



OVERVIEW

In Alberta, responsibility for early childhood education and care (ECEC) falls under two Ministries, Alberta Education and Alberta Children’s Services. Responsibility for licensed and approved (referred to as “regulated” in Alberta) child care had been under Alberta Human Services but moved to the newly created Ministry of Children’s Services in January 2017.

The Education Supports Sector of Alberta Education is responsible for Early Childhood Services (ECS). Kindergarten is part of ECS programming and is intended for children in the year before Grade 1. Children with severe developmental disabilities may receive Early Childhood Services when they are two years eight months of age (as of September 1 of each year). Kindergarten and other ECS programs are provided by school divisions, accredited private schools and private non-profit and for-profit ECS operators.

There are five categories of licensed child care (sometimes called ECEC programs) defined under Alberta’s [Child Care Licensing Act](#). Each has a primary purpose of providing child care to seven or more children.

Licensed child care in Alberta includes:

- day care programs for preschool-aged children under seven years;
- part day preschool programs;
- out-of-school programs for kindergarten and school-aged children;
- group family child care; and
- Innovative child care programs designed to meet the unique child care needs of the community in which they are provided, as approved by the Children’s Services statutory director.

The Approved Family Day Home (FDH) program is another child care option available in Alberta. Under this program, contracted family day home agencies and approved providers are required to operate according to ministry standards. Neither providers nor agencies are licensed.

More than half Alberta’s licensed full and part day centre based child care programs and about half of approved family day home agencies are for-profit. The others are non-profit; this category includes a small number of municipally operated or supported centres.

Regional Children’s Services offices at the local level are responsible for licensing, monitoring and issuing enforcement actions for licensed child care programs.

The Government of Canada and the Government of Alberta signed [the Canada-Alberta Early Learning and Child Care Agreement](#), effective for a three year term from April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2020. Alberta's total share of funding was \$136.8 million over three years, and approximately \$45.6 million per year to increase accessibility, affordability, quality, and to address gaps and flexibility. These federal funds contributed to funding Phase 2 of the ELCC \$25/day pilot projects (2018).

In 2017, Alberta launched Phase 1 of a pilot project; 22 Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) centres were to test capping parent fees at \$25/day, to develop professional development initiatives; to support inclusion through the Access Support and Participation (ASaP) program; and to implement the *Flight* Early Learning and Care Framework. The ELCC grant enabled programs to implement activities in areas related to parent involvement, access to family supports, development of cultural and linguistic supports, and development of extended hours services. This Alberta wide pilot program was implemented with non-profit licensed child care programs providing services to children aged 0 to kindergarten. In 2018, Phase 2 of the pilot project expanded to include an additional 100 centres across Alberta.

The government commissioned an outside evaluation of the ELCC \$25/day pilot project. Two [evaluation reports](#), based on data collected through interviews, focus groups and surveys with ELCC Centre supervisors, educators, academic partners and parents were released in June 2018, with a [final report](#) in February 2020.

Following a change in government, it was announced that in April 2020, Phase 1 of this pilot program would end, which it did on June 30 after a three month extension. The Phase 2 projects will end March 31 2021 when the initial three year bilateral agreement between the federal and Alberta governments concludes.

Subsequently, a July 2020 announcement by the Alberta and federal ministers responsible for child care outlined a new one year bilateral agreement between the province and the federal government of \$45 million (2020 – 2021). It covers revamped fee subsidies (\$29 million); increased accessibility for children with disabilities, in underserved communities and with Indigenous and Francophone language and culture (\$9.7 million) and online training for early childhood educators (\$4.7 million) while phasing out the federally funded \$25/day centres. Under the revamped fee subsidies, subsidy rates to licensed and approved child care increased.

Several other ELCC programs also ended in 2020: the Stay-at-Home Child Care Subsidy and the Kin Child Care Subsidy (January 2020); the Northern Allowance (July 1 2020) and the Accreditation for Child Care Centres, which had a number of sub programs including the Benefit Contribution Grant and the Staff Attraction Incentive programs (March 31 2020). Wage enhancement funds that had been awarded on the basis of the accreditation process will now be paid to all staff.

The [Alberta Child Care Licensing Act](#) and regulations are set to expire in January 2021. A regulation review included consultation in June to inform revisions to the *Act* and regulations. The proposed new legislation, Bill 39, *The Early Learning and Child Care Amendment Act*, making changes in child care monitoring, replacing previous accreditation with new “guiding principles” and allowing more flexibility on 24 hour child care, was introduced in October 2020.

PROVINCIAL CONTEXT

Please note that 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 shown here.

Number of children 0 – 12 (2019 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0	48,000
1	55,100
2	51,600
3	54,900
4	51,000
5	53,400
6	52,100
7	56,500
8	52,700
9	55,300
10	56,700
11	53,000
12	57,700
Total	698,000

Number of children 0 – 12 years (aggregated) (2019 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0 – 2	154,700
3 – 5	159,300
6 – 12	384,000
Total	698,000

Number of children 0 – 12 years with employed mothers (2019 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0	27,800
1	31,900
2	31,000
3	34,200
4	30,200
5	31,400
6	32,900
7	34,200
8	34,600
9	38,800
10	39,000
11	35,600
12	40,000
Total	441,600

Number of children 0 – 12 with employed mothers (aggregated) (2019 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0 – 2	90,700
3 – 5	95,800
6 – 12	255,100
Total	441,600

Number of children 0 – 14 identifying with an Indigenous group (2016)

Age	First Nations	Métis	Inuk (Inuit)	Multiple	Other
0 – 4	14,300	9,215	250	390	240
5 – 9	15,865	10,120	285	245	240
10 –14	13,790	9,555	230	285	170

Workforce participation of mothers by age of youngest child (2019 rounded estimate)

Age of youngest child	Number of mothers	Participation rate (%)
0 – 2	93,300	66.1
3 – 5	63,800	75.7
0 – 5	157,100	69.7
6 – 15	198,800	84.7

Living arrangements of child by age by number of parents (2016)

Age	Living with two parents	Living with one parent	Lone mother	Lone father
0 – 4	228,685	31,915	26,450	5,465
5 – 9	219,010	45,330	36,260	9,075
10 –14	188,085	46,755	36,645	10,110

Languages spoken most often at home (2016)

Age	English	French	Non-official	Multiple
0 – 4	215,860	2,015	35,610	12,520
5 – 9	226,640	2,015	27,690	14,120
10– 14	202,910	1,615	23,805	13,220
Total	645,405	5,645	87,105	39,865

Median after tax income among families with children aged 0 – 5 (2015) (\$)

Two parent families	Lone parent families	Male lone parent families	Female lone parent families
92,890	31,264	40,636	30,240

PARENTAL LEAVE AND BENEFITS

Maternity leave

16 weeks.

Pregnant employees who have been employed at least 90 days with the same employer are eligible for maternity leave.

Parental leave

A maximum of 62 weeks are available for parental leave for parents, including adopting parents within 78 weeks of the birth or placement. Employees are eligible for parental leave if they have been employed at least 90 days with the same employer.

Benefits

Maternity and parental leave provisions in Canada outside Quebec, are divided between federal and provincial/territorial governments. Benefits are paid by the federal government under the Employment Insurance program (EI), while provincial/territorial provisions for job protected leave are established in each jurisdiction's employment standards legislation. The federal benefit covers 15 weeks of maternity leave for eligible employees who are birth mothers, up to 12 weeks prior to the expected date of birth, and up to 17 weeks following the date of birth.

There are two federal benefit options for parental leave: the Standard Parental Benefit and the Extended Parental Benefit. The Standard Parental Benefit covers 35 weeks of paid leave taken over a 12 month period, paid at 55% of average weekly insurable earnings, up to \$573/week (2020) for either eligible parent, including adoptive parents. The Extended Parental Benefit allows 61 weeks of parental leave benefits taken over an 18 month period paid at 33% of average weekly earnings up to \$344/week (2020) for either eligible parent including adoptive parents.

The Parental Sharing Benefit is available to non-birth (second) parents. It covers an additional five weeks of benefits if both parents have shared the Standard Benefit option (40 weeks total) or an additional eight weeks of benefits under the Extended option if both parents have shared the Extended Benefit option (69 weeks total). It is paid at either the Standard or the Extended rate.

Note: For further details about the EI federal benefit, Quebec benefit and leave provisions, and all provincial/territorial provisions for job-protected leave, see the PARENTAL LEAVE AND BENEFITS section of this publication.

KINDERGARTEN AND EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR KINDERGARTEN

Alberta Education

Education Supports Sector

8th Floor – 44 Capital Boulevard

10044-108 Street

Edmonton, AB, T5J 5E6

Telephone: (780) 427-4919

Website: <https://www.alberta.ca/early-childhood-education.aspx>

LEGISLATION

Alberta. Legislative Assembly. [Education Act](#). Statutes of Alberta, 2012, Chapter E-0.3. (Current as of July 18, 2019, in force September 1, 2020)

Alberta. Legislative Assembly. [Education Act – Private Schools Regulation](#). Alberta Regulation 93/2019. (Current to August 16, 2019)

Alberta. Legislative Assembly. [Early Childhood Services Regulation](#). Alberta Regulation 87/2019 (Current to August 22, 2019)

Alberta. Legislative Assembly. [Student Record Regulation](#). Alberta Regulation 97/2019 (Filed on August 16, 2019, in force September 1, 2019)

EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES ENROLLMENT

Kindergarten enrolment not available.

67,900 funded students (includes kindergarten and children with severe disability/delay younger than kindergarten age in Early Childhood Services (ECS) programs)

KINDERGARTEN SERVICES

Alberta Education is responsible for providing Early Childhood Services (ECS) under *The Education Act*.

Kindergarten, as part of ECS programming, is intended for children in the year prior to Grade 1.

ECS also provides educational services in a variety of early learning settings in addition to kindergarten. Children with mild, moderate, or severe developmental disabilities may receive early childhood services starting as early as two years and eight months of age (as of September 1 of each year).

Funding for ECS may be accessed by all school authorities, which include: school divisions (public, separate, francophone school boards), accredited private schools, charter schools, and approved non-profit and for-profit private ECS operators.

ECS is funded for 475 hours of instruction for each child. Some school authorities may provide hours in addition to the minimum 475 hours.

AGE ELIGIBILITY FOR KINDERGARTEN

To enter kindergarten, children must be four years and six months of age on or before September 1 of the relevant school year.

Effective September 2020, children entering kindergarten are required to be five years old by December 31 of that same calendar year.

COMPLUSORY

Attendance in kindergarten is not compulsory. However, 94% of children enrolled in Grade 1 had attended ECS/ kindergarten in Alberta in the year prior.

HOURS

Alberta Education funds 475 hours of instruction in a school year for every child eligible for Early Childhood Services. Kindergarten is usually part day, every day.

Some school authorities and ECS operators provide additional hours of ECS. The costs for additional hours beyond 475 are the responsibility of the school authority or individual ECS operator.

CLASS SIZES

Alberta does not set class sizes for kindergarten. Information about average class sizes is not available.

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Qualification requirements: Early Childhood Services teachers in Alberta must hold a valid Alberta teaching certificate based on a four year university degree that includes a basic teacher preparation program (B.Ed.), or a bachelor's degree supplemented with a teacher preparation program (two year post degree for teacher course work and practicum).

There is no specific requirement for early childhood education training.

CURRICULUM

[Kindergarten Program Statement](#) (2008) (Current to November 2012)

[Kindergarten Curriculum Overview](#) 2011

Press release: [Draft K-4 Curriculum](#) 2018

[New Learn Alberta – Kindergarten curriculum](#)

[My child's learning: A parent's resource](#)

SPENDING ON KINDERGARTEN

Kindergarten spending is not available.

In the 2018-2019 school year, approximately \$360 million was spent in operational funding for almost 68,000 children in ECS, not including capital expenditures.

In addition, \$316 million is spent for ECS children with mild/moderate and severe disability/delay and children with gifted and talented learning needs.

CHILD CARE

PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILD CARE

Ministry of Children's Services

Early Childhood Development Branch 6th Floor Sterling Place

9940 - 106th Street

Edmonton, AB, T5K 2N2

Telephone: (780) 422-1119

Website <https://www.alberta.ca/about-child-care-in-alberta.aspx>

LEGISLATION

Alberta. Legislative Assembly. [Child Care Licensing Act](#). Statutes of Alberta 2007 Chapter C-10.5. (Updated June 26, 2020)

Alberta. Legislative Assembly. [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#). 143/2008. (Current to September 1, 2019)

CHILD CARE SERVICES

UNREGULATED CHILD CARE

Unlicensed family child care

In Alberta, the maximum number of children permitted in an unlicensed family child care setting is six under the age of 13, not including the caregiver's own children.

REGULATED CHILD CARE

Under Alberta's *Child Care Licensing Act*, there are six types of services considered to be regulated child care programs. Of these, five program types are licensed and one program type is approved. (Family day home agencies and their providers are approved, not licensed).

Day care program

A child care program provided to seven or more infants, preschool, and/or kindergarten children for four or more consecutive hours in each day that the program is provided.

Preschool program

A child care program provided to preschool-age and kindergarten children for less than four hours per child in each day that the program is provided.

Innovative program

A licensed child care program approved by the provincial government statutory director that is designed to meet the unique child care needs of the community in which it is provided.

Out of school care program

A child care program provided to kindergarten-aged and school-aged children (under age 13) in any or all of the following periods: before and after school; during the lunch hour; and/or when schools are closed.

Group family child care program

A child care program provided in the private residence of the license holder to a maximum of 10 children, including infants, preschool, kindergarten and school-aged children. Group family child care programs must have two providers on record and both must be on the premises when seven or more children are in attendance.

As a licensed program, group family child care is subject to the Child Care Licensing Regulations in Alberta.

Family day home program (approved)

The Alberta Family Day Home (FDH) Program uses an agency model. Each FDH program is delivered by an agency that is contracted by a Ministry of Children's Services Region to coordinate and monitor the provision of child care in private residences. These homes are referred to as "approved family day homes."

Note that a family day home agency is not licensed. Agencies enter into contracts with the province to approve homes, which are not licensed.

Under the legal authority of the *Child Care Licensing Act*, the [Family Day Home Standards Manual for Alberta](#) outlines the requirements for approved family child care, including the roles, objectives, responsibilities and expectations for Children's Services, FDH agencies and approved FDH providers. Contracted FDH agencies and approved providers are required to operate according to these Ministry standards.

The maximum number of children in a family day home is six including the provider's own children.

CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

Alberta's ECEC curriculum framework, introduced in 2014, was originally titled *Play, participation, and possibilities: An early learning and child care curriculum framework for Alberta* but was renamed [Flight: Alberta's early learning and care framework](#) in 2018.

Alberta's curriculum framework supports a holistic view of children and builds common language across diverse delivery settings about the importance of a) play in early learning, b) emergent curriculum planning and c) responsive care. It is intended to guide practitioners in their intentional interactions with young children. A professional development model for the framework including access to an online course, resources, and onsite pedagogical support was developed through the Early Learning and Child Care Centre (ELCC) pilot conducted in 122 centres.

The Flight document is available free of charge to any educator who wants to engage voluntarily with the ideas and concepts as a way to support their evolving practices, planning and provisions for young children's learning. Licensed child care programs interested in engaging in more in depth training and exploration will be invited to participate in curriculum initiatives as funding permits. Funding for curriculum training and on site pedagogical supports is provided to post secondary institutions and a community organization.

Implementation of the Flight curriculum is not mandatory at this time.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The Inclusive Child Care Program provides supports to facilitate inclusion of children with special needs in Alberta's regulated or contracted child care settings. Program delivery and funding may vary depending on the needs of the child and type of service required. Funds are paid to licensed or contracted operators on behalf of eligible children. As part of the revised [bilateral agreement](#) with the Government of Canada in 2020, the new Inclusive Child Care Program is managed provincially and no longer regionally.

Alberta does not require additional training for staff working with children with special needs; however, staff members must hold Alberta child care certification.

In 2020, work is underway to develop provincial policy that reflects an evidence based model that includes enhanced ratio supports, onsite consultation, training, resources and coaching accessible to regulated child care programs throughout the province.

A non-profit community program, Getting Ready for Inclusion Today (GRIT), was funded by the province to deliver the Access, Support and Participation (ASaP) program. ASaP provides training and on site coaching to support child care staff in strengthening inclusive practices for children with additional needs and enabling meaningful participation for all children.

ASaP programming was delivered in the 122 Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) pilot centres and an additional 40 licensed and approved child care programs. Participating programs complete an assessment to determine areas for enhancement, then child care teams received training and onsite, practice based coaching to provide them with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to provide equitable access and support participation of all children in a quality, inclusive environment.

For more information, see the [ASaP Project website](#).

INDIGENOUS CHILD CARE

Alberta child care programs in Indigenous communities on reserve are not typically licensed by the province of Alberta. However, in 2016, Children's Services staff were requested to work collaboratively with Kapawe'no First Nation to establish a provincially licensed day care program and enable the program to access provincial funding. On July 10, 2017, Kapawe'no First Nation Child Care Society received a provincial child care license for 31 spaces, becoming the first licensed on reserve program in Alberta.

There are 42 other on reserve Indigenous child care programs in Alberta that may be eligible for federal government funding equivalent to provincial fee subsidies. Federal funding is provided when programs demonstrate to the federal government that they adhere to provincial licensing standards. (See the section of this report on INDIGENOUS EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE).

These programs are inspected by provincial licensing staff, by invitation of a First Nation. Provincial child care licensing staff conducts an inspection visit and provides a written inspection report based on provincial licensing standards. Alberta has ongoing communication with federal funders under the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) program (formerly the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy) to consult on and respond to requests for inspection of child care programs located on First Nations reserve land.

Alberta recognizes early learning and child care education training programs in approved private vocational training institutions that are based on theoretical understanding of First Nations/Indigenous cultural knowledge as well as an academic study of all aspects of child development. Depending on program content and course hours, staff members who complete these programs may be eligible for certification as a Child Development Worker or a Child Development Supervisor. Alberta also contracts with early childhood educators to deliver the entry level Child Care Orientation Course in First Nation communities. Completion of the course qualifies staff for certification as a Child Development Assistant.

SPACE STATISTICS

Number of regulated child care spaces (2019)			
<i>Centres – regular funding</i>			
Age group	Full day	Part day	Total
Infants (< 12 months)	2,080	-	2,080
Infants (13 – 19 months)	6,774	-	6,774
Toddlers (19 months – < 3 years)	15,989	1,304	17,293
Preschool-age (3 years – 4.5 years)	20,762	14,277	35,039
Kindergarten-age (4.5 years +)	9,854	13,763	23,617
Out of school (Grades 1 – 6) reported as part day	-	34,301	34,301
Innovative child care (no age grouping)	598	-	598
Total centre spaces - regular funding	56,057	63,645	119,702
<i>Centres - \$25/day pilot projects</i>			
Infants (under 12 months)	277	-	277
Infants (13 – 19 months)	875	-	875
Toddlers (19 months – < 3 years)	2,121	-	2,121
Preschool-age (3 years – 4.5 years)	2,553	-	2,553
Kindergarten-age (4.5 years +)	1,442	-	1,442
Out of school (Grades 1 – 6) reported as part day	-	-	-
Innovative child care (no age grouping)	-	-	-
Total regulated spaces in \$25/day pilots	7,268		7,268
Total centre based spaces	63,325	63,645	126,970
Family child care spaces			
Approved family day homes	11,832	-	11,832
Licensed group family group child care	90	-	90
Total family child care spaces	11,922		11,922

Total number of licensed and approved spaces in all centres and family child care

75,247	63,645	138,892
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Children with special needs in regulated/approved child care (2018-2019)

Not available. Funding is distributed by regional delivery offices to regulated child care programs. The number of children served is not collected centrally.

Children receiving fee subsidies (2018-2019)

Full subsidy	22,605
Partial subsidy	5,654
\$25/day pilot project subsidies	1,812
Total children receiving fee subsidies	30,701

Number of child care programs (2018-2019)

<i>Centre based programs</i>	
Day care centres	986
Innovative	23
Out of school care	1,079
Preschools (part day)	671
\$25/day pilot programs	120
Total centre based programs	2,879

Family child care

Group family child care homes (licensed)	9
Number of family day home agencies (contracted)	66
Number of individual family child care providers (approved by contracted agencies)	1,892

Sponsorship of regulated centre based child care centres (2018-2019)

<i>Program</i>	Non-profit	For-profit	Total
Day care (full day)	284	702	986
Preschools (part day)	406	265	671
Out of school care	402	677	1,079
Innovative child care	19	4	23
Early Learning Centres (\$25/day)	120	-	120
Total number of centres	1,231	1,648	2,879

Sponsorship of centre based regulated child care spaces (2018-2019)

Program	Non-profit	For-profit	Total
Day care spaces (full day)	14,521	40,938	55,459
Preschools spaces (part day)	9,466	7,722	17,188
Out of school care spaces	20,214	26,243	46,457
Innovative child care spaces	519	79	598
Early Learning Centres spaces (\$25/day)	7,268	-	7,268
Total number of centre based spaces by sponsorship	51,988	74,982	126,970

Sponsorship of spaces in approved family day homes (2018-2019)

Program	Non-profit	For-profit	Total
Spaces in family day homes spaces	4,705	7,127	11,832
Spaces in group family day homes	-	90	90
Total number of home based spaces by sponsorship	4,705	7,217	11,922

PARENT FEES

Fees at centres in Alberta are set by individual operators and providers with the exception of the 120 centres that have/had been part of the \$25/day pilot project. Funding that made possible the set fees of \$25/day at the remaining 100 pilot centres will end March 31, 2021.

In 2019, a national survey of child care fees in Canada's large cities included the following cities in Alberta:

Median monthly fees for full time child care

City	Infant	Toddler	Preschooler
Lethbridge	\$900	\$850	\$830
Edmonton	\$1,075	\$917	\$875
Calgary	\$1,300	\$1,100	\$1,075

Source: Macdonald, D., & Friendly, M. (2020). *In Progress: Child care fees in Canada 2019*. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

REGULATED CENTRES

Maximum centre size: Not specified

Maximum staff:child ratios and group sizes

Age	Staff:child ratios	Max. group sizes
Infants < 12 months	1:3	6
Infants 12 months < 19 months	1:4	8
19 months < 3 years	1:6	12
3 years < 4.5 years	1:8	16
4.5 years and older	1:10	20
<i>Out-of-school care program</i>		
Part day programs for kindergarten-age children	1:10	20
Part day programs for children attending Grade 1 and higher	1:15	30

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

Child care staff certification

Under the Alberta [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#), staff working in licensed day care, preschools, out-of-school care and group family child care programs are required to be certified. Certification is the process used to review educational training to determine eligibility and to certify staff at one of the three levels specified in regulation.

Primary staff working in licensed child care programs as a Child Development Assistant have six months to become certified. Without certification, they cannot be left alone to supervise children. All staff must apply for certification to the Child Care Staff Certification Office. The Certification Office is also responsible for contracting the delivery of the child care orientation course. For more details on child care staff certification, see the [Certification Guide](#).

Alberta uses three levels of qualifications for child care certification:

Child Development Assistant certificate (formerly Level 1) requires completion of the Child Care Orientation Course (Alberta government sponsored course); or completion of specific courses in Alberta high schools; or completion of a 45 hour (three credit) college/university level course related to child development; or completion of the Step Ahead Family Day Home Training or Family Child Care Training Program through an approved Alberta Family Day Home Agency registered with the Alberta Family Child Care Association.

Child Development Worker certificate (formerly Level 2) requires completion of a one year early learning and child care certificate program offered by an Alberta public college or university or completion of an equivalent level of training (refer to Appendix A “Educational Equivalencies for Alberta Child Care Staff Certification” in the Certification Guide for details).

Child Development Supervisor certificate (formerly Level 3) requires completion of a two year early learning and child care diploma program offered by an Alberta public college or completion of an equivalent level of training (refer to Appendix A “Educational Equivalencies for Alberta Child Care Staff Certification” in the Certification Guide for details).

Language Proficiency

Proof of language proficiency is required for certification as a Child Development Worker and Child Development Supervisor if the person’s post secondary training was not completed in a country where English or French was provided throughout all levels of schooling.

Equivalency

Approved educational equivalencies are recognized for certification as a Child Development Worker and Child Development Supervisor. Listed in Appendix A of the [Certification Guide](#).

Coursework equivalencies are also available for individuals who have completed extensive related coursework but have not received an educational credential. Each course is assessed for content and hours of instruction comparability. See Schedule B in the Certification Guide for details.

For more details on child care staff certification see the [Certification Guide](#).

Staff qualification requirements in each centre

Each licensed program is required to employ staff with credential levels as follows:

Day care program requirements (Schedule 1: Child Care Licensing Regulation)

Program Supervisor must hold a Child Development Supervisor certificate.

In addition, at least one in every three primary staff must hold at least a Child Development Worker certificate.

All other primary staff working directly with children must hold at least a Child Development Assistant certificate. Staff are allowed six months for staff to obtain this certificate; until then, the staff person must not have unsupervised access to children.

Out of school care program requirements (Schedule 4: Child Care Licensing Regulation)

One in every four staff working directly with children at any time must hold at least a Child Development Worker certificate, while all other staff hold at least certification as a Child Development Assistant.

Staff are allowed six months to obtain this certificate; until then, the staff person must not have unsupervised access to children.

Preschool (part day) program requirements (Schedule 5: Child Care Licensing Regulation)

One in every four staff working directly with children at any time must hold at least a Child Development Worker certificate while all other staff hold certification as a Child Development Assistant.

Staff working as a Child Development Assistant are allowed six months to obtain this certificate; until then, the staff person must not have unsupervised access to children.

Group family child care program requirements (Schedule 2: Child Care Licensing Regulation)

The license holder or one additional care provider must be certified at minimum as a Child Development Worker and each additional child care provider must be certified at minimum as a Child Development Assistant.

Licensing, Monitoring And Enforcement

Inspection visits are intended to ensure all licensed child care programs adhere to the [Child Care Licensing Act](#) and Regulation. Licensed child care programs will generally receive a minimum of two licensing inspections during a 12 month period. However, if non compliances are identified or incidents/complaint investigations take place, licensing staff may complete additional inspections as required for follow up.

Alberta’s [Child Care Licensing Act](#) and Child Care Licensing Regulation provides additional information.

Accreditation program

Until March 31, 2020, Alberta had a program for granting accreditation to licensed day care centres, out-of-school care programs and approved family day home agencies that voluntarily enrolled in an onsite evaluation process based on a set of provincial [Child Care Accreditation Standards](#) criteria and indicators.

The accreditation initiative was introduced in 2004. The government had contracted its administration to a community agency, the Alberta Association for the Accreditation of Early Learning and Childcare Services (AELCS).

Programs that voluntarily participated in the process and met the accreditation criteria were eligible for provincial grant funding. The grants included staff wage top up and funding for benefits and professional development funding. Wage grants for all licensed child care centres and family day homes are no longer tied to accreditation but will become part of the ministry's licensing program. A number of grants associated with the accreditation process including Benefit Contribution Grants and Staff Attraction Incentive Funding previously available to eligible programs concluded March 31, 2020. See the [Alberta Child Care Funding Guide](#).

STAFF WAGES

Median annual employment income (\$) and median hourly wage range (\$) for Early Childhood Educators and Assistants working in day care services full time, full year.

Median annual employment income \$35,893

Median hourly employment income \$17.26 - 19.72/hr
(calculated using 2080 hrs/year (40 hrs week)
and 1280 hrs/year (35 hrs/week)

Source: Canadian Census, 2016

Note: These data include Early Childhood Educators and Assistants, as defined in NOC 4214, working in the day care services industry in centre based environments with children aged 0 – 12 years, as defined in NAICS 6244. Included as individuals who worked full-time (30+ hours/week) and full-year (48+ weeks/year), did not work at home, and were not self-employed. Included are supervisors but not managers. Employment income refers to income from all jobs if the Early Childhood Educator or Assistant holds a second job providing a wage, salary or commissions.

REGULATED FAMILY CHILD CARE

Model of organization

Alberta uses two models for delivery of “regulated” family child care:

- Contracted agencies, which have the role of approving individual providers in private homes and of completing the majority of monitoring of what are called “approved family day homes.” Neither the agency nor the provider is licensed.
- Individually licensed group family child care homes.

The [Child Care Licensing Act](#) states that anyone caring for seven or more children must be licensed by the Government of Alberta. Individuals who care for six or fewer children, not counting their own children, do not require a license.

APPROVED FAMILY DAY HOMES

Section 25 of the *Act* defines the family day home program (FDH) as one in which an agency has entered into an agreement with the provincial government to coordinate and monitor the provision of child care in private residences (i.e., approved family day homes).

Operating under the legal authority of the [Child Care Licensing Act](#), the [Family Day Home Standards Manual for Alberta](#) describes the roles, objectives, responsibilities and expectations for Children's Services, agencies and approved family day home providers. Approved family day home agencies recruit, monitor and support family day home providers according to the standards.

Day home agencies may be non-profit or for-profit.

Maximum capacity

Approved family day home providers may accommodate a maximum of six children 0 – 12 years old in each private residence, including the provider's own children. A maximum of three children may be 36 months or younger and a maximum of two children may be 24 months or younger.

Monitoring and enforcement

Through its contract with a regional office of the Ministry of Children's Services, a family day home agency is responsible for complying with the agency standards and monitoring providers' compliance with provider standards. Ministry staff monitor agency operations, activities, and records, including a minimum of one in person visit to each contracted agency annually. In addition, ministry staff visit a minimum of 10% of the agency's active homes annually. For agencies with fewer than 20 homes, at least two homes are visited.

Family day home agencies are required to monitor all providers with both scheduled and unscheduled visits at least six times per year. Agency staff, referred to as family child care consultants and coordinators, monitor compliance utilizing a standard Government of Alberta checklist to ensure adherence to the provider standards. Under the Family Day Home Standards, agency staff responsible for monitoring providers must be certified at minimum as a Child Development Worker. The consultants work closely with both family day home providers and parents.

Family day home provider requirements

Family day home providers must be 18 years of age and have a criminal records check, including 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.

Each direct care provider is required to develop, in partnership with the agency, a training plan to cover areas such as child development, child guidance and employing culturally respectful strategies. Family day home agencies are also required to bring providers together at least six times each year for training, consultation, information sharing, or problem solving to reduce provider isolation.

GROUP FAMILY CHILD CARE

Licensed group family child care is provided in the private residence of the license holder in which two providers care for a maximum of ten children.

Maximum capacity

In a licensed group family child care home, two providers care for a maximum of 10 children, of which not more than three may be under three years of age, and not more than two may be infants (24 months or younger). The license holder must ensure that where seven or more children are present at a program, whether on or off the program premises, two care providers are on duty.

Monitoring and enforcement

Because group family child care is a licensed category, it is subject to the Child Care Licensing Regulations. Inspection visits are intended to ensure all licensed child care programs adhere to the *Child Care Licensing Act* and Regulation. Licensed child care programs will generally receive a minimum of two licensing inspections during a 12 month period. However, if non compliances are identified or incidents/complaint investigations take place, licensing staff may complete additional inspections as required for follow up. (Refer to *Alberta's Child Care Licensing Act* and Child Care Licensing Regulation for additional information).

Group family child care provider requirements

In the group family child care program, the license holder must be certified at minimum as a Child Development Assistant. At least one additional care provider must be certified as a Child Development Worker if the license holder is a Child Development Assistant, and any additional child care providers must be certified at minimum as a Child Development Assistant (see certification table).

FUNDING

CHILD CARE SERVICES ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING

Grants funding the centres that were part of the Early Learning and Child Care Centres Pilot project went only to the project centres, which were required to be non-profit.

Otherwise, Alberta provides all funding to both non-profit and for-profit child care programs.

TYPES OF FUNDING

Fee subsidies

Eligibility for families

Social criteria

Valid reasons for care in order to be eligible for subsidy include:

- working;
- attending school;
- looking for work (maximum four month approval of subsidy in a 12 month time period – per applicant);
- special needs applicant or child.

Financial eligibility for fee subsidy (2020) (gross family income)

As of August 1, 2020, below \$50,000 gross income, a fully subsidized parent would pay \$0 for child care. Families cease to be eligible for a fee subsidy at \$75,000/gross annual family income.

[Alberta subsidy financial eligibility levels](#)

Service providers' eligibility to deliver subsidized child care

Licensed family day homes and for-profit and non-profit child care centres are eligible to deliver subsidized child care. As of January 1, 2020, subsidy for preschools via the Stay At Home subsidy program has been discontinued. Children who attend part time hours in a licensed daycare or approved family day home are still eligible for subsidy.

Subsidy rates

The subsidy rate is the maximum amount paid by the provincial/territorial government to the service to cover all or part of the parent fee.

Monthly maximum subsidy rates for Alberta

(with August 1 2020 increases)

Subsidy type	Age group		
	Infant (<18 months)	Preschooler (19 months – Grade 1)	Grades 1 to 6
Licensed day care and out-of-school care	\$628 (\$741 as of 8/1/20)	\$546 (\$644 as of 8/1/20)	\$310 (\$366 as of 8/1/20)
Approved family day home/ Licensed group family child care	\$520 (\$614 as of 8/1/20)	\$437 (\$516 as of 8/1/20)	\$310 (\$366 as of 8/1/20)
Extended hours (licensed programs and approved family day homes)	\$100 additional	\$100 additional	\$100 additional

See [2020 subsidy rate increase table](#)

Are eligible families entitled to a fee subsidy?

Yes, there are no waiting lists to be approved for Child Care Subsidy.

Surcharges above the fee subsidy

Programs may surcharge subsidized parent fees above the maximum subsidy rate, in which case the parent must pay the difference. Fees are not capped.

Are there other programs that subsidize the individual family or child?

Extended Hours Child Care subsidy: Certain facilities (mainly family day homes) are approved to provide care outside of standard business hours. Subsidized children who attend more than four hours of care per month outside of the Monday to Friday 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. time slot are eligible to receive an additional \$100 per month.

Kin Child Care subsidy: Prior to January 1, 2020, a Kin Child Care subsidy was offered in Alberta for applicants to help pay for child care provided by a relative caregiver. This subsidy program ended January 1, 2020.

The fee subsidy for preschool attendance via the *Stay At Home* subsidy program was discontinued January 1, 2020.

Operational (previously recurring) funding

Early Learning and Child Care Centres Pilot Project Grant

Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) pilot centres in Alberta had been operationally funded since 2017. The purpose of the pilot program was to test capping parent fees at \$25/day; to develop professional development initiatives to support inclusion through the Access Support and Participation (ASaP) program; and to implement the *Flight* Early Learning and Care Framework.

This Alberta wide pilot program was implemented with non-profit licensed child care programs that provided services to children aged 0 – kindergarten-age. An initial Phase 1 of 22 centres was provincially funded in 2017; in 2018, federal funds through the Canada-Alberta Early Learning and Child Care Agreement. This allowed the program to expand to include an additional 100 centres across Alberta. The program created more than 7,000 new spaces in existing and new centres.

The ELCC grant enabled programs to implement activities in areas related to parent involvement, access to family supports, development of cultural and linguistic supports, and extended hours services.

The ELCC \$25/day pilot project is being phased out. Funds to the 100 federally funded centres will end on March 31, 2021, and funding to the 22 provincially funded centres ended June 30, 2020 after a three month extension from the initial phase out date announced of March 31, 2020.

The government commissioned an outside evaluation of the ELCC \$25/day pilot project in 2017. The [evaluation reports](#), based on data collected through interviews, focus groups and surveys with ELCC supervisors, educators, academic partners and parents were released in June 2018 and February 2020.

Infant Care Incentive

The Infant Care Incentive is a per space amount paid to regulated child care programs. It pays \$150/month for each child under 19 months of age who is in more than eight hours of care in that month. Regulated programs were receiving payments for an average of approximately 5,400 infants/month in 2018-2019.

Northern Allowance (Formerly the Oil Sands Strategy)

The Northern Allowance was put in place in 2008 to help stabilize the child care sector in northern Alberta. Funding supported recruitment, retention and professional development of staff. This funding was available for staff working in licensed day care centres, licensed out-of-school care programs and contracted family day home agencies located in Fort McMurray. The allowance included a monthly flat rate payment to staff (in addition to the provincial accreditation wage top up) and access to an additional \$500 per year for professional development. The Northern Allowance for child care concluded July 1, 2020.

Accreditation funding for child care programs

Until March 31, 2020, Alberta had a process of accrediting licensed day care centres, out-of-school care programs and approved family day home agencies that voluntarily enrolled in an on site evaluation process based on a set of provincial criteria and indicators.

[Child Care Accreditation Standards](#)

The accreditation initiative was introduced in 2004. The government had contracted its administration to a community agency, the Alberta Association for the Accreditation of Early Learning and Childcare Services (AELCS).

Wage top up funding was paid to the child care program, which distributed it to staff members and to family day home providers. Rates varied by the accreditation status of the child care program and level of staff certification. Funding was paid monthly up to a maximum of 181 hours.

Overviews of funding rates by program type are no longer available but rates for staff working in day care centres are provided below as an example:

<i>Certification Level</i>	<i>Pre-accredited</i>	<i>Accredited</i>
Child Development Assistant	\$1.44/hr	\$2.14/hr
Child Development Worker	\$2.70/hr	\$4.05/hr
Child Development Supervisor	\$4.42/hr	\$6.62/hr

Programs that voluntarily participated in the process and met the accreditation criteria were eligible for provincial grant funding. The grants included staff wage top ups, and funding for benefits and professional development. Wage grants for all licensed child care centres and family day homes are no longer tied to accreditation, but will become part of the ministry's licensing program.

A number of grants associated with the accreditation process including Benefit Contribution Grants, Staff Attraction Incentive Funding previously available to eligible programs concluded March 31, 2020. See the [Alberta Child Care Funding Guide](#).

Benefit Contribution Grant

Grant provided to child care programs to offset the costs of the mandatory provincial and federal employer contributions associated with the wage top-up funding and the child care staff attraction incentive allowance including statutory pay, vacation pay, Employment Insurance (EI), Canada Pension Plan (CPP), and Workers Compensation Board (WCB) premiums. This grant supports 16% of Staff Support Funding and 16% of Child Care Staff Attraction Incentive Allowance. This grant concluded March 31, 2020.

Family Child Care Consultant and Coordinator (FCCC) Funding

This funding provided a wage top up for paid, certified staff, working as an employee in the role of a family child care consultant and/or coordinator in a contracted family day home agency. Hourly funding was paid monthly up to a maximum of 181 hours. This grant concluded March 31, 2020.

One time funding

Professional Development Grant

This grant, which was part of Accreditation Funding, is available to eligible certified staff working in licensed programs or as staff of a family day home agency. The funding enables certified staff to obtain higher levels of certification or attend approved conferences and workshops relating to early learning and child care. Certified Child Development Assistants and Child Development Workers are eligible for up to \$1,000/year.

Professional Development funding is also available to staff certified as Child Development Supervisors. This funding is now administered through the Alberta Government.

Child Care Staff Attraction Incentive Allowance

This grant, part of Accreditation Funding, was intended to support the recruitment of qualified staff to the profession. Certified Child Development Workers and Child Development Supervisors in both levels of accreditation were eligible for \$2,500 after working 12 months and an additional \$2,500 after having worked 24 months, if they are experienced staff that have returned to the field. This funding was also considered a "wage" under the Alberta Employment Standards Code. New applications will not be accepted after March 31, 2020.

PROVINCIAL ALLOCATIONS FOR REGULATED
CHILD CARE (2018-2019)

Fee subsidies

Day care centres	\$101,024,000
Family day homes	\$12,687,000
Preschools (Stay At Home parent support)	\$1,679,000
Out of school care	\$38,034,000
Extended hours	\$525,000

Total fee subsidies **\$153,949,000**

Operational (previously Recurring) funding

Infant care incentive	\$10,112,000
Northern Allowance	\$4,052,000
Accreditation funding	\$119,561,000
Family day home agency contracts	\$6,485,000
Specialized child care (includes Inclusive Child Care)	\$10,212,000

Total Operational funding **\$150,422,000**

One time funding

Staff certification	\$1,145,000
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Total provincial allocation on regulated child care
\$305,516,000

Note: Federal funding of \$45,593,076 through the Canada – Alberta Early Learning and Child Care Agreement for 2018-2019 is not included in the provincial allocations.

TOTAL ALLOCATION **\$351,109,076**

Total provincial allocation for regulated child care + \$45,593,076 federal funding through the Canada – Alberta Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (2018-2019)

Other funding

Parent Link centres	\$33,103,000
Home visitation	\$10,990,000
Kin Child Care	\$19,659,000

Total Other funding **\$63,752,000**