



PROVINCIAL CONTEXT

Number of children 0-12 years (2007 rounded estimate)

| Age | Number of children |
|-------|--------------------|
| 0 | 44,700 |
| 1 | 39,800 |
| 2 | 42,800 |
| 3 | 40,800 |
| 4 | 36,900 |
| 5 | 41,300 |
| 6 | 39,600 |
| 7 | 43,500 |
| 8 | 40,300 |
| 9 | 42,400 |
| 10 | 43,700 |
| 11 | 41,100 |
| 12 | 44,600 |
| Total | 541,400 |

Number of children 0-12 years, aggregated (2007 rounded estimate)

| Age | Number of children |
|-------|--------------------|
| 0-2 | 127,300 |
| 3-5 | 119,000 |
| 6-12 | 295,200 |
| Total | 541,400 |

Children 0-14 years identifying with an Aboriginal group (2006)

| Age | North American Indian | Métis | Inuit | Multiple | Other | Total |
|-------|-----------------------|--------|-------|----------|-------|--------|
| 0-4 | 10,760 | 7,160 | 145 | 130 | 130 | 18,330 |
| 5-9 | 11,315 | 7,495 | 195 | 100 | 220 | 19,330 |
| 10-14 | 11,610 | 8,760 | 175 | 155 | 265 | 20,965 |
| Total | 33,685 | 23,415 | 515 | 385 | 615 | 58,625 |

Children 0-14 yrs with disabilities (2006)

| Age | Number of children with disabilities | Rate of children with disabilities (%) |
|-------|--------------------------------------|--|
| 0-4 | 2,940 | 1.5 |
| 5-9 | 9,300 | 4.7 |
| 10-14 | 12,980 | 5.9 |
| Total | 25,220 | 4.1 |

Note: Total may not add up due to rounding.

Number of children 0-12 years with mothers in the paid labour force (2007 rounded estimate)

| Age | Number of children |
|-------|--------------------|
| 0 | 22,900 |
| 1 | 22,300 |
| 2 | 24,300 |
| 3 | 24,700 |
| 4 | 21,400 |
| 5 | 24,300 |
| 6 | 25,400 |
| 7 | 27,800 |
| 8 | 27,900 |
| 9 | 28,400 |
| 10 | 30,900 |
| 11 | 30,800 |
| 12 | 31,100 |
| Total | 342,100 |

Number of children 0-12 years with mothers in the paid labour force, aggregated (2007 rounded estimate)

| Age | Number of children |
|-------|--------------------|
| 0-2 | 69,500 |
| 3-5 | 70,400 |
| 6-12 | 202,300 |
| Total | 342,100 |

Number of children by marital status of families (2006)

| Age | Children in couple families | Children in lone parent families | (with lone mothers) | (with lone fathers) |
|-------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 0-4 | 173,185 | 25,945 | 22,015 | 3,930 |
| 5-9 | 167,215 | 32,840 | 27,220 | 5,620 |
| 10-14 | 176,895 | 42,850 | 34,560 | 8,290 |
| Total | 517,295 | 101,635 | 83,790 | 17,840 |

Number of children by mother tongue (2006)

| Age | English | French | Non-official language |
|-------|---------|--------|-----------------------|
| 0-4 | 172,910 | 1,315 | 22,625 |
| 5-9 | 176,190 | 1,420 | 20,950 |
| 10-14 | 195,310 | 1,735 | 22,470 |
| Total | 544,410 | 4,470 | 66,045 |

Number and percentage of children living in families below the LICO (2006)

| | | |
|-------|--------|------|
| 0-2 | 18,000 | 15.5 |
| 3-5 | 19,000 | 15.8 |
| 6-12 | 24,000 | 8.1 |
| Total | 62,000 | 11.5 |

Workforce participation of mothers by age of youngest child (2007 rounded estimate)

| Age of youngest child | Number of mothers | Participation rate (%) |
|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| 0-2 | 66,800 | 61.0 |
| 3-5 | 46,200 | 73.0 |
| 6-15 | 159,000 | 83.7 |

FAMILY-RELATED LEAVE

Maternity leave

Fifteen weeks.

Parental leave

Thirty-seven weeks may be taken by one parent or shared between two parents but the total combined leave cannot exceed 37 weeks. The legislation stipulates that there is no requirement to grant parental leave to more than one parent at a time if both parents of a child work for the same employer.

Adoption leave

Thirty-seven weeks may be taken by one parent or shared between two parents but the total combined leave cannot exceed 37 weeks.

Births and EI maternity and parental claims (2007)

Number of births: 47,579

Birth rate per 1,000 population: 13.9

Number of initial maternity claims allowed: 24,460

Average length of maternity claim: 14.7 weeks

Number of parental claims: 26,040

Average length of parental claim: 30.6 weeks

Number of adoptive parent claims: 290

Average length of adoptive claim: 29.8 weeks

Note: Maternity, parental and adoption leaves are determined by provincial and territorial legislation. The federal government pays for up to 15 weeks for maternity leave and 35 weeks for parental and adoptive leave for eligible parents at 55% of earned income to a maximum of \$447/week (2009). See FEDERAL ECEC PROGRAMS for more information.

KINDERGARTEN

LEGISLATION

Government of Alberta. Legislative Assembly. *School Act*. 2000.

Early Childhood Services Regulation 31/2002.

Private Schools Regulation 190/2000.

PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR KINDERGARTEN

Early Childhood Services contact

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KINDERGARTEN SERVICES

Kindergarten refers to the year before Grade 1. The term Early Childhood Services is used in Alberta and refers to programs under the authority of Alberta Education serving children from 2.5 years to and including kindergarten year.

Alberta funds and delivers denominational education. Both “public” and Catholic school boards are publicly funded.

EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

Early Childhood Services (ECS) is under the authority of Alberta Education. ECS may be offered by public schools (including charter schools), private schools, or by private ECS operators, which must be a nonprofit society, nonprofit company or through special act of legislature (no ECS program is currently authorized this way). Alberta provides funding for Early Childhood Services (ECS) for approved private nonprofit ECS operators.

ECS is not compulsory. Access is not legislated; however, 98% of five year olds are in kindergarten.

AGE ELIGIBILITY

Five years old by February 28.

2.5 years by September 1 if the child has a severe disability; 3.5 years by September 1 if the child has a mild or moderate disability.

CLASS SIZE

There is no provincial policy on class size.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Alberta Education has standards for the provision of early childhood special education (see RECENT DEVELOPMENTS). Compliance is monitored by Special Programs Branch. Extra supports are available; appropriate funding may be allocated to specialists.

Number of children with special needs in kindergarten: Information not available.

ENROLMENT (2006/2007)

Number of children enrolled in ECS (the year before Grade 1): 47,106*

Number of children enrolled in ECS (two years before Grade 1): Information not available

Number of children enrolled in ECS (three years before Grade 1): Information not available

**The total includes children attending ECS programs offered by public, separate, francophone, charter, private school and private ECS operators. Since Alberta has a lower age eligibility than other provinces and territories, there are numerous four year old children who are in ECS in the year before Grade 1.*

KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS

Qualification requirements: A valid Alberta Teaching Certificate (B.Ed.). Teacher certification requires a minimum of four years university study in a basic teaching program (B.Ed.), or a bachelor's degree supplemented with a basic teacher program (two years post-degree for teacher training and practicum). There are no specific early childhood requirements for ECS teachers.

All teachers must complete a professional development Growth Plan, as outlined in the *Teacher Growth, Supervision & Evaluation Policy*.

Responsibility for certification: The Teacher Development and Certification Branch of Alberta Education for private school and private ECS operators offering kindergarten programs. The Association of Independent Schools & Colleges in Alberta (AISCA) has responsibility as designated signing authority for extending interim certificates and applications for permanent certification.

Representation: Alberta Teachers Association (ATA) represents teachers in the public school system.

Average salary (2006/2007): Information not available.

In 2006/2007 there were approximately 2,611 certificated teachers working in ECS programs.

CLASSROOM ASSISTANTS

Title: Teacher Assistants or Education Assistants

Qualifications: There are no provincial qualification requirements.

There is no provincial policy on teacher assistants. They are hired at the discretion of the operator.

Assistants help children with activities, prepare materials for lessons, provide one-to-one care to children with special needs, etc. All work is done under the supervision of an Alberta certificated teacher.

CURRICULUM

There is a mandatory provincial *Kindergarten Program Statement*. It has defined child outcomes in specific areas (language arts, physical skills and well-being, etc.). A revised *Kindergarten Program Statement* was released in September 2008.

MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

The principal or an administrator monitors ECS programs run by school boards. There is also a review of documentation (including authority and school information, hours of instruction, teacher information etc.), budget reports and audited financial statements for Alberta Education and an Annual Education Report.

Alberta Education Field Services Managers visit all new ECS programs run by private ECS operators and they also visit a yearly sample and any programs that may have issues. Document reviews are also conducted.

SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR KINDERGARTEN

Funding for all ECS programs, including kindergarten, is allocated according to a different funding schedule than the one used for grades 1-12. Funding is provided to approved ECS operators and school boards that offer ECS programs on a per child basis to deliver the program. ECS funding receives an annual increase of about 4%.

Private schools can provide ECS programs for which they receive the same grants as public schools and private ECS operators. At Grade 1, though, the private school grant is about 60% that of public school as private schools are able to charge tuition for Grade 1.

All ECS programs (private schools included) must provide 475 hours of basic program at no charge to parents. Parents can pay approximately \$50/year to offset non-instructional costs such as supplies, snacks and field trips, and additional program hours. If the program is provided at a child care centre, parents may be eligible for child care subsidy for the balance of the day. Full subsidy is given to eligible families with kindergarten children if they are in the child care component for more than 100 hours/month. The schedule of the “normal day” depends on the operator.

PUBLIC SPENDING ON KINDERGARTEN

Per capita spending (basic instruction grant per child in kindergarten, one year before Grade 1)

2007/08 \$2,725

Total spending on kindergarten

Information not available.

KINDERGARTEN DEVELOPMENTS

2006 Alberta Education released *Standards for the Provision of Early Childhood Special Education*. It outlines the standards for educational programming and services for children with special education needs (6 years and younger as of September 1). It applies to ECS special education in public and separate school boards, francophone regional authorities, private ECS operators and funded accredited private schools approved by Alberta Education to provide an ECS program, and charter schools that apply for ECS special education funding.

2007/08 The Minister of Education announced the Early Learning Priority as one of his priorities. Work is currently underway to define the project charter and begin work. One of the large pieces of work is the Early Child Development Mapping Project.

2008 A revised *Alberta Education Kindergarten Program Statement* was released.

REGULATED CHILD CARE

LEGISLATION

Alberta. Legislative Assembly. *Child Care Licensing Act* (Bill 4) (awaiting proclamation).

Alberta. Legislative Assembly. *Social Care Facilities Licensing Act*.

Alberta. Legislative Assembly. *Alberta Child Care Regulation 180/2000* (and amendments up to and including Alberta Regulation 146/2004).

PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILD CARE

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CHILD CARE SERVICES

UNREGULATED CHILD CARE

Unregulated family child care

Maximum number of children permitted: Six including the caregiver's own children under 12 years.

A maximum of three children may be under the age of two years.

REGULATED CHILD CARE

Day care centres

Seven or more children under seven years of age who are not yet in Grade 1, in a group setting for more than three but less than 24 consecutive hours/day.

Nursery schools

Part-day programs (maximum four hours/day) for pre-school and kindergarten children 19 months and older.

Out-of-school care programs

Programs for children age 6-12 years outside school hours. Out-of-school care is licensed by the province under the *Social Care Facilities Licensing Act*. Child and Family Services Authorities (CFSAs) monitor out-of-school care facilities under the revised *Child Care Regulation* (2004). Municipal approvals are also required in the areas of building safety, fire and zoning, and health.

Approved family day homes

Care in a provider's home for up to six children under 11 years of age, with a maximum of three children under three years old with no more than two children under two years old (including the provider's own children under 11 years). Providers are under contract with a for-profit or not-for-profit family day home agency. Agencies are not licensed but are contracted by the provincial government to administer and monitor approved family day care homes.

Licensed drop-in centres

Programs for children under seven years of age are permitted to operate with lower staff/child ratios than day care centres. No child may attend for more than 40 hours/month.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The Inclusive Child Care Program in Alberta provides for inclusion of children with special needs. Funding varies depending on the special needs of the child, the type of service required and the region. Funds are paid to contracted operators on behalf of eligible children. Additional training for staff working with children with special needs is not required in legislation; however, staff typically have an Early Childhood Education (ECE) credential. Children with special needs may receive Early Childhood Services (ECS) Program Unit Funding (PUF), and may receive care and education in a child care centre or a nursery school/preschool. Operators may choose whether or not to provide service.

ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE

Child care centres on-reserve are not licensed. However, under an agreement between Alberta and the federal government, on-reserve child care centres are eligible for federal government funding equivalent to parent subsidies when provincial licensing standards are met and centres are approved.

As of March 31, 2008 there were 35 approved child care centres on-reserve with a capacity of 1,499 spaces.

SPACE STATISTICS (MARCH 2008)

| Number of regulated child care spaces* | | | |
|--|----------|-----------|---------------|
| <i>Centre-based</i> | | | |
| Age Group | Full-day | Part-day* | Total |
| Infants (under 12 months) | 2,028 | - | 2,028 |
| Toddlers (13-18 months) | 1,762 | - | 1,762 |
| Preschool (19-54 months) | 21,939 | - | 21,939 |
| Nursery school | - | 16,586 | 16,586 |
| Kindergarten | - | 3,635 | 3,635 |
| Out of school | - | 15,847 | 15,847 |
| Drop in care | - | 517 | 517 |
| Total centre-based spaces | 25,729 | 36,585 | 62,314 |
| <i>Enrolled approved family day home spaces</i> | | | 11,667 |
| Total number of regulated/approved spaces | | | 73,981 |

Children with special needs receiving support in regulated/approved child care

Information not available.

Children receiving fee subsidies* 10,616

*Alberta Children and Youth Services does not provide subsidies for school-age care except for ECS-age children (5-6 years old and not yet in Grade 1) who attend an out-of-school care program. Many municipalities receive Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) funding from the province that they direct towards the prevention needs of the municipality. They may choose to use a portion of these funds for school-age child care. Of the 227 municipalities, 45 redirect FCSS funding for out-of-school care and, of these, six provide direct subsidies. In other locations, out-of-school care programs are offered through the municipalities, but a grant is provided.

| Number of centres and homes | |
|--|--------|
| <i>Number of centres</i> | 1,739 |
| Full-day day care centres | 512 |
| Nursery schools | 698 |
| Out of school care programs | 529 |
| <i>Number of drop in centres</i> | 18 |
| <i>Number of family child care agencies</i> | 84 |
| Sponsorship of regulated centre spaces | |
| Nonprofit | 30,354 |
| For-profit | 31,960 |
| Sponsorship of family day home agencies | |
| Nonprofit | 43 |
| For-profit | 41 |

STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

REGULATED CENTRES

Maximum centre size

No cap on centre size

Maximum staff: child ratios and group sizes

Daycare centres

| Age | Ratio | Max. group size |
|---|-------|-----------------|
| Under 13 months | 1:3 | 6 |
| 13 months or over, but under 19 months | 1:4 | 8 |
| 19 months or over, but under 3 years | 1:6 | 12 |
| 3 years or over, but under 4.5 years | 1:8 | 16 |
| 4.5 years or over | 1:10 | 20 |

Drop-in centres

| Age | Ratio | Max. group size |
|---|-------|-----------------|
| Under 19 months | 1:5 | 10 |
| 19 months or over, but under 3 years | 1:8 | 16 |
| 3 years or over, but under 5 years | 1:12 | 24 |
| 5 years or over | 1:15 | 30 |

Out-of-school care centres

| Age | Ratio | Max. group size |
|---|-------|-----------------|
| For children attending an early childhood services program | 1:10 | 20 |
| For children attending grades 1 to 6 | 1:15 | 30 |

Nursery schools

| Age | Ratio | Max. group size |
|---|-------|-----------------|
| Under 19 months | 1:6 | None |
| 19 months or over, but under 3 years | 1:10 | None |
| 3 years or over, but under 5 years | 1:12 | None |
| 5 years or over | 1:15 | None |

Staff qualification requirements

Alberta has three qualification levels:*

Level Three requires completion of a two-year ECE diploma from an Alberta public college or an equivalent level of training, or a four-year Bachelor of Education degree with a major in ECE.

Level Two requires completion of a one-year ECE certificate from an Alberta public college or an equivalent level of training, or a four-year Bachelor of Elementary Education from a recognized post-secondary institution.

Level One requires completion of the government's orientation course or equivalent course work equivalent of at least 45 hours related to ECE.

To be eligible to work in a child care centre in Alberta, all staff must apply for certification to the Day Care Staff Qualification Office. The Office is also responsible for the delivery of the Level One orientation course, which is contracted out to public colleges, private vocational schools, individual instructors, and is taught in some high schools for credit. Funding is provided to the institutions to deliver the course at no cost to the participant.

The regulation requires that each licence holder for a day care centre must ensure that there is a full-time program director with a Level Three certificate on the staff of the centre at all times. Between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., programs must ensure that at least one in every four staff holds a least a Level Two certificate and all others hold a Level One certificate.

Out-of-province ECE credentials must meet the same requirements for Level One, Two and Three Certification.

Equivalencies for Level Two or Three must include the completion of at least one college-level English course. For Level Two, a total of at least 770 hours of course work and practicum hours; for Level Three, a total of at least 1,545 hours of course work and practicum hours is required.

* See *RECENT DEVELOPMENTS for changes to qualifications effective November 2008.*

The day care centre can request exemptions for specific staff members when the staff member is engaged in early childhood coursework necessary to obtain the qualification certificate.

In out-of-school care programs there is to be a full time program director on staff at all times; there are no standards for staff qualifications in out-of-school centres.

Numbers of centre-based staff and family day home providers by certification levels (2007/08 average)*

Unassigned: 959 (primarily family day home providers, who do not require certification)

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Level One | 2,962 |
| Level Two | 727 |
| Level Three | 1,393 |
| Total | 6,041 |

**This number does not include staff in school-age programs, where there are no provincial training requirements.*

Parent involvement

Not specified in legislation.

Licensing, monitoring and enforcement

Alberta regional child care specialists conduct a minimum of quarterly licensing inspections. Child care specialists currently operate under a Human Service Worker classification and come from a variety of backgrounds, including family studies and early childhood education.

If a centre is not in compliance with the regulations, a series of enforcement actions may occur depending upon the severity of the non-compliance, including a formal written order directing the centre to comply within a specific time frame to the specified regulation, cancellation of the licence, or refusal to renew the licence. There is a formal appeal board set up by the minister to hear appeals if a licence is cancelled or refused. The legislation allows the decision of the appeal panel to be appealed through the Court of Queen's Bench. Its decision is binding.

APPROVED FAMILY DAY HOMES

Regulation

There are no regulations for family day homes. Family day homes are approved under contract with family day care home agencies that approve and monitor providers according to provincial standards. Agencies contract with individual care providers.

Maximum capacity

Up to six children under 11 years (including the provider's own children under 11 years) with a maximum of three children under three years old and no more than two children under two years old.

Provider qualification requirements

The Family Day Home Manual requires that direct care providers receive training in such areas as child development, child guidance and employing appropriate culturally sensitive strategies. Family day home agencies are required to develop appropriate training based on the needs of their providers and families.

Family day home providers must be 18 years of age, have a criminal records check, including a vulnerable sector search, and have completed a first aid course.

Licensing, monitoring and enforcement

Agency staff (home visitors) visit family day homes monthly to ensure providers are operating according to provincial standards. Provincial staff monitor agencies and homes on a regular basis. The minimum ministry-wide requirement is four times per year.

FUNDING

CHILD CARE FEE SUBSIDY PROGRAM

Fee subsidies are paid directly to service providers on behalf of eligible parents. Subsidized children may be enrolled in not-for-profit or for-profit regulated child care centres and approved family day care homes. Provincial subsidies are not available in drop-in centres or for school-age care. However, some municipalities provide subsidies for school-age care.

There is a two-step eligibility process. Parents must first demonstrate need for subsidized child care such as being employed or enrolled in a training program, or a parent's or child's special need. An income test is then applied.

There is no minimum user fee for subsidized parents but centres and family day home agencies may surcharge above the subsidy rates. There is no cap on the number of subsidies in any licensed program but parents must secure a space before applying for subsidy. Application for subsidy may be made either by mail, in person, or online.

Eligibility for fee subsidy (gross income, 2007/08)

| | Turning point | Break-even point |
|---|---------------|------------------|
| <i>Child care centres</i> | | |
| 1 parent, 1 infant | \$35,100 | \$56,052 |
| 2 parents, 1 infant, 1 preschool child | 39,600 | 79,560 |
| <i>Family child care</i> | | |
| 1 parent, 1 infant | | \$52,272 |
| 2 parents, 1 infant, 1 preschool child | | 71,964 |

The turning point is the income level up to which full subsidy is available. Partial subsidy is available up to the break-even point, after which income subsidy ceases.

Maximum subsidy/child/month* (2007/08)

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| Infants in child care centres | \$607 |
| Other ages in child care centres | 528 |
| Infants in family day care | 502 |
| Other ages in family child care | 422 |

* Parents whose children are in care outside the regular business hours of Monday to Friday 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. may qualify for an additional subsidy up to a maximum of \$100/month.

PUBLIC FUNDING FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE (2007/08)

One-time funding

None

Child and Family Service Authorities may choose to use funds from related children's programs for child care if funds permit. This has resulted in some one-time grants for minor capital and other one-time expenses.

Recurring funding

Note: See RECENT DEVELOPMENTS for revisions to Accreditation funding as of April 1, 2008.

Pre-Accreditation Funding Program

The intent of this funding is to help centres meet the requirements for accreditation, and to assist with increasing staff retention and reducing staff turnover rates. Participation is voluntary.

Pre-accreditation funding becomes ongoing accreditation funding if the centre becomes accredited. The pre-accreditation funding received by centres working towards accreditation will end at a time not yet determined.

For a full description of the Child Care Accreditation program, see the HISTORY section.

Day care centres Beginning in 2003/04 there are two types of funding for licensed day care centres:

- Quality Recognition/Improvement Funding Grants: Available to day care centres "to maintain/enhance quality programming". Up to \$1,200 per year based on compliance with licensing standards and licensed capacity.
- Staff Support Funding Grants: Available to all paid, certified staff working in regulated day care centres that have applied, been approved, and are in good licensing standing. Approved family day home providers and family day home agency staff are also eligible for Staff Support Funding. Funding is paid to the day care centre on behalf of staff members at the following rates:

Day Care Staff

| Day Care Staff | Pre-accredited centres | Accredited centres |
|----------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Level One | \$0.90/hr | \$1.34/hr |
| Level Two | 1.69/hr | 2.53/hr |
| Level Three | 2.76/hr | 4.14/hr |

Family Day Home Consultants

| Family Day Home Consultants | Pre-accredited agencies | Accredited agencies |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Level One | \$1.69/hr | \$12.53/hr |
| Level Two | 1.69/hr | 2.53/hr |
| Level Three | 2.76/hr | 4.14/hr |

Note: See RECENT DEVELOPMENTS section for increases effective April 1, 2008.

Family Day Home Providers

Provider Support Funding Grants This funding is for child care providers who offer direct child care for preschool children (not including their own children) under a contracted family day home agency. Funding is paid to a maximum of 181 hours per month.

| Family Day Providers | Pre-accredited centres | Accredited centres |
|---|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Level One or unassigned (not certified) | \$163/month | \$243/month |
| Level Two | \$163/month + \$.79/hr | \$243/month + \$1.19/hr |
| Level Three | 163.month + 1.86/hr | 243/month + 2.80/hr |

Note: See RECENT DEVELOPMENTS section for changes effective April 1, 2008.

Family day home agency administration fee: A monthly administrative fee is paid to approved family day home agencies which contract with the Ministry to recruit, train and supervise individual family child care providers, collect fees, and pay providers. Both not-for-profit and for-profit programs are eligible for this funding program.

0-35 months

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| Each of first 10 children enrolled | \$95/month |
| Each of next 10 children enrolled | 63/month |

3-6 years

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------|
| Each of first 10 children enrolled | 65/month |
| Each of next 10 children enrolled | 50/month |

Funding for special needs

Funding is provided to assist in the inclusion of children with special needs and may be used for specialized resource staff or for consultation and training services. Funding varies depending on the special needs of the child, the type of service required and the region; funds are paid to contracted operators on behalf of eligible children.

The program is administered differently in different regions of Alberta. Both for-profit and not-for-profit programs are eligible to apply for special needs funding.

Respite care

Respite funding provides funding for short-term child care placements in regulated child care to support identified families in need of support in their child rearing role. It also assists families of children with disabilities in need of relief care. Child and Family Services Authority (CFSA) staff fund and work with child care providers to make a number of child care spaces available in their program on a daily basis. This program enables families to participate in counselling or treatment programs that they need, and benefits the children of these families through placement in a child care program.

Nutrition program

The Child Care Nutrition program assists CFSA's to fund regulated child care programs to enhance the nutritional quality of meals and snacks served to children in child care settings and to provide information about preschool nutritional needs to parents of children in child care.

Stay-at-Home Subsidy Program

This program offers up to \$1,200 per year for families whose child is attending a licensed nursery school or approved early childhood development program. It uses the same eligibility levels as the subsidy program.

Staff Attraction Incentive Allowance (See RECENT DEVELOPMENTS section for further details)

- Up to \$5,000 (\$2,500/yr over two years) to help recruit trained staff who have at least six months of child care experience at a licensed/approved child care program and have not worked in the child care field for at least six months;
- Up to \$5,000 to staff interested in working in licensed school-age child care programs. To be eligible, school-age child care staff must have started on or after April 1, 2008.

Professional Development funding

Up to \$1,000 per certified child care centre staff or home visitor in contracted family child care agencies per fiscal year, based on hours worked. Funds may be used for:

- Early childhood education course work;
- First aid training;
- ECE-related conferences, workshops and professional association fees;
- Resources and books, up to \$250.

Child Care Bursary Program

For those training for a leadership position (executive director, director, assistant director, program director, program supervisor, owner/operator), who have direct contact with children and families, up to \$10,000 per person for:

- tuition for courses at accredited post-secondary institutions;
- costs for required books and course material; and,
- a maximum of \$500 per year towards travel costs.

Applicants must work for a licensed child care program (day care centre, nursery school, out-of-school care), an approved family day home or day home agency in Alberta.

PROVINCIAL ALLOCATIONS FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE (2007/08)

| | |
|---|----------------------|
| Fee subsidies (Children under six years) | \$61,327,171 |
| One-time funding (Making Space for Children) | 2,000,000 |
| Recurring funding | |
| Family Day Home Agency Contracts | \$5,234,097 |
| Inclusive Child Care | 3,127,230 |
| Stay At Home | 829,964 |
| Accreditation | 33,214,511 |
| Total regulated child care | \$105,732,973 |

Note: In the Annual Report 2007/08 the authorized budget for child care was identified as \$134,036,000.

SALARIES

Provincial information not available.

Median full-time, full-year employment income for centre-based Early Childhood Educators and Assistants (2005)

| | |
|------------------------------|----------|
| All | \$18,774 |
| Those with an ECE credential | 22,009 |

Source: Custom tabulations, 2006 census data on National Occupational Classification for Statistics E-217, Early Childhood Educators and Assistants.

FEES

Average fee for approved or regulated child care was \$649 (day care centre) and \$511 (family day home) in March 2008.

Source: Reporting from operators - actual fees paid.

ADMINISTRATION

Between April 1999 and May 2003, child care services were administered through 18 Child and Family Services Authorities (CFSAs) which were responsible for service delivery (see HISTORY 1999). In May 2003, regions were amalgamated so that the number was reduced to 10. The province provides funding to each Authority which allocates funds for local services and is accountable to the Minister of Children’s Services for the use of public funds.

Responsibility for setting standards, subsidy policy, strategic policy, services for children with special needs, and staff qualifications remains with the province. A provincial subsidy system remains although the regional authorities may enhance it if they wish. Department staff of the Ministry of Children’s Services provide resources, support and programming advice to the CFSAs.

The work of the CFSAs is overseen by community-based boards appointed by the Minister. CFSAs oversee planning and development, and administration of children’s services, including child care.

Staff in CFSAs, including child care specialists (formerly licensing officers) and subsidy workers, are hired by the authorities but remain provincial government employees.

MUNICIPAL OR OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROLE

Funding for some preschool programs is currently available to municipalities and Métis settlements through the Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) Program.

Each municipality or Métis settlement receiving FCSS funding determines how the dollars should be allocated to best meet the needs of their community.

Out-of-school care is the responsibility of municipal authorities; 45 FCSS-funded municipalities allocate a portion of their FCSS funds to provide out-of-school care programs. Of these, six municipalities provide subsidies and the remainder provide grants.

RECENT HISTORY OF CHILD CARE AND OTHER ECEC SERVICES

FOR HISTORY BEFORE 2000, SEE THE RELEVANT PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL SECTION OF *ECEC IN CANADA 2006*, available online at: <http://www.childcarecanada.org/ECEC2006/> or in print.

2001 ECS Policy and Regulation were revised (regulation was enacted in 2000). The Day Care Regulation Review was initiated as a result of an Alberta Government initiative to “streamline, simplify requirements and reduce duplication”. Completion of the review followed a two-phase consultative process with day care operators and stakeholder groups. The regulation includes elimination of regulations already covered by other ministries.

January The Children’s Services Ministry established the Day Care Review Working Committee consisting of child care stakeholders to analyze and propose solutions to the challenges facing child care delivery in Alberta.

2001/02 The Early Childhood Development Initiative allocation for Alberta was \$29.7 million. The funds were distributed to the 18 Child and Family Service Authorities (CFSA) who develop their own plans with community groups. There are no specific province-wide strategies for the fund.

2002 The Child Care Accreditation Program was introduced. Accreditation is a voluntary process by which early childhood programs demonstrate that they meet defined child care standards. Programs seeking accreditation complete a self-study process, receive an on-site visit and are reviewed by an independent body that grants or defers accreditation. Accreditation requirements exceed current standards set out in the regulations. Alberta Children’s Services has contracted with the Alberta Child Care Network Association, in partnership with the Canadian Child Care Federation, to develop the accreditation standards.

Respite options for families in need were introduced to support identified at-risk families and families of children with disabilities in need of relief care. CFSA staff work with child care providers to make regulated child care spaces available in their program on a daily basis for this purpose.

A child care nutrition program was introduced to fund regulated child care programs to enhance the nutritional quality of meals and snacks served and to provide information about preschool nutrition to parents of children in child care.

2003 Kin Child Care Funding was introduced to provide funds to eligible parents to pay non-resident relatives of the child to care for their children.

2003/04

The Pre-Accreditation Funding program was introduced to assist programs to work towards accreditation standing. Participation is voluntary. In 2003/04:

- More than 95% of eligible day care centres were receiving Pre-Accreditation Funding;
- 99% of approved family day home agencies were receiving Provider Support Funding;
- An average of 4,000 day care staff received Staff Support Funding;
- Approximately 1,700 family day home providers received Provider Support Funding.

Effective August 1, 2004, the *Day Care Regulation* was amended to include standards for out-of-school care facilities. The renamed *Child Care Regulation* outlines the minimum requirements that Out-of-school care (OSC) operators must meet. Out-of-school care programs may now be licensed to provide care for children who are ages 4.5 years and older and attending Early Childhood Services (ECS) Programs as defined in the *School Act*. Families of ECS children attending out-of-school care programs became eligible for provincial child care subsidy.

2005/06 Alberta received \$70.4 million through the Early Learning and Child Care Agreement in 2005/06 and \$66 million in 2006/07. Alberta Children’s Services conducted a consultation to ask what was important to families regarding child care. As a result Alberta’s Five Point Child Care Plan was implemented and:

- Subsidy rates were increased and subsidy eligibility extended up to a household income of \$76,000 for parents attending care centres, approved family day homes, and those using the expanded Kin Child Care Funding Program;
- The Stay-at-Home Subsidy Program was introduced. This program offers up to \$1,200 per year for families attending a licensed nursery school or approved early childhood development program and uses the same thresholds as the other subsidy programs;

- The number of inclusive child care spaces was expanded and the program extended to all ten CFSA regions.
- Wage Enhancement (or Staff Support) funding was increased, as well as funding to help programs complete the Alberta Child Care Accreditation Program. Professional Development funding was increased to assist child care professionals to pursue further training;
- The Parent Information Line, a toll-free phone line providing information on early childhood and child care programs and services, was introduced. The Ministry is also improving training for early childhood development professionals on working with children with disabilities, new immigrant children and Aboriginal children. Funding was made available to Women's Shelters to enhance child care services.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CHILD CARE AND OTHER ECEC SERVICES

2007/08 Under the 2007/08 Comprehensive Child Care Strategy the Ministry invested about \$12.5 million more in child care and:

- Introduced the Space Creation Innovation fund providing \$1,500 (\$2,000 in Ft. McMurray) to child care programs, school boards, municipalities, industry or community groups for each space created;
- Increased Staff Support funding (wage top-up) by 40%;
- Introduced a Staff Attraction Incentive Allowance to a maximum of \$5,000 to recruit back experienced staff;
- Continued to support the Child Care Leadership Bursary providing funding for staff to further their post-secondary training;
- Introduced a Ft. McMurray Allowance for full-time day care staff at \$1,040/month and family day home providers at \$208/month, and increased professional development grant funding for staff in Ft. McMurray;
- Increased child care subsidy rates by 5.6%;
- Introduced a subsidy transaction fee for programs serving subsidized families.

2008/09 As of April 1, 2008 the Provider Support Funding Grants were increased and the flat fee was replaced by an hourly rate. The new rates are as follows:

| Family Day Providers | Pre-accredited Agencies | Accredited Agencies |
|---|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Level One or unassigned (not certified) | \$1.44/hr | \$2.14/hr |
| Level Two | 2.70/hr | 4.05/hr |
| Level Three | 4.42/hr | 6.62/hr |

The creation of an additional 14,000 spaces by 2011 was announced in May 2008 as part of the Creating Child Care Choices Plan (CCCCP). Under CCCC the Ministry is:

- Expanding the Space Creation Innovation Fund;
- Providing an Infant Care Incentive to licensed or approved child care programs of \$150 per infant space, per month;
- Increasing subsidy rates by 3.5% for eligible low and middle-income families with preschool children;
- Purchasing modular buildings to increase the number of child care spaces adjacent to school sites;
- Increasing wage top-ups by another 60% for day care and family day home staff working in programs participating in accreditation. Child care workers will now make between \$1.44 to \$6.62/hour on top of their employer-paid wages;
- Expanding the Staff Attraction Incentive Allowance to staff interested in working in licensed school-age care. (Pays up to \$5,000 over two years to staff who have six months experience and have been out of the child care field for at least six months and agree to work in child care for a minimum of two years);
- Adding a new allowance to recruit staff new to child care. (\$2,500 to new staff following one year of full-time work at a licensed or approved child care program);
- Increasing quality funding grants available to pre-accredited programs (\$4,000/yr) and accredited programs (\$7,500/yr) for the purchase of quality toys and equipment;
- Introducing a provincial subsidy for eligible low- and middle-income families with children Grades 1-6, of a flat rate of \$300/month effective September 1, 2009;
- Providing a Retention Stability Grant (wage top-up of \$144/month) to staff working with children Grades 1-6;
- Implemented a marketing campaign to promote child care as a career of choice.

A new Child Care Licensing Act and Child Care Licensing Regulation were introduced November 1, 2008. They include new certification requirements for all child care staff, including those working in out of school programs. See details at: http://www.child.alberta.ca/home/documents/childcare/Child_Care_Professional_Brochure.pdf

■ KEY PROVINCIAL ECEC ORGANIZATIONS

Alberta Child Care Network Association
Contact: Tim Baier, Executive Director
Telephone: (780) 421-7544 / 1-877-421-9937
Email: tbaier.accna@telus.net
Website: www.accna.ca

Alberta Family Child Care Association
4615 85 St. Nw.
Calgary, AB T3B 2R8
Telephone: (403) 288-3066

Public Interest Alberta
Contact: Bill Moore-Kilgannon
Suite 35, 9912-106St.
Edmonton, AB
Telephone: (780) 420-0471
Facsimile: (780) 420-0435
E-mail: pialta@telus.net
Website: www.pialberta.org

TEACHERS' ORGANIZATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS

Alberta Teachers' Association
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