensed part-day centres (preschools/nursery schools);
- Licensed before- and after-school centres that enrol children under age six; and
- Licensed/approved family child care.

New or expanded for-profit centres are eligible for operational funding under some circumstances.

Under Alberta’s 2021 CWELCC agreement with the federal government, federal funding to a cap of 26,200 new or expanded for-profit spaces was permitted. Effective May 15, 2025, with the expectation that this cap would be reached by summer 2025, eligibility for operational (affordability) funding for for-profit Daycares, preschools, and Out-Of-School Care programs for

children up to kindergarten age was targeted with priority given to:

- Spaces in existing programs demonstrating parent demand for more spaces and having a proven track record of regulatory compliance (providing safe, high-quality care); and
- New programs in five communities with long waitlists.

New for-profit programs that do not meet these criteria are not eligible for operational funding at this time. Programs that already have signed 2025/2026 Affordability or Space Creation Grants are not affected by these changes.

In Alberta, the following are eligible for capital funding under CWELCC:

- Licensed full-day centres.

New or expanded for-profit centres are not eligible for capital funding through the Building Blocks Capital Grant Program. For-profit centres are eligible for capital funding through the Space Creation Grant, but applications closed in November 2024. Applications received before this date continue to be processed as funding allows. See “[Space Creation Grant](#)” and “[Building Blocks Capital Grant Program](#)” below under “Types of funding” for more information.

■ CHILD CARE SERVICES’ ELIGIBILITY FOR FUNDING

Licensed non-profit and for-profit child care facilities are eligible for all applicable funding programs.

■ TYPES OF FUNDING

Operational funding

AFFORDABILITY GRANT

The Affordability Grant is an operating grant for eligible child care programs providing monthly funding to cover the “reasonable costs” associated with staffing, facilities, operations, programming, and administration. The amount of funding varies based on program type, child care fee, region, age

group, and number of hours the child is registered to attend. Eligible programs must be licensed and have signed the Affordability Grant Agreement 2025/2026. Specific criteria apply for different types of programs and attendance hours.

See the [Alberta Child Care Affordability Grant Funding Guide](#) and the [Early Learning and Child Care “What’s Changing” Fact Sheet for Daycare Facilities](#) for more information.

Affordability Grant rates for licensed centres and family child care per space per month (January 1, 2024)

Type of care	Registered hours	Infant (<19 months)	Toddler (19 months – <3 years)	Preschool-age (3 years – kindergarten-age)	Preschool program (part-time programming for 4 or fewer hours per day for children 19 months up to kindergarten)
Daycare centre	Full-time	\$883	\$709	\$626	-
	Part-time	\$317.50	\$255	\$225	\$75
Daycare centre – Overnight	Full-time	\$1,324	\$1,063	\$938	-
	Part-time	\$476.25	\$382.50	\$337.50	-
Family Day Home	Full-time	\$487	\$452	\$417	-
	Part-time	\$175	\$162.50	\$150	-
Family Day Home – Overnight	Full-time	\$730	\$678	\$626	-
	Part-time	\$262.50	\$243.75	\$225	-

As of April 1, 2025, with the introduction of the set fee, Affordability Grants were increased, with rates varying by region, hours of care, children’s ages, and other factors.

ALBERTA CHILD CARE GRANT

Licensed Daycares, Out-Of-School Care, preschool programs, and licensed Family Day Home agencies may be eligible to apply for [Alberta Child Care Grant](#) funding to support the recruitment,

retention, and professional development of their certified educators. Funding is available for wage top-ups, professional development, release time, and mandatory employer contributions. To be eligible for funding, the facility-based program or Family Day Home agency must have signed the Child Care Affordability Grant agreement. Programs offering only Out-Of-School Care for kindergarten and school-age children are only eligible for wage top-ups and professional development.

See “[Other ELCC funding](#)” below for information about funding for professional development, release time, and mandatory employer contributions.

WAGE TOP-UP FUNDING

Wage top-up funding through the Alberta Child Care Grant provides licensed child care programs with a wage top-up for eligible certified early childhood educators. Staff must be paid at least the provincial minimum wage before the wage top-up is added. Wage top-up is paid for hours directly and indirectly related to providing child care.

Wage top-up funding provides a wage enhancement for eligible certified frontline staff who:

- Provide direct child care, including program supervisors and alternate supervisors, as well as family child care consultants or coordinators with a licensed Family Day Home agency;
- Are certified as an early childhood educator Level 1, 2, or 3; and
- Meet the conditions outlined in the “Eligible hours for wage top-up” section of the [Alberta Child Care Grant Funding Guide](#).

In 2025, wage top-ups were paid up to a maximum of 181 hours/month by certification level at the following rates:

- Level 1 Early Childhood Educator at \$2.64/hour;
- Level 2 Early Childhood Educator at \$5.05/hour; and
- Level 3 Early Childhood Educator at \$8.62/hour.

INCLUSIVE SPACES PROGRAM GRANT

Licensed early learning and child care programs can apply for [Inclusive Spaces Program Grant](#) funding to make their existing spaces, facilities, and programs more inclusive. Eligible applicants may submit proposals to improve access to existing child care programs through either of two streams. The first stream is for accessible

renovations to existing facilities to enhance accessibility and inclusivity, such as wheelchair ramps, elevators, or adaptive washrooms. The second stream is for purchasing equipment and materials that promote inclusion, such as assistive technology, sensory equipment, culturally relevant materials, or adaptive play structures. Projects must be completed within 12 months, with funding provided in installments. Half of the funds are available upfront, and the remainder is released after submitting a final report.

INFANT CARE INCENTIVE

The Infant Care Incentive is aimed at increasing the availability of infant child care spaces in centres. The government provides \$150 for each child aged 0 – 18 months who participates for at least eight hours a month. Parents must complete a Parent Statement of Acknowledgement form for the child care centre to claim the grant. The funds are paid directly to the centre and are not considered taxable income for parents. Since the introduction of new funding approaches in April 2025, the Infant Care Incentive is accounted for in the regional fee in that age category and is not funded separately.

FAMILY DAY HOME AGENCY FUNDING

Alberta introduced new contracts for Family Day Home agencies on January 1, 2025. The primary goal is to offer equal base funding per provider to help agencies fulfill their primary function to recruit, monitor, and train providers. Additional funding is available for agencies to support rural and new providers. The funding components include a base rate of \$400 per provider to support service delivery under the standards and modifiers, which provide additional funding for onboarding new educators and those in rural areas. Agencies can charge optional fees capped at \$550 per active provider for services such as insurance,

bookkeeping, online apps, lending libraries, marketing, and advertising.

One-time funding

SPACE CREATION GRANT

Applications for the [Space Creation Grant](#) funding program closed on November 12, 2024, but applications received before this date continue to be processed as funding allows. The Space Creation Grant targets areas of high need and high demand for child care spaces. The funds are available to non-profit, for-profit, and public child care.

Eligible recipients may receive grant amounts of up to:

- \$6,000 per space for new licensed facilities located in communities where there is limited to no child care;
- \$5,500 per space for new licensed facilities in areas with high demand;
- \$5,000 per new space for existing licensed facilities in high-demand regions; and
- \$1,350 per space for new or existing Family Day Home agencies in areas of high need or high demand.

BUILDING BLOCKS CAPITAL GRANT PROGRAM

The [Building Blocks Capital Grant Program](#) started after the Space Creation Grant Program ended in November 2024, with the first application intake closing on March 15, 2025. It provides capital funding to support the creation of new licensed child care spaces in Alberta. The program aims to improve access to child care, particularly in high-need, rural, and underserved communities, as well as for families facing barriers such as low income, non-standard work hours, or language access challenges. Eligible applicants include non-profit and public child care providers,

including municipalities, First Nations and Indigenous communities, and public institutions such as school divisions and post-secondary institutions. For-profit providers are not eligible.

The program consists of two funding streams, Major Capital Grant and Minor Capital Grant, which support new and existing facility-based child care programs.

The [Major Capital Grant](#) provides one-time capital funding to support the creation of new full-time licensed early learning and child care spaces in new and existing public or non-profit facility-based child care programs. Eligible projects may receive up to \$30,000 per child care space, with total capital costs of \$500,000 or more. Funding can be used for new facility construction, building expansion, major retrofitting, or acquiring and installing modular structures.

The [Minor Capital Grant](#) provides one-time funding to support the creation of new full-time licensed child care spaces in new and existing public or non-profit facility-based child care programs. Eligible projects may receive up to \$10,000 per child care space, with total capital costs under \$500,000. Funding can be used for interior and exterior renovations, upgrades, repairs, improvements, and refurbishment in a new or existing building with no building structure change.

Fee subsidies

On April 1, 2025, Alberta ended the Child Care Subsidy program in Daycares, Family Day Homes, and preschools for children up to kindergarten-age requiring child care during regular school hours. Fee subsidies remain in place for school-age children and may be used in non-profit, public, and for-profit Out-Of-School centres and Family Day Homes. See Alberta's "[Parent fees](#)" section for more information.

Other ELCC funding

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDING

Professional development funding through the Alberta Child Care Grant is provided to licensed child care programs to help staff with costs of approved post-secondary tuition, approved conferences and workshops, and up to \$1,500 per year for post-secondary coursework and textbooks, with a maximum of \$2,000 per ECE per year. This funding supports paid ECEs or contracted Family Day Home educators in pursuing further training and professional development opportunities.

Professional development funding covers employees or contracted Family Day Home providers who:

- Provide direct child care, including program supervisors and alternate supervisors (as defined in the Early Learning and Child Care Regulation), as well as consultants/coordinators with a licensed Family Day Home agency;
- Are certified as early childhood educators Level 1, 2, or 3;
- Are Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada; and
- Have worked at least 29 hours in at least one month preceding the date of the expenditure or the date the application was received.

RELEASE TIME FUNDING

Release time funding through the Alberta Child Care Grant compensates ECEs for studying, completing post-secondary coursework, and attending workshops approved for professional development funding. Release time funding is available regardless of when training occurs. The funding rates are \$800 per three-credit course for post-secondary coursework, with a limit of two

three-credit courses per year, and \$17.50 per hour for workshops and conferences, up to 45 hours per year.

Programs need to apply for release time funds and pay it to ECEs as taxable income. This funding is available to staff who:

- Are eligible for professional development funding;
- Are enrolled in/have paid for a post-secondary course, workshop, or conference that is approved for the professional development funding; and
- Have been approved for professional development funding by the Alberta Child Care Grant Funding Program, which includes the request to access the release time funding.

Each ECE is eligible for a combined total of up to \$4,387.50 in funding for professional development and release time per year.

MANDATORY EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTION FUNDING

Mandatory employer contribution funding through the Alberta Child Care Grant assists child care programs with payroll expenditures related to wage top-up payments. This funding is paid at a rate of 9.51% of the wage top-up funding received by the program. The fund is to help offset related expenditures to the Canadian Pension Plan (CPP) contributions, Employment Insurance (EI), and Workers Compensation Board (WCB) premiums. Programs that receive wage top-up funding and make the required payroll contributions are eligible for this funding.

■ FUNDING FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE (FISCAL YEAR 2023 – 2024)

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

Operational funding

Program	Amount
Infant Care Incentive	\$14,457,740
Family Day Home agency funding	\$8,757,346
Affordability Grant	\$624,557,188
Wage top-ups	\$212,836,113
Inclusion	\$17,587,631
Total operational funding	\$878,196,018

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, disability funding, and other grants/funding paid on a recurring basis.

One-time funding – capital (major and minor)

Program	Amount
Capital Investment	\$11,086,267

One-time funding – other

Space Creation Grant (Operating)	\$23,863,730
Total one-time funding	\$34,949,997

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.

Fee subsidies

Program	Amount
Daycare	\$153,494,793
Family Day Home	\$27,660,876
Out-Of-School Care	\$51,891,524
Extended hours	\$931,958
Preschool	\$5,153,015
Total fee subsidies	\$239,132,165

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 directly to service providers.

TOTAL SPENDING FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE (operational funding, one-time funding, and fee subsidies) **\$1,152,278,180**

Other ELCC funding

Program	Amount
Professional development funding	\$10,175,162
Release time funding	\$8,610,280
Mandatory employer contribution funding	\$17,452,371
Curriculum	\$1,518,650
Total other ELCC funding	\$37,756,463

Federal transfers to Alberta

Federal transfer	Amount
Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework – Early Learning and Child Care Bilateral Agreements	\$65,214,040
Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care	\$756,550,668
Early Learning and Child Care Infrastructure Fund	\$8,615,673

Note: The federal transfers above represent the funds allocated to Alberta for fiscal year 2023 – 2024. These funds may be slightly different from those included in the original agreements, as they are updated annually in line with population estimates. 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 (2025).