

# Northwest Territories



## OVERVIEW

Regulated child care, junior kindergarten (JK) and kindergarten in the Northwest Territories are under the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE), Early Childhood Development and Learning (ECDL) division. The ECDL operates the Early Childhood Program (ECP) funding to support early learning and child care programs under the *Child Day Care Act* and is responsible for licensing, monitoring and subsidizing programs.

Territorial implementation of junior kindergarten (JK) began in the 2017-18 school year. [Prior to 2017-18](#), JK was piloted in small communities. Education Authorities can choose to offer JK as a full day or part day program; most are full day. Kindergarten for five-year-olds may be full or part day; most are full day.

All regulated child care programs are non-profit. With the introduction of JK, the Education Authorities no longer offer user-pay preschool programs for four-year-old children. Regulated family child care homes are termed licensed family home day care facilities and are licensed individually.

The NWT does not have a stand-alone child care subsidy program. Parents must qualify for the territorial [Income Assistance Program \(IA\)](#) under the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, which provides financial assistance towards the cost of child care for its clients. In order to qualify, applicants must meet all other eligibility requirements of the IA program.

In 2015, ECE completed a [review](#) of the administrative and funding processes of the Early Childhood Program (ECP), as identified in the *Right from the Start Framework and Action Plan* for early childhood development in the NWT.

Effective October 1st, 2016, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment revised the ECP funding model. Changes to the ECP funding model include:

- Revising ECP operating funding model, increased rates and reduction from 10 areas to two zones;
- Consolidating licensing and funding applications into a single application form and the possibility of a multi-year funding agreement;
- Eliminating Start-up and Minor Health and Safety funding;
- Increased funding for operators within government buildings;
- Rebranding the Healthy Children Initiative (HCI) funding stream as the Early Childhood Intervention Program (ECIP), with a phased-in approach (base funding to be introduced in 2019-20 for all licensed centers and unlicensed programs in communities without a licensed centre; in addition, proposal-based funding for those that meet the eligibility criteria).

In March 2018, the [Canada-Northwest Territories Early Learning Agreement](#) was signed by the two parties. It will provide almost \$7.5 million over three years to NT to contribute to quality improvement, training, professional development, accessibility and affordability, among other initiatives.

## TERRITORIAL CONTEXT

### Number of children 0-12 (2016 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0-2	1,900
3-5	1,900
6-12	4,200
Total	8,000

### Number of children 0-12 years with employed mothers (2016 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0-2	1,100
3-5	1,200
6-12	2,900
Total	5,200

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

Age	First Nations	Métis	Inuk (Inuit)	Multiple	Other
0-4	1,095	260	400	35	0
5-9	1,120	235	405	10	0
10-14	1,125	230	370	20	10
Total	3,335	725	1180	60	0

### Workforce participation of mothers by age of youngest child (2016 rounded estimate)

Not available

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

Age	Living with two parents	Living with one parent	Lone mother	Lone father
0-4	2,420	605	490	115
5-9	2,180	700	550	150
10-14	1,905	660	505	230

### Language spoken most often at home (2016)

Age	English	French	Non-official	Multiple
0-4	2,875	65	115	60
5-9	2,770	45	125	65
10-14	2,460	45	145	75
Total	8,105	160	385	195

## FAMILY-RELATED LEAVE

### Maternity leave

Seventeen weeks.

### Parental leave

Thirty-seven weeks may be shared between the parents. Fifty-two weeks is the maximum allowed for combined maternity and parental leave.

### 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.

EI is a contributory program; both employees and employers contribute. Under EI, 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. Until December 3, 2017, there was only one option for parental leave benefits: 35 weeks of paid leave taken over a 12 month period, paid at 55% of average weekly insurable earnings, up to \$543/week (2017) for either eligible parent, including adoptive parents. This option is now known as the Standard Parental Benefit and will continue to be offered.

However, as of December 3, 2017, the federal government amended the Employment Insurance benefits offering an additional option for the parental leave portion, referred to as the Extended Parental Benefit, that allows 61 weeks of parental leave benefits, that can be taken over an 18 month period, paid at 33% of average weekly earnings up to \$326/week (2017) for either eligible parent including adoptive parents.

Although the federal parental benefit provisions have changed, new parents cannot be paid for the Extended option until provinces/territories make changes to their own leave provisions. Leave provisions under the Canada Labour Code have already changed.

*Note: For further details about the EI federal benefit, Quebec benefit and leave provisions, and provincial/territorial provisions for job-protected leave, see the FAMILY LEAVES AND BENEFITS section of this publication. Provincial/territorial provisions are up-to-date in this document up to December 31 2017.*

## KINDERGARTEN

### TERRITORIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR KINDERGARTEN

Department of Education, Culture and Employment  
Early Childhood and School Services  
PO Box 1320  
Yellowknife, NT, X1A 2L9  
Telephone: (867) 920-3491

[Website](#)

### LEGISLATION

Northwest Territories. Legislative Assembly. *Education Act*, R.S.N.W.T. 1995, c. 28.

The legislation applies to public schools.

### AGE ELIGIBILITY

Four-years-old by December 31 for junior kindergarten.  
Five-years-old by December 31 for kindergarten.

### KINDERGARTEN ENROLMENT (2016)

Junior kindergarten: 100 students

Kindergarten: 785 students

### COMPULSORY

Junior kindergarten and kindergarten are not compulsory. Access is a legislated entitlement.

### HOURS

Education Authorities can choose to offer either a full day or a part day program or both. A majority of the JK/K programming offered is full day. Funding is provided to Education Authorities through the School Funding Formula. Education Authorities are required to offer a minimum of 485 instructional hours for JK/K programming.

### CLASS SIZE

There is no class size limit. Class sizes and configurations vary across the territory and are determined at the discretion of the Education Authority and local school principal.

## TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

A Bachelor of Education or a two year diploma in early childhood from an accredited institution is required to teach junior kindergarten. Junior kindergarten teachers are required to be certified by the Registrar.

A Bachelor of Education is required to teach kindergarten. There are no ECE requirements.

## CURRICULUM

[NWT Junior Kindergarten/Kindergarten Curriculum](#)

## SPENDING ON KINDERGARTEN (2015-2016)

\$13,025 (per full time equivalent JK and K student)

Estimated total spending: \$9,352,000

Source: Territorial government child care Standards and Regulations.

## REGULATED CHILD CARE

### TERRITORIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILD CARE

Department of Education, Culture and Employment  
Government of the Northwest Territories  
Early Childhood and School Services  
Lahm Ridge Tower, 3rd Floor  
P.O. Box 1320  
Yellowknife, NT, X1A 2L9  
Telephone: (867) 920-3491  
[Website](#)

### LEGISLATION

Northwest Territories. Legislative Assembly. Northwest Territories [Child Day Care Act and Standards and Regulations](#) 1988 (2013).

### CHILD CARE SERVICES

#### UNREGULATED FAMILY CHILD CARE

Maximum number of children permitted: Four including the caregiver's own children up to 12 years.

#### REGULATED CHILD CARE

##### Centre day care facility

Group care, instruction and supervision provided in a place other than a private residence.

##### Preschool day care

Part time day care provided for a child two years of age or older that is not enrolled for the full day in a school operated under the *Education Act*.

##### Family day home facility

A child day care facility where day care is provided within the private residence of the operator. It may include up to eight children under 12 years including the caregiver's own children.

##### Out-of-school day care

Day care provided following completion of the daily school program for a child who is in regular attendance at a school operated under the *Education Act*.

## CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

An early learning framework is in development and will be completed by March 2019.

## CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

There are no segregated child care programs for children with special needs. The NT child care Standards and Regulations state that a centre day care facility must modify the daily program to ensure that any child is able to participate and also obtain any specialized equipment required for the child to participate.

Licensed child care providers are supported with higher operating grants for children with special needs through the ECP Operating Subsidy. Documentation from a health care professional must be provided.

## INDIGENOUS CHILD CARE

The Northwest Territories is composed of Dene, Métis and Inuvialuit (Inuit) communities. The majority of community-based programs are available to all children equally.

Aboriginal Head Start (AHS) programs are the only programs targeted specifically to Indigenous children. However, they may include non-Indigenous children if capacity allows. There are eight AHS programs in the NWT.

## SPACE STATISTICS

<b>Number of regulated child care spaces (2016)</b>	
<i>Age group</i>	<i>Number of part and full day spaces</i>
<i>Centre-based</i>	
Infant (0-2 years)	130
Preschooler (2-5 years)	892
After-school (6-12 years)	434
<i>Total centre-based spaces</i>	1,456
<i>Family child care</i>	
Infant (0-2 years)	80
Preschooler (2-5 years)	160
After-school (6-12 years)	80
<i>Total family child care spaces</i>	320
<b>Total number of regulated spaces</b>	1,776
<i>Note: All centres are licensed for full time spaces even though many operate as part day nursery schools/playschools. Of the 1,052 preschooler spaces for children aged 2-5 years, 279 operate as part day spaces.</i>	
<b>Children with special needs in regulated child care</b>	
Information not available.	
<b>Children receiving fee subsidies (2016)</b>	
Information not available.	
The Northwest Territories does not provide stand-alone child care user subsidies. However, the Income Assistance (IA) program provides financial assistance toward the cost of child care for clients. In order to qualify, applicants must meet all other eligibility requirements of the IA.	
<b>Number of child care programs</b>	
<i>Centre-based</i>	
Full day centres	32
Part day nursery schools/preschools	16
Stand-alone school-age centres	16
<i>Total centre-based programs</i>	64
<i>School-based child care centres</i>	
For preschool-age children	21
For school-age children (included in centre-based )	13

### *Family child care*

Individually licensed family child care providers 40

### **Sponsorship of part and full day centre spaces**

All centres are currently non-profit and family day homes are also considered to be non-profit.

### **Parent fees**

The average monthly parent fee for full time centre-based care varies from free of charge up to \$1,380 for an infant and free of charge up to \$1,170 for a preschooler. In regulated family day homes, the average monthly parent fee is \$1,000 for an infant and \$900 for a preschooler.

## STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

### REGULATED CENTRES

<b>Maximum centre size</b>	Not specified	
<b>Staff/child ratios and group sizes</b>		
<i>Age</i>	<i>Staff: child ratios</i>	<i>Max. group sizes</i>
0-12 months	1:3	6
13-14 months	1:4	8
25- 35 months	1:6	12
3 years	1:8	16
4 years	1:9	18
5 years	1:10	20

### **Centre staff qualification requirements**

Primary staff must be at least 19 years of age and have a certificate in first aid and infant/child cardiopulmonary resuscitation. All staff must provide a criminal record check, including a vulnerable sector search prepared by the RCMP.

Primary staff must have successfully completed a post-secondary program (minimum of a one year certificate) in child development satisfactory to the Director or demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Director an understanding of developmentally appropriate practices in respect of children and the ability to apply that understanding to the operator's child day care program.

## REGULATED FAMILY CHILD CARE

### Model of organization

Individually licensed.

### Maximum capacity

Maximum of eight children under 12 years (including the provider's own children). No more than six of the eight children may be under six years of age, and no more than two children may be under two years.

### Licensing, monitoring and enforcement

Homes are visited at least once a year by staff from the Early Childhood Program and a representative from each of the Department of Health and Social Services (HSS) Environmental Health Officer and the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs' (MACA) Office of the Fire Marshall. Licences are usually issued in conjunction with annual inspections.

### Family child care provider qualification requirements

A provider must be a minimum of 19 years of age and have a certificate in first aid and infant/child cardio-pulmonary resuscitation. The operator and all adults that live in the home must provide a criminal record check, including a vulnerable sector search prepared by the RCMP. Must undertake training in relation to child development and care on an annual basis through appropriate courses, seminars or workshops and retain documentation respecting attendance at such training.

## FUNDING

### CHILD CARE SERVICES ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING

Non-profit licensed early childhood centres and family day homes including part time, infant, after-school and special needs spaces are eligible for public funding.

## TYPES OF FUNDING

### Fee subsidies

The NT does not provide a stand-alone child care subsidy. The Income Assistance (IA) program offers financial support to IA applicants to assist them with their child care expenses so that they can participate in the labour force, or pursue education and training opportunities in the NWT. In order to be eligible for the child care benefit, applicants must:

- Require care for children under the age of 13 because both parents are participating in the labour force or attending school or training.
- Provide monthly invoices from the child care provider.
- Provide receipts showing the child care has been paid, if the provider is not being paid directly, for continued eligibility.

### IA daily subsidy rates

	Licensed (\$)	Unlicensed (\$)
Infant (0-1 years)	\$42	\$33
Children (2-12 years)	\$39	\$28
Preschool/pre-kindergarten		
with extended care (3-4 years)	\$39	NA
Part time (0-5 years)	\$26	\$13
After-school (5-12 years)	\$15	\$8

### Recurring funding

#### Operating funding

Available to non-profit licensed early childhood centres and family day homes. Ranges from \$14.17-\$19.81/per occupied preschool space/day, depending on the location of the program.

For infants/children with special needs it is \$35.75-\$49.66/per occupied space/day, depending on the location of the program.

For out-of-school spaces it is \$4.72-\$5.01 per occupied space/day, depending on the location of the program.

Programs that operate part time receive half the full day rate.

Family day homes and licensed early childhood centres receive the same rates in operating funding.

### The Early Childhood Staff Grant

The purpose of the Early Childhood Staff Grant is to increase the earnings of staff in licensed early childhood centres and to offer an incentive to attract new professionals to the early childhood workforce. It is paid directly to the staff person.

Employees eligible for this grant must:

- Be a permanent employee of a licensed early childhood centre;
- Provide care, assistance and supervision of children as part of their usual job duties or provide on-site supervision of the daily operation of the program.

The following table outlines the grant amounts for eligible employees based on the amount of hours worked per quarter and the level of early childhood post-secondary education (PSE) completed:

	100-234 hrs/worked quarter (8-18 hours/wk)	235-351 hrs/worked quarter (18.5-27 hrs/wk)	354-468 hrs/worked quarter (27.5-36 hours/wk)	469 + hrs/worked quarter (37 + hrs/wk)
No early childhood PSE	\$600	\$900	\$1,200	\$1,500
Early childhood certificate	\$800	\$1,200	\$1,600	\$2,000
Early childhood diploma	\$1,000	\$1,500	\$2,000	\$2,500
Early childhood degree	\$1,200	\$1,800	\$2,400	\$3,000

*Note: For example, if an employee who has not completed a post-secondary early childhood program worked 35 hours/week during April–June, she/he will qualify for a grant of \$1,200 for the 1st quarter grant payment.*

### TERRITORIAL ALLOCATIONS FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE (2015–2016)

#### Fee subsidies

Income Assistance program funds	NA
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#### One-time funding

Start-up contributions	\$52,321
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#### Recurring funding

Operational contributions	\$2,265,829
Rent and mortgage contributions	105,805
Minor health and safety renovations	133,279
Healthy Children Initiative	1,641,042
Small Community Initiative	\$289,000

<b>Total regulated child care</b>	<b>\$4,487,276</b>
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