

Nova Scotia

PROVINCIAL CONTEXT

Number of children 0-12 yrs (2001 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0-2	30,000
3-5	31,400
6-12	80,400
Total 0-12	141,800

Note: Total may not add up due to rounding.

Children 0-12 yrs with mothers in the paid labour force (2001 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0-2	20,000
3-5	20,300
6-12	56,800
Total 0-12	97,200

Note: Total may not add up due to rounding.

Children 0-14 yrs identifying with an Aboriginal group (1996)

Age	North American Indian	Métis	Inuit
0-4	2,930	170	115
5-9	2,630	160	75
10-14	2,550	95	60

Note: These 1996 data are the most recent currently available.

Children 0-14 yrs with disabilities (2001)

Age	Number of children with disabilities	Rate of children with disabilities (%)
0-4	630	1.3
5-9	2,340	4.3
10-14	3,250	5.3
Total 0-14 yrs	6,210	3.8

Note: Total may not add up due to rounding.

Workforce participation of mothers by age of youngest child (2001 rounded estimate)

Age of youngest child	No. of mothers	Participation rate (%)
0-2	18,000	71.4
3-5	13,000	72.2
6-15	44,000	78.1

FAMILY-RELATED LEAVE

Maternity leave

17 weeks.

Parental leave

Both parents are entitled to 52 weeks which must be taken within 12 months of the child's birth. 35 weeks for birth mothers who have taken pregnancy/maternity leave.

Adoption leave

52 weeks.

Births and EI maternity claims

Number of births (2000): 9,116

Number of initial maternity claims allowed (2000-2001): 5,190

Note: Provincial leaves are unpaid. The federal government pays for some portions under Employment Insurance. See federal ecec programs for more information.

KINDERGARTEN

LEGISLATION

Nova Scotia. Legislative Assembly. *Education Act and Regulation. 1995-96. Amended 1998, 2000, 2002.*

PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR KINDERGARTEN

Department of Education.

KINDERGARTEN SERVICES

GRADE PRIMARY

Grade Primary is delivered in public and private schools. It is available to all five year olds in Nova Scotia on a full-time basis (a minimum of four hours/day are required for Grade Primary to Grade 2).

Grade Primary is an entitlement and is compulsory in Nova Scotia.

AGE ELIGIBILITY

Five years old before October 1.

CLASS SIZE

Class size limits of 25 are about to be set by the provincial government for Grade Primary to Grade Two.

Average/mean class size

(current Grade Primary to Grade 2)

27% of classes have more than 25 students

73% of classes have 25 or fewer students

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

There is a policy of including children with special needs in the least restrictive setting. Extra support is available and children have Individual Program Plans. Resources such as assistants and technology are provided. A per pupil special education grant is available to school boards.

KINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT (2001-02)

Five year olds (Anglophone and Francophone): 10,368

Total other ages: 140

(4 Plus students in Halifax — see SPECIAL FEATURES)

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

A valid teaching certificate (B.Ed) is required. There is no differential certification for kindergarten.

CURRICULUM

There is a provincial kindergarten curriculum, *Foundation for Grade Primary*. The focus is on the transition from home to school, on the foundations for lifelong learning and on fostering development in all areas. Specific curriculum outcomes in all areas are included.

SPENDING ON KINDERGARTEN (2001)

Average on each kindergarten student

Information not available.

Total spending on kindergarten

Information not available.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Some school boards (Halifax) have a pre-Grade Primary (4 Plus) initiative for inner-city schools and at-risk populations. The Department of Education provides some funding support. 4 Plus is not an entitlement for four year olds.

REGULATED CHILD CARE

LEGISLATION

Nova Scotia. Legislative Assembly. *Day Care Act and Regulations*. Chapter 120, of the Revised Statutes, 1989. R.S., c. 120, s. 1

PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILD CARE

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CHILD CARE SERVICES

UNREGULATED CHILD CARE

Unregulated family child care

Maximum number of children permitted 6

Six children who may be of mixed-age groups including the caregiver's own preschool children. If all children including the caregiver's own are school-age, eight children are permitted.

REGULATED CHILD CARE

Child care centres

Care in a group setting for less than 24 hours/day for seven or more children from 0-12 years. This includes full-day child care centres, preschools, nursery schools and programs for school-age children.

Child Development Centres (CDC)

CDCs were established to provide a pre-school experience for children deemed to be "at risk" to prepare them for school entry. They are licensed under the *Day Care Act and Regulations* and are required to operate on at a minimum 1:12 staff/child ratio. Centres receive a grant which cannot exceed 50% of their operating costs. In order to qualify for a grant, at least half the families of children enrolled must qualify for assistance under established income guidelines (the former Canada Assistance Plan guidelines). These income guidelines are higher than those that must be met to qualify for regular child care subsidy. The director of the CDC administers the income test and keeps the information on file as required for licensing inspections.

Centres are free to establish their own fees, which are often on a sliding scale according to family income. The amount of funding is generally based on past allocations and not formula-based on capacity or actual costs. There are 31 part-day pre-school programs in 35 locations.

Family day care homes

Care in a private home for up to six children of mixed ages including the provider's own children, or eight school-age children including the provider's own school-age children.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Licensed child care centres may receive additional funding from \$28 to \$70 per full day to support the inclusion of children with special needs. The funding is intended to cover additional costs associated with including children with special needs in child care programs. Eligibility is based on evidence of the child's disability.

Developmental centres have a designated allotment of special needs spaces; other special needs spaces are allocated on an as-needed case by case basis.

This grant depends on availability of funding and is not an entitlement.

Parents of children with special needs are not income tested for additional supports. Historically, 10% of all new child care subsidy allocations are directed towards this program.

Differential funding is not available in family child care but may be used in part-day centres.

ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE

Development of on-reserve child care as part of the First Nations/Inuit Child Care Initiative is the responsibility of the Tri-Partite Committee. There are 11 on-reserve child care centres with 225 spaces in Nova Scotia. Centres follow provincial regulations but are not licensed.

SPACE STATISTICS

Number of regulated child care spaces (2001)

Centre-based	
– Full-day	7,957
– Part-day	3,357
Family child care	150
Total regulated spaces	11,464

Children with special needs in regulated child care (2001) 238

Children receiving subsidies (2001)

2,560 spaces with specific allocations to registered, non-profit centres, and 95 portable spaces that may be used in for-profit and non-profit centres, and which follow the child.

Total subsidies	2,655
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Subsidized children as a proportion of total regulated spaces (2001) 23%

Sponsorship of regulated centre spaces (2001)

	Full-time	Part-time	Total
Non-profit	4,545	1,806	6,501
For-profit	3,412	1,551	4,963
Total	7,957	3,357	11,314

STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

REGULATED CENTRES

Maximum centre size

60 spaces
(recommended but not mandatory)

Maximum staff:child ratios and group sizes

Age	Staff:child ratios	Max. group sizes
0-17 mos	1:4	not specified
17 mos-5 yrs (full-day)	1:7	not specified
17 mos-5 yrs (part-day)	1:12	not specified
5-12 yrs	1:15	not specified

Staff qualification requirements

The centre director and 2/3 of the staff must have completed at least a training program in early childhood education OR two years experience, one course and a 35 hour workshop on child development and curriculum. All staff must have first-aid training and up-to-date Child Abuse Register checks.

Parent involvement

Parent meetings must be held at least four times in a year for full-day programs and twice a year for part-day programs.

Licensing, monitoring and enforcement

Initial and ongoing inspections are conducted by provincial Early Childhood Development Services licensing staff. Regional staff are not required to have a background in early childhood education but are provided with early childhood education training annually.

Licenses can be issued for up to 24 months for part-day programs and up to 12 months for full-day programs.

If a centre is not in compliance with The Day Care Act and Regulations, a license with conditions is issued for a specified time period. If the centre fails to meet the legislative requirements in this period, The Day Care Act and Regulation authorizes the Minister to cancel the license.

Health inspections are conducted by inspectors from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. Fire inspections are conducted by the Department of Environment and Labour.

REGULATED FAMILY CHILD CARE

Regulation

Family child care providers are supervised by licensed agencies.

Maximum capacity

Up to six children of mixed ages including the provider's own preschool children, or up to eight school-age children including the provider's own school-age children.

Provider qualification requirements

Providers must be at least 18 years, be screened through the Child Abuse Register and have undergone a criminal record check by the RCMP or local police.

No early childhood training or experience is required by the province.

Licensing, monitoring and enforcement

A licensed family child care agency staff must have ECE qualifications as per the provincial regulations. The agency is responsible for recruiting, screening and selecting providers, and for approving and monitoring homes. Provincial staff conduct annual visits and evaluations of agencies to check for adherence to provincial guidelines for child care care homes.

FUNDING

CHILD CARE FEE SUBSIDY PROGRAM

Fee assistance is paid directly to service providers on behalf of eligible parents.

There is a two-step eligibility process. Parents must be employed, seeking employment, attending school or a training program, receiving medical treatment or have a special or emergency child care need. If the parent meets one of these criteria, an income test is applied.

Prior to 2000, only registered centres (non-profit centres operated by community-based organizations) and family child care agencies could enrol children receiving subsidies. In 2000, the province introduced portable subsidies, which are assigned to the child and not to the child care centre. They may be used in any licensed child care centre that provides full-day services and that has signed a letter of agreement with the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services. New subsidies allocated after 2000 are portable.

There is a minimum user fee of \$2.25 per day. Programs may surcharge subsidized parents if costs are above the maximum subsidy rate; they must charge full fee parents at least the same as subsidized parents.

Eligibility for fee subsidy (net income, 2001)

	Turning point	Break-even point (estimated maximum)
1 parent, 1 child	\$16,812	\$24,540
2 parents, 2 children	17,712	34,092

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

Maximum subsidy by age of child (2001)

Infants to 17 mos	\$14.95/day
Preschoolers	14.95/day
School-age	14.95/day

Note: In the previous version of this publication (2000), Nova Scotia subsidy rates were \$17.20/day. This rate included the minimum user fee of \$2.25/day. The rate has been adjusted to be comparable to those in other jurisdictions which do not include any parent portion.

PUBLIC FUNDING FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE (2001)

For the purposes of funding, the category "child care centres" includes:

- Non-profit centres
Operated by non-profit boards of directors and eligible for subsidized spaces, portable spaces, differential funding, salary enhancement grants, equipment grants and infrastructure grants.
- For-profit centres
Operated by owners or managers and eligible for portable subsidized spaces and differential funding.

Recurring funding

Equipment grant

Available to non-profit, full-day licensed child care facilities. Up to \$130/year/subsidized centre space may be used for the purchase of equipment only.

Infant incentive grant

Non-profit centres that enrol infants receive an additional \$4.69/day/infant.

Special needs funding

Between \$28 and \$70/day/child with special needs intended to cover additional costs associated with integrating children with special needs. Eligibility is based on evidence of the child's disability. Developmental centres have a designated allotment of special needs spaces; other special needs spaces are allocated on an as-needed case by case basis. This grant depends on availability of funding.

Salary enhancement grant

Available to non-profit, licensed child care centres and licensed family child care agencies. The grant is \$3.25/ day/space up to the maximum number of allocated subsidized spaces.

Infrastructure grant

The infrastructure grant was introduced in 1998 and is paid to all non-profit child care centres at the rate of \$0.25 per day per licensed space up to 260 days maximum per year.

Family day care administrative grant

Available to licensed family day care agencies. The grant is either 10% of the approved per diem fee or based on the previous year's utilization of subsidized spaces of \$1.65/ day/space.

Child Development Centre Grant

Annual grant provided to Child Development Centres (part-day enrichment programs which primarily enrol children from low-income families). The maximum grant available cannot exceed 50% of the centre's

approved operating budget and is based on the percentage of families whose income falls within provincial income guidelines.

PROVINCIAL ALLOCATIONS FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE (2001)

Fee subsidy* \$8,562,514

One-time funding

Start-up grants 17,430

Recurring funding

Equipment/Infrastructure grant 509,398

Family day care administration grant 42,470

Child development centre grant 300,000

Salary enhancement grant 2,455,194

Special needs differential 1,005,272

Total \$12,892,278

**Note that the fee subsidy amount in the previous edition (2000) of this publication was incorrect.*

Other funding

Payments to parents through Employment Support \$793,000
(funding provided to an average of 554 children/month)

Parents on social assistance who are involved in an employability program may receive payment to assist with child care costs. The parent may choose any form of licensed, unlicensed or relative care, except care provided by a spouse. Parents using licensed care are encouraged to apply for subsidy; the child care allowance may cover the difference between the subsidy rate and the fee charged by the centre. Parents may receive \$400/family/month. The maximum for unregulated care is \$4/hr/family.

Payments to providers/centres through Child Welfare \$875,000
(of which \$420,000 was spent on licensed care)

Children who are permanent wards, temporary wards or involved in a family support program may be eligible for child care funding. Care may be provided in licensed, unlicensed or relative care, except a spouse. Occasionally a home care agency may be used. If the care is unlicensed, the provider must undergo a police check and not be on the abuse register. If the child is a ward, the full cost of care is covered. If there is a supervision order or family support, the parent is encouraged to apply for subsidy. When using licensed care, the minimum parent fee and surcharge may be covered.

SALARIES (2001)

Mean gross hourly wage for centre-based child care staff (full-time staff) (2001)

Directors \$13.32

Assistant directors 10.31

Teachers 7.87

Special needs teacher 9.22

Note: Information provided by provincial officials from the Employee and Wage Information Questionnaire.

Family child care

Information not available.

FEES (2001)

Median monthly parent fees for centre-based full-time care (2001)

Infants (Age 0-17 mos)	\$565
Toddlers (Age 18 mos-36 mos)	490
Preschool (Age 3-5 yrs)	488
School-age (Age 5-12 yrs)	357

Note: Information provided by provincial officials from the Child Care Centre Information Questionnaire.

Average daily fee in family child care

Information not available.

ADMINISTRATION

The Early Childhood Development Services section of the Department of Community Services is responsible for the licensing and inspection of child care and preschool facilities, monitoring family child care agencies, administration of funding arrangements, program consultation for licensed programs, and developing policy. The Early Childhood Development Services section approves all new early childhood education and training programs and approves the training status of child care staff working in licensed child care facilities.

MUNICIPAL OR OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROLE

There is no legislated municipal or other local government role.

CHILD CARE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Nova Scotia has developed a document that sets a direction for early childhood development initiatives in the province. *Our Children: Today's Investment, Tomorrow's Promise* can be found at www.gov.ns.ca/coms/files/e.cd.asp.

HISTORY OF CHILD CARE AND OTHER ECEC SERVICES

1966 Advocacy Committee on Day Care Services announced by the Minister of Public Welfare.

1967 Enactment of the *Day Nurseries Act*.

1968 Formation of the Preschool Association of Nova Scotia.

1970 Founding of the Nova Scotia Day Care Advocacy Association and the Nova Scotia Child Care Council.

1972 Appointment of the Provincial Day Care Advisory Committee, which introduced the day care subsidy program.

1977 A Task Force on Day Care Finance was struck with a mandate to review the per diem rate. This resulted in yearly increments in the subsidy rate and an annual review of the parent fee formula.

1980 Enactment of the revised *Day Care Act and Regulations*.

1983 Task Force on Day Care was announced. Its recommendations resulted in the introduction of annual equipment grants, additional subsidized child care spaces, special needs funding, and staff training standards along with staff training grants.

1987 Training specifications for staff working in child care came into effect.

1988 Provincial child care plan to triple spending for program expansion and enhancements subject to federal-provincial cost-sharing agreement was developed.

1989 Child care spending was postponed.

1990 Child care staff in 40 centres across the province staged a one day walkout to protest poor wages.

The Minister announced a Round Table on Day Care with representation from the child care community to conduct a review of the province's child care system.

A salary enhancement grant was introduced.

1991 The Round Table on Day Care presented series of recommendations to the Minister including a recommendation to establish the Round Table as a permanent advisory body. This recommendation was adopted. Other recommendations called for the creation of 500 new subsidized spaces and the adoption of salary scales for child care workers.

1992 Funding increases were announced including 100 new subsidies and increases in subsidy rates.

1993 Per diem and subsidy rates to non-profit infant child care and staff training grants were increased.

1995 The Department of Community Services was restructured.

1993-96 Fifty additional subsidized spaces were allotted each year.

1998 All licensed child care facilities must ensure that staff and volunteers have up-to-date Child Abuse Register checks.

The per diem rate for a subsidized space and the infant differential increased by two percent.

Through the National Child Benefit, \$2.2 million was allocated to a Healthy Child Development Initiative to enhance/support centre-based and family child care, rural child care and early intervention programs.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CHILD CARE AND OTHER ECEC SERVICES

2000 One hundred "portable" child care spaces were introduced, including five for children with special needs. These spaces follow the child and are not attached to a specific centre.

2001 There were amendments to the *Nova Scotia Day Care Act and Regulations* including several related to the provision of infant/toddler care.

2001 A funding review was conducted and the *Nova Scotia Child Care Funding Review* was released.

2001 Under the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Agreement on Early Childhood Development, Nova Scotia's strategy for Early Childhood Development was outlined in *Our Children: Today's Investment, Tomorrow's Promise*. In keeping with this, the Department of Community Services had undertaken a number of initiatives designed to improve the quality of and access to child care. Funding was designated to strengthen and stabilize the existing licensed child care programs, to support inclusion of more children with special needs, to improve salaries, and to provide professional development opportunities for early childhood educators.

2001 Six million of the \$9.1 million in ECDI funding was allocated to child care. The breakdown is as follows:

- \$4.5 million (child care stabilization grants) to assist in attracting and retaining quality staff
- \$500,000 to support the inclusion of children with special needs in licensed child-care settings
- \$1,000,000 for training.

2002 Another 50 portable subsidized spaces were announced.

KEY PROVINCIAL ECEC ORGANIZATIONS

Child Care Connection-NS
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TEACHERS' ORGANIZATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS

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