



PROVINCIAL CONTEXT

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

Age	Number of children
0	127,700
1	132,300
2	142,800
3	136,500
4	135,600
5	137,500
6	134,600
7	143,600
8	154,500
9	155,200
10	151,000
11	168,100
12	164,200
Total	1,883,700

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

Age	Number of children
0-2	402,800
3-5	409,600
6-12	1,071,200
Total	1,883,700

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

Age	North American Indian	Métis	Inuit	Multiple	Other	Total
0-4	14,705	4,345	260	165	335	19,815
5-9	15,355	4,960	175	155	430	21,075
10-14	16,410	6,120	260	190	455	23,435
Total	46,470	15,425	695	510	1,220	64,325

Children 0-14 yrs with disabilities (2006)

Age	Number of children with disabilities	Rate of children with disabilities (%)
0-4	11,760	1.8
5-9	29,130	4.1
10-14	41,920	5.2
Total	82,820	3.8

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

Age	Number of children
0	75,700
1	78,200
2	84,800
3	87,900
4	85,000
5	92,500
6	86,700
7	93,500
8	104,900
9	102,600
10	102,900
11	117,100
12	116,900
Total	1,228,700

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

Age	Number of children
0-2	238,700
3-5	265,400
6-12	724,600
Total	1,228,700

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	573,825	92,495	81,115	11,385
5-9	590,600	124,880	107,260	17,620
10-14	645,325	164,435	137,820	26,615
Total	1,809,750	381,810	326,190	55,620

Number of children by mother tongue (2006)

Age	English	French	Non-official language
0-4	516,715	16,475	107,425
5-9	570,010	19,355	100,990
10-14	651,550	22,990	112,260
Total	1,738,275	58,820	320,675

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

Age	Number	Percent (%)
0-2	58,000	15.9
3-5	60,000	14.0
6-12	212,000	18.7
Total	330,000	17.1

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

Age of youngest child	Number of mothers	Participation rate (%)
0-2	240,800	68.3
3-5	193,700	78.6
6-15	608,600	83.6

FAMILY-RELATED LEAVE

Maternity leave

Seventeen weeks to the natural mother only.

Parental leave

Thirty-five weeks for birth mothers who took maternity leave; 37 weeks for other parent. Leaves may be taken by both parents consecutively.

Adoption leave

Thirty-seven weeks.

Births and EI maternity and parental claims (2007)

Number of births	136,217
Birth rate per 1,000 population	10.7
Number of initial maternity claims allowed	85,080
Average length of maternity claim	14.6 weeks
Number of parental claims	95,070
Average length of parental claim	29.2 weeks
Number of adoptive parent claims	1,130
Average length of adoptive claim	28.2 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

Ontario. Legislative Assembly. *Education Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2

Section 16 of the *Education Act* is specific to private schools.

PROVINCIAL CONTACT FOR KINDERGARTEN

Jennifer Evans
Manager, Policy Information and Research Unit
Policy and Programs Branch
Ontario Ministry of Education
15th Floor, 900 Bay St Toronto, ON, M7A 1L2
Telephone: (416) 325-4417
Email: jennifer.evans1@ontario.ca
Website: www.edu.gov.on.ca

EDUCATION FACTS

Government funding for public education in Ontario (2007/08): \$18.35 billion

Ontario provides funding for public and Catholic school boards to deliver education in both official languages. Ontario's schools are administered by 72 district school boards and 31 school authorities. "School authorities" consist of geographically isolated boards and hospital school boards. School boards include: 31 English Public, 29 English Catholic, 4 French Public and 8 French Catholic.

There are 4,017 elementary schools in Ontario (2007/08).

KINDERGARTEN SERVICES

KINDERGARTEN

In Ontario, it is not compulsory for children to be enrolled in kindergarten programs; however, most four and five year olds attend.

All school boards provide kindergarten (K) for five year olds and junior kindergarten (JK) for four year olds. The organization and delivery of these programs is the responsibility of the local school board. Kindergarten programs are organized in multiple ways including full-day, every day programs; full-day, alternate day programs; and part-day, every day programs. The most common organization is part-day, every day programs in urban communities and full-day, alternate day programs in rural communities.

All 12 French-language school boards provide full-day, every day kindergarten programs. In addition, some school boards offer combined 4 and 5 year old classes or French-immersion classes for 5 year olds.

The *Education Act* does not define instructional hours for JK or K. School boards decide on the daily schedule.

Ontario does not fund private schools. Private elementary schools in Ontario may operate programs for four or five year olds and for younger children as well. These may or may not be licensed under the *Day Nurseries Act*. There are no Ministry of Education requirements for curriculum or teacher qualifications in private schools. Although the ministry does not inspect these schools for health equipment nor practices related to safety and staffing, private operators are required to conform to municipal and public health bylaws, which the Ministry reviews.

CLASS SIZE

In the 2004/05 school year, the government implemented a four-year plan to improve student achievement by lowering primary class sizes. Boards were to meet these goals:

- (a) each primary class will have no more than 23 students, and
- (b) 90% of primary classes will have 20 or fewer students.

By 2005/06, 48% of the primary classes were at the target of 20 or fewer students, in 2006/07 65%, and in 2007/08 88.4%.

AGE ELIGIBILITY

Junior kindergarten: Four years old by December 31.

Senior kindergarten: Five years old by December 31.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The *Education Act* requires that all publicly funded school boards provide special education programs and services to students identified as exceptional. This requirement extends to all enrolled pupils. Inclusion is not specified.

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

ENROLMENT (2007/08)

Number of children enrolled in junior kindergarten (two years before Grade 1): 116,356

Full time	9,878
-----------	-------

Part-time	106,478
-----------	---------

Number of children enrolled in senior kindergarten (the year before Grade 1): 122,340

Full time	13,745
-----------	--------

Part-time	108,595
-----------	---------

KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS

Qualification requirements: A valid Ontario Teacher's Certificate (undergraduate degree plus one year of teacher training and successful writing of the Ontario Teacher Qualifying Test). Early childhood qualifications are not required for kindergarten teachers.

Responsibility for certification: Ontario College of Teachers.

Representation: Kindergarten teachers are represented by one of three unions: The Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO), the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association (OECTA) and L'association des enseignants et des enseignantes francophones de l'Ontario (AEFO).

TEACHING ASSISTANTS

The provincial funding formula allocates funding for teaching assistants based on each board's elementary enrolment. The school boards' role is to determine staffing levels. Based on local priorities and staffing and program considerations, each school board determines the number of JK/SK and special education teaching assistants it requires and where those teaching assistants should be located.

Qualifications and wages: Information not available.

Role: Determined by school boards.

KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

All kindergarten programs are based on the expectations outlined in *The Kindergarten Program 2006* (revised).

The *Kindergarten Program* is designed to help children build on their prior knowledge and experiences, form concepts, acquire foundational skills, and form positive attitudes to learning as they begin to develop their goals for lifelong learning. Local boards decide how the expectations can best be achieved within the total kindergarten program that they offer.

The learning expectations outlined in the document represent the first steps in a continuum of programming from kindergarten to Grade 8. They describe learning achievements that are appropriate for young children and that provide the foundation for successful future learning experiences. Learning expectations are given for six areas of learning: personal and social development, language, mathematics, science and technology, health and physical activity, and the arts.

FUNDING FOR KINDERGARTEN

The provincial government determines each school board's annual funding allocation based on a series of grant formulae that collectively make up the Grants for Student Needs (GSN). These grants respond to factors such as enrolment, student need, capital requirements, school board size, and school board location. Funding is provided to boards through a combination of local property taxes and provincial grants.

Under the GSN's formula, kindergarten classes (including full-day classes in French school boards) are currently funded on a half-time basis, according to kindergarten enrolment, but boards have the flexibility to use their resources to support a full-day program.

There is no provincial government funding for independent (private) schools.

SPENDING ON KINDERGARTEN (2007/08)

Estimate per pupil (FTE) amount

JK	\$4,863 (part-day rate)
SK	\$4,863 (part-day rate)

Total provincial spending for kindergarten*

JK	566 million
SK	596 million

*Total provincial spending includes both operating and capital funding.

SPECIAL FEATURES

It is up to individual school boards to determine additional policies or resources regarding ESL or inner-city kindergarten students.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

2004 The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services announced a commitment to pursue the government's Best Start vision (see CHILD CARE for details on Best Start). One feature of Best Start is that it is guided by a *Schools first* policy, meaning that schools are the location of first choice for new or expanded child care services. This creates an environment where kindergarten teachers and early childhood educators have the opportunity to collaborate on the early learning and care provided to young children.

2004/05 During the school year, the government implemented a four-year plan to improve student achievement by lowering primary class sizes (see CLASS SIZE).

2007 In the 2007 provincial election, the Liberal government made a commitment to develop a province-wide program of full-day learning for all four and five year olds. To determine how best to carry out this commitment, the Ontario government appointed an Early Learning Advisor to report to the Premier on a strategy for implementation. The report will be presented to the Premier and then made public in the spring of 2009 (see CHILD CARE).

2009 June The government released the report of the Early Learning advisor (see RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CHILD CARE).

REGULATED CHILD CARE

LEGISLATION

Ontario. Legislative Assembly. *The Day Nurseries Act. Revised Statutes of Ontario*, 1990 (reprinted 1998). Amended by The Services Improvement Act effective January 1, 1998, c. D-2 Amended by: 1997, c. 30, Sched. C; 1999, c. 12, Sched. E, s. 2; 1999, c. 12, Sched. G, s. 21; O. Reg. 500/00; 2001, c. 13, s. 14.

Ontario. Legislative Assembly. *Ontario Regulation 262*, 1990. (Amended 1998, 1999, 2006).

PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILD CARE

Julie Mathien

Director

Early Learning and Child Development Branch

Strategic Policy and Planning Division

Ministry of Children and Youth Services

56 Wellesley Street West

15th Floor

Toronto, ON, M5S 3A9

Telephone: (416) 325-5874

Facsimile: (416) 326-0478

Email: Julie.Mathien@Ontario.ca

Website: www.children.gov.on.ca/CS/en/programs/BestStart/default.htm

CHILD CARE SERVICES

UNREGULATED CHILD CARE

Unregulated family child care

Maximum number of children permitted: No more than five children under the age of ten years in care at any one time; this does not include the caregiver's own children.

Family resource centres

Resource centres provide support services to parents and regulated and unregulated care providers. The range of services can include: drop-in programs, resource lending libraries, playgroups, training opportunities and educational workshops.

Note: In addition, some unregulated recreation programs provide subsidized child care for school-aged children.

REGULATED CHILD CARE

Day nurseries (child care centres, nursery schools, before and after-school programs)

Group care for less than 24 hours/day for five or more unrelated children under 12 years, and under 18 years for children with special needs.

Supervised private-home day care (family child care)

Private-home day care agencies provide home child care at more than one location. Care in each location is provided to five children or fewer under 10 years of age in a private residence other than the home of the parent/guardian of the child. With the approval of the agency, school-age children up to and including the age of 12 may be accommodated along with younger children where appropriate. All children who are being cared for by the provider must be counted and not exceed the limited of five at any one time. Further, there can be no more than two children under two years of age and three children under three years of age in the home at any one time. The provider's own children are included in the count only if they are under six years of age.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Ontario does not have a written policy regarding children with special needs but encourages integration and inclusion of children with special needs into community child care services with their peers. Special needs resourcing provides assistance for staffing, equipment, supplies or services to support the inclusion of children with special needs in child care.

Resource teachers generally work for agencies that provide a variety of services for children with special needs, and may serve children in several child care settings. The level of service per child can vary, depending on the child's needs, the local service model, and available resources. Consequently, the previous ratio of one resource teacher to four children with special needs is no longer applicable in all areas.

A resource teacher must hold a diploma in early childhood education or academic equivalent and have completed a post-secondary school program related to children with special needs. If working with children with multiple disabilities, the resource teacher must also have a current standard certificate in first aid. There are no training or experience requirements for staff other than for resource teachers who are working with children with special needs.

ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE

Ontario funds and regulates on-reserve child care.

As of March 2008, there were 67 licensed child care centres on-reserve with a licensed capacity of 2,881. There were also two licensed private-home day care agencies with 37 homes on-reserve.

Ontario cost-shares fee subsidies for licensed on-reserve child care programs on an 80/20 basis with First Nations. The province pays 100% of other child care financing (wage subsidies, special needs resourcing and family resource centres). First Nations manage the fee subsidy system in their communities. Ontario recovers the majority of expenditures on fee subsidies from the federal government under the 1965 *Memorandum of Agreement Respecting Welfare Programs for Indians*.

SPACE STATISTICS (MARCH 2008)

Number of regulated child care spaces

Centre-based

Age Group	Full-day*	Part-day	Total
Infants (0-18 months)	7,877	-	7,877
Toddlers (18-30 months)	25,566	-	25,566
Preschool (2.5-5 years)	100,297	-	100,297
JK (3 years 8months)	16,503	-	16,503
SK (4 years 8 months)	9,361	-	9,361
School age (6-12 years)	-	81,292	81,292
Total centre-based spaces	159,604	81,292	236,988

*Breakdowns of full-day and part-day centre-based child care are not available by age. Capacity in nursery school is not available.

Note: The total number of centre-based spaces is not the sum of the age groups listed. This is a result of child care centres having alternate capacity rooms. Alternate capacity means that a room may be used for different age groups at different times. Therefore, the capacity by age group can exceed the total number of spaces.

Family child care **19,760

** This figure represents the enrolment in family child care. Licensed capacity information is not available because it fluctuates according to the ages of the children being served.

Total number of regulated spaces *256,748

* The estimated licensed capacity includes the capacity of child care centres and enrolment in regulated family child care enrolment.

Children receiving special needs

resourcing in regulated child care *20,777

* This figure is a cumulative total of children serviced throughout the fiscal year.

Note: Figures comparable to other provinces/territories, that is, the number of children served at a given point in time, are not available.

Children receiving fee subsidies

Regular fee subsidies	113,974
Ontario Works subsidies in licensed care	12,123
Total	*126,097

* This figure is the cumulative total subsidized throughout the fiscal year.

Note: Figures comparable to other provinces/territories, that is, the number of children served at a given point in time, are not available.

An additional 7,528 children received Ontario Works subsidies for unregulated care.

Number of centres and homes

Number of child care centres	4,582
Full day	2,902
Part-day nursery schools/preschools	1,857
Stand-alone school-age programs	2,551

Note: Child care centres may be licensed to offer more than one program (e.g., a before-and-after school program for school-age children and a full-day program for preschool-age children). As a result, some centres appear in more than one category above.

Number of family child care providers 7,822

Number of family child care agencies 140

Sponsorship of full-time regulated centre spaces

Nonprofit	*179,071
For-profit	57,917

*This includes municipally-operated centres. Current figures are not available for the number of municipally-operated child care spaces. In 1998, however, 18,143 of the nonprofit spaces were municipal.

Sponsorship of regulated private-home day care agencies

	Agencies	Homes
Nonprofit	122	7,287
For-profit	18	535

Note: This includes municipally-operated family child care agencies and homes. See previous note.

STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

REGULATED CENTRES

Maximum centre size		Not specified
Maximum staff:child ratios and group sizes		
Age	Staff:child ratios	Max. group sizes
Infant (under 18 months)	3:10	10
Toddler (18-30 months)	1:5	15
Preschool (2.5-5 yrs)	1:8	16
44 months - 67 months as of Aug 31 of the year	1:10	20
56 months - 67 months as of Aug 31 of the year	1:12	24
68 months as of August 31 of the year up to and including 12 years	1:15	30

Staff qualification requirements

Centre supervisors must have a two-year diploma in early childhood education from an approved Ontario College of Applied Arts and Technology (CAAT) or the equivalent and at least two years experience working in a day nursery with children who are of the same age and developmental level as the children in the day nursery where the supervisor is employed.

One staff person with each group of children must have a two-year early childhood education diploma from a CAAT or the equivalent.

A Ministry Director has the authority to approve exceptions to the educational requirements for supervisors and other staff in a specific program. A Director is an employee of the Ministry appointed by the Minister as a Director for the purposes of *Day Nurseries Act*.

Individuals with out-of-province credentials must currently submit documentation to the Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario (AECEO). A list of recognized Canadian ECE programs has been developed by the AECEO; the list acts as a guide for assessing ECE credentials from Canadian post-secondary institutions that are not community colleges operating in Ontario. Out-of-province equivalency assessment is to become the responsibility of the College of Early Childhood Educators.

An internationally trained individual or an individual with a credential from a Canadian institution that does not appear on the AECEO list seeking ECE equivalency

status is referred to the AECEO's review process for service in English and to the Association francophone à l'éducation des services à l'enfance de l'Ontario (AFÉSEO) for service in French.

The College of Early Childhood Educators was established in 2007. The college is a professional self-regulatory organization for early childhood educators, focused on quality and standards in the practice of early childhood education.

The College will regulate the practice of early childhood education, establish and maintain qualifications for membership and issue certificates of registration. It will also provide for the ongoing education of members, enforce professional and ethical standards, investigate complaints against members and deal with issues of discipline. In carrying out its objectives, the college's primary duty is to serve and protect the public interest.

Parent involvement

Each centre and family child care agency must have a written statement regarding parent involvement. The type of parental involvement is not specified.

Licensing, monitoring and enforcement

Ministry Program Advisors based in Regional Offices license, monitor and enforce *Day Nurseries Act* and its Regulations.

The annual licence renewal process includes an inspection of the child care facility to determine whether it is in compliance with the regulatory standards. Some licence renewals are conducted more frequently if the licence is provisional or short term. Unannounced drop-in visits are also conducted. Non-compliance with the legislation that does not pose an immediate threat to the children's well-being may result in a provisional licence with a time frame in which the operator is required to correct the non-compliance. Repeated non-compliance of a serious nature or non-compliance that poses a likely danger to the children may result in a refusal to renew or a revocation of the licence. However, the Director must give notice of intent to close the centre to the operator, who then has the right to appeal to the Licence Appeal Tribunal. The legislation provides the authority for immediate closure in the situation of immediate danger to the children's well-being.

REGULATED FAMILY CHILD CARE

In Ontario, family child care has historically been referred to as “private-home day care” in provincial legislation. The terms “home child care” or “family child care” are also used.

Regulation

The Ministry licenses family child care agencies that then enter into agreements with caregivers to provide child care. The agencies support and monitor providers as specified in the regulations.

Maximum capacity

Care for up to five children from 0-12 years. Not more than two of the children may be under two years, and not more than three of the children may be under three years, or five children under six, including the caregiver’s own children only when they are under six years. No more than two may be children with special needs. Only one child with special needs may be cared for if there is one other child under two years of age or two children over two years of age but under three years of age.

When the caregiver’s children are under six years, she/he may still have five children in addition to their own by caring for school-age children over six years. For example, a caregiver who has two children ages three and four may also care for three children under six years and two children over six years.

Provider qualification requirements

No caregiver training qualifications are specified in provincial regulations. Regulation requires caregivers to be older than 18 years and, if working with children with special needs, to hold a standard first-aid certificate. Many agencies provide training for caregivers.

Licensed private home day care agencies are required to have a criminal reference check policy. This policy applies to potential new providers and their family members (18 years of age and over), or others normally resident in the private home day care environment or regularly on the premises when the enrolled children are present.

Providers are supported and monitored by agency staff called home visitors, who are required to have completed a post-secondary program in child development or family studies and to have at least two years experience working with children who are of the same age and developmental levels as the children cared for by the agency where the person is employed.

Licensing, monitoring and enforcement

The agency home visitor is required to conduct quarterly in-home monitoring visits. The agency is responsible for ensuring that legislated requirements are met.

As part of agency licensing inspection, provincial program advisors inspect a sample of homes to determine whether the agency is in compliance with the *Day Nurseries Act* and Regulations.

FUNDING

CHILD CARE FEE SUBSIDY PROGRAM FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE

Fee subsidies are paid directly to nonprofit and for-profit service providers on behalf of eligible parents.

As of January 2007, MCYS implemented an income test to determine eligibility for fee subsidy.

Eligibility for fee subsidy effective 2007/08 (net income)

Turning point for all families: \$20,000

Break-even point: Not applicable. Subsidies depend on cost of child care. Examples are provided below.

Net family income(\$)	Daily child care fee for subsidized families(\$)
20,000	0
30,000	4.00
40,000	8.00
50,000	19.00
60,000	31.00
70,000	42.00

The province does not set maximum subsidy rates. There is no provincial minimum user fee; however, municipalities have the leeway to charge minimum user fees. The provincial government permits subsidization up to the full cost of the program; however, in practice, some municipalities set maximum subsidy rates.

Municipalities may allocate a specified number of subsidized spaces to particular programs or may have a more flexible plan which allows them to float so that families are not restricted to the designated centres.

There is a province-wide cap on the total subsidy budget rather than on the number of subsidized spaces available. Lengthy waiting lists of parents eligible for subsidies exist in some communities, but some do not have waiting lists.

PUBLIC FUNDING FOR REGULATED
CHILD CARE (2007/08)

Wage subsidy funding may be paid to full and part-time permanent staff in:

- nonprofit and for-profit licensed child care centres;
- nonprofit and for-profit private-home day care agencies;
- nonprofit special needs resourcing agencies; and
- nonprofit family resource centres.

Family child care providers may be eligible to receive the provider enhancement grant (a portion of wage subsidy) if they are associated with a licensed agency.

OTHER FUNDING

Ontario Works child care

Ontario Works child care funds may be used to cover the cost of regulated child care as a transition measure where participants are in employment assistance activities or are entering the paid labour market; or funds may be used for payment for unregulated child care arrangements or alternatives to child care (e.g., summer camp, supervised homework programs, recreation programs) up to established maximums.

Whether the payment goes to the parent or to a service provider is determined by each CMSM/DSSAB (see Municipal or Other Governmental Role).

Learning, Earning and Parenting is a program within Ontario Works that supports young parents on social assistance and includes high school, parenting courses, career counseling, job preparation and child care.

PROVINCIAL EXPENDITURES FOR REGULATED
CHILD CARE (2007/08)

Fee subsidies

Regular fee subsidies	\$324,200,000
Ontario Works subsidies for regulated care	*26,600,000

Recurring funding

Wage subsidies	\$171,300,000
Special needs resourcing	47,300,000
Transfers to municipalities*	211,000,000

Total	780,400,000
--------------	--------------------

Other

Resource Centres	\$8,500,000
Ontario Works child care (unregulated care)	7,100,000
Ontario Early Years Centres	64,300,000

**In 2007/08, just over \$211 million was provided to municipalities under Best Start operating funding. Municipalities were to spend the funds on fee subsidies, special needs resourcing, and wage subsidies.*

SALARIES

Ontario does not collect salary information.

Median full-time, full-year employment income for centre-based early childhood educators and assistants (2005)

All	\$27,199
Those with an ECE credential	29,298

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

FEES

Ontario does not collect fee information.

ADMINISTRATION

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services is responsible for developing policy and legislation, coordinating planning, licensing programs and monitoring compliance with the regulations.

Licensing and monitoring of programs is the responsibility of nine Regional Offices. The Early Learning and Child Development Branch is responsible for policy and legislation development.

Administration of all funds has become the responsibility of municipal governments (see section following).

**MUNICIPAL OR OTHER LOCAL
GOVERNMENT ROLE**

In Ontario, 47 Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSM) or District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSAB) (these are usually municipal or regional governments) and Native Bands administer the fee subsidy program. The legislated cost-sharing formula is as follows:

- Approved cost of fee subsidies — 80% provincial, 20% municipal;
- Capital — 50% provincial, 50% municipal;
- Administrative — 50% provincial, 50% municipal;
- Special needs resourcing — 80% provincial, 20% municipal with the exception of special needs resourcing funded under the new federal funds from 2005/06 onwards.

Ontario has waived cost sharing for municipalities on funds received through the 2003 Multilateral ELCC agreement and on Best Start funding from 2005/06 onward.

Municipalities may make local policies regarding the planning for and use of cost-shared funding. These local discussions may have downstream impacts such as increased waiting lists for child care subsidies.

The transfer of responsibility was completed on January 1, 2000 and was authorized by amendments to the *Day Nurseries Act*.

This change meant that 20% of funding for wage subsidies, resource centres and special needs resourcing is paid by local governments, whereas 100% of these funds were previously paid by the provincial government. Ontario has waived cost sharing for municipalities on funds received through the 2003 Multilateral ELCC agreement (see RECENT DEVELOPMENTS) and on Best Start funding from 2005/06 onward.

In addition, some Ontario municipal governments operate regulated child care, a role they have played since World War II.

Beginning in 1992, school boards also were authorized to operate child care services; however, very few do so.

The Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA), a non-governmental organization composed of municipal social services staff, in operation since 1950, works to “build members’ (municipal governments and non-profit social service organizations) capacity to plan, manage and deliver quality human services in their communities”.

CHILD CARE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The provincial government requires local governments to develop local service plans including service targets and levels according to provincial guidelines on local service planning. Although these are three-year service plans, Regional Offices review them on an annual basis.

Under the Best Start initiative, 47 local Best Start Networks

were established and required to submit long-term plans outlining how the Best Start vision would be achieved in their communities. See “Recent History of Child Care and Other ECEC Services” for more information on Best Start.

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.

2000 In September, the Ministry of Community, Family and Children’s Services amended the regulation under the *Day Nurseries Act* to allow child care fee subsidies to flow to parents in need with children ages 6-12 years (up to age 18 for children with special needs) enrolled in unregulated recreation programs. These will have purchase of service agreements with the local government or authority.

In November, the provincial government launched Ontario’s Promise, a program to promote public/private partnerships and volunteers in fulfilling five “promises to children”. Ontario’s Promise was based on an American program called America’s Promise.

A Minister’s policy statement on eligible hours of care was issued. It requires that child care fee subsidies and Ontario Works child care assistance be used only for periods when child care is actually required for parents to work or attend school.

The provincial Education Improvement Commission (Ministry of Education) proposed full-day kindergarten for four and five year olds and expansion of regulated child care for younger children rather than cash payments to parents.

2001 The provincial government launched its Early Years Plan for children 0-6 which “fulfilled the new way of thinking outlined in the Mustard-McCain study”.

Ontario received \$114 million for the first year from the federal/provincial Early Childhood Development Initiative. None of the money was spent on “early learning and care” in Ontario.

The provincial government tightened eligibility criteria for subsidized child care; hardest hit were student parents. Five unions challenged the government’s decision not to finance proxy pay equity under the *Charter of Rights and*

Freedoms, arguing that the lack of dedicated funding for proxy pay equity was discriminatory.

2002 In August, Dr. Fraser Mustard and the Hon. Margaret McCain released their follow-up report, *The Early Years Study — Three Years Later*. This report stated that the Ontario government had not responded to the recommendations from their previous 1999 report. It noted the failure to support child care as part of the Early Years strategy.

2003

March The Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care was released by federal, provincial and territorial social services ministers for regulated early learning and child care programs for children under the age of six.

April A Memorandum of Settlement was reached between the province and five unions to provide provincial funding to eligible service providers and organizations, including child care programs with outstanding and ongoing proxy pay equity obligations (see 2000 for background).

October A provincial Liberal government was elected. Its platform for young children, called “Best Start”, was described as a long-term plan to promote healthy development and early learning and child care for Ontario children so they arrive at school ready to learn. One of the goals was to create a universal regulated child care system as a “seamless extension of our public education system”.

The Ministry of Children’s Services was established. (The name was then changed to Ministry of Children and Youth Services in March 2004.)

2004

July The government announced that the \$58.2 million in 2004/05 federal Early Learning and Child Care funds through the Multilateral Framework Agreement would be used to create up to an additional 4,000 new subsidized child care spaces with a priority on preschool-aged children, and to further stabilize the regulated child care system.

November The government announced its Best Start Strategy. Under Best Start, there was to be a major expansion of child care during non-school hours for children enrolled in junior and senior kindergarten. Ontario’s long-term vision, to be delivered over the next 10 to 15 years, is to extend wrap-around child care programs, first to four and five year olds, and then to children aged 2.5- 4 years, for whom a full day made up of universal part-day preschool with wrap-around full-day child care will be developed. Schools are a preferred site for these child care programs. Other child care components of Best Start include:

- Panel on Early Learning Framework;
- Panel on Quality and Human Resources;
- Establishment of a College of Early Childhood Educators;
- Flexibility in eligibility requirements for child care fee subsidies;
- Review of child care financing.

Winter Further details on Best Start were announced. Once fully implemented, it was intended to provide:

- An integrated approach to early learning and care that is seamless for both the child and family;
- A significant expansion of child care;
- Additional child care subsidies ;
- A sliding-scale income test to determine eligibility for a child care subsidy;
- A preschool early learning program for children 2.5 to 4 years of age at no cost to parents;
- Early and ongoing screening of all children with appropriate referrals to intervention. This includes the Healthy Babies Healthy Children program, provided by public health nurses and lay home visitors, screening and assessment services, a home visiting service and service coordination to families with children identified as at-risk;
- A comprehensive 18-month well baby check-up;
- Early learning and care hubs to integrate screening, assessment and access to services, intended to offer a single point of access to services and supports based on local needs and available resources.

2005

July Forty-seven Best Start Networks and four Regional French-language Best Start Networks were established to lead the planning and implementation of Best Start at the local level.

November Ontario received \$271.9 million through the Early Learning and Child Care Agreement as part of a five-year \$1.9 billion Agreement with the Government of Canada to deliver a comprehensive early learning and child care program to Ontario families, including greater access to higher quality, licensed child care spaces.

2005/06 \$296 million was provided to Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSM) and District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSAB), local governments, as an unconditional grant.

2006

March The federal government terminated the existing ELCC agreements signed by the province as of March 31, 2007. The Government of Canada announced it would

transfer funds for one year, 2006/07, at the level set out in Budget 2005 to all provincial and territorial governments. Ontario announced that it will use the final federal payment* of \$252.9 million to support the almost 15,000 new child care spaces to be implemented by September 2006 in addition to the 4,000 subsidized child care spaces that were created in 2004/05.

The government of Ontario will allocate \$122.5 million in 2006/07 to support Best Start initiatives. This includes funding from the 2003 Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care Agreement and \$63.5 million as a result of the reallocation of the ELCC Agreement.

* Note that Ontario decided to spend these funds over a four year period.

November Age definitions for kindergarten and school-age children were amended as follows:

Age of child	Staff:child ratio	Group size
44 months or over and up to and including 67 months of age as of August 31 of the year	1:10	20
56 months or over and up to and including 67 months of age as of August 31 of the year	1:12	24
68 months or over as of August 31 of the year and up to and including 12 years	1:15	30

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CHILD CARE AND OTHER ECEC SERVICES

2007

January Effective January 1, 2007 amendments to O. Reg. 262 under the *Day Nurseries Act* enabled Ontario to introduce an income test to determine eligibility for child care fee subsidies, to replace the previously used needs test. Under the income test, families with net income up to \$20,000 will be eligible for a full subsidy for child care. For families in receipt of a subsidy, family contribution toward the cost of child care is calculated based on 10% of their net income over \$20,000 plus an additional 20% of net income over \$40,000. No family would pay more than the total cost of child care.

The Best Start Expert Panel on Early Learning submitted the *Early Learning for Every Child Today: A Framework for Ontario's Early Childhood Settings* report. The report is available at www.gov.on.ca/children/graphics/263264.pdf.

March The Panel on Early Learning Framework and the Panel on Quality and Human Resources published their report on Quality and Human Resources. The report is available at www.gov.on.ca/children/graphics/stel02_183340.pdf

May The *Early Childhood Educators Act* received Royal Assent on May 17, 2007. Members of a Transitional Council were appointed on August 13, 2007 for an 18 month period ending February 13, 2009. The College of Early Childhood Educators appointed a transitional Registrar and began the registration process for qualified early childhood educators across the province.

July The Ontario Minister of Children and Youth Services announced a new \$142.5 million investment to enhance, strengthen and sustain the government's Best Start program including:

- \$105.7 million new funding to municipalities to sustain 7,374 licensed child care spaces, including more than 300 new licensed and culturally-appropriate child care spaces for Aboriginal children in targeted off-reserve communities, as well as to assist Ontario municipalities with the pressures they face in supporting quality child care in Ontario;
- An additional \$24.8 million to provide an average wage increase of approximately three per cent for approximately 33,500 child care practitioners across Ontario;
- \$12 million to provide improved access to training and support the creation of the first regulatory College for Early Childhood Educators in Canada;
- As part of the \$12 million investment, Ontario provided support beginning in 2007/08 to staff working in licensed child care settings who want to upgrade their qualifications in order to obtain an early childhood education diploma, by providing grants for training, as well as grants to cover the associated travel and living costs, the amounts of which are assessed on a case by case basis.

In a provincial election campaign, the governing Liberals promised to create a universal full-day early learning program for all four and five year olds.

November Dr. Charles Pascal was appointed Early Learning Advisor to recommend a model for implementing full-day early learning for all four and five year olds, building on child care and kindergarten programs. The

initiative is led by the Ministry of Education, Training, Colleges and Universities and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. Dr. Pascal was to report back to the Premier in the Spring of 2008.

June The report of the Early Learning Advisor, commissioned in 2007 by the Ontario Premier was publicly released. Laying out an architecture that places responsibility for all early childhood education and care in the Ministry of Education and noting that “our best future” is one in which all children are healthy and secure; emotionally and socially competent; eager, confident and successful learners; and respectful of diversity, the report recommends four key components:

Full-day early learning for four and five year olds – a core full school day ECEC program extended to meet parents’ work hours if they choose;

Before- and after-school programs for school-age children;
Quality programs for younger children aged 0-4 years;
Enhanced parental leave.

The Pascal report proposes phasing in the universal four and five year old program over three years, beginning September 2010. A play-based curriculum and community schools approach are proposed, as is “team teaching” including both Ontario certified teachers and registered early childhood educators.

The report is available online at: www.ontario.ca/earlylearning

■ KEY PROVINCIAL ECEC ORGANIZATIONS

Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care
489 College Street, Suite 206
Toronto, ON M6G 1A5
Telephone: (416) 538-0628
Facsimile: (416) 538-6737
Website: www.childcareontario.org

College of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario
College of Early Childhood Educators
P.O. Box 190, Station Q
Toronto, ON M4T 2M1
Telephone: (416) 961-8558 or 1-888-961-8558
Website: collegeofece.on.ca
Association of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario

40 Orchard View Blvd., Suite 211
Toronto, ON M4R 1B9
Telephone: (416) 487-3157 or 1-866-932-3236
Facsimile: (416) 487-3758
Website: <http://www.aecce.ca>

TEACHERS’ ORGANIZATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS

Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario
480 University Ave., Ste.1000
Toronto, ON M5G 1V2
Telephone: (416) 962-3836 or 1-888-838-3836
Facsimile: (416) 642-2424
Website: www.etfo.ca

Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Association
65 St. Clair Ave. E., Suite 400, Toronto, ON M4T 2Y8
Telephone: (416) 925-2493
Facsimile: (416) 925-7764
Website: www.oecta.on.ca

Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens
681, chemin Belfast, Ottawa (Ontario) K1G 0Z4
Tél. : (613) 244-2336, 1-800-267-4217
Télééc. : (613) 563-7718, 1-888-609-7718
Website: www.aefo.on.ca

People for Education
641 Bloor Street West, Second floor
Toronto, ON M6G 1L1
Telephone: (416) 534-0100
Facsimile: (416) 536-0100
Website: www.peopleforeducation.com