

# Ontario

## PROVINCIAL CONTEXT

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

Age	Number of children
0-2	408,200
3-5	436,400
6-12	1,099,800
Total 0-12	1,944,400

*Note: Total may not add up due to rounding.*

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

Age	Number of children
0-2	253,400
3-5	285,400
6-12	786,500
Total 0-12	1,325,400

*Note: Total may not add up due to rounding.*

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

Age	North American Indian	Métis	Inuit
0-4	24,585	3,190	430
5-9	23,000	3,130	320
10-14	21,560	3,045	270

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

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### Children 0-14 yrs with disabilities (2001)

Age	Number of children with disabilities	Rate of children with disabilities (%)
0-4	10,700	1.6
5-9	30,500	4.0
10-14	37,140	4.8
Total 0-14 yrs	78,340	3.5

*Note: Total may not add up due to rounding.*

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

Age of youngest child	No. of mothers	Participation rate (%)
0-2	230,000	67
3-5	187,000	74.2
6-15	579,000	82.1

## **FAMILY-RELATED LEAVE**

### **Maternity leave**

17 weeks to the natural mother only.

### **Parental leave**

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

### **Adoption leave**

37 weeks.

### **Emergency leave**

10 days if employee works for an employer with more than 50 employees.

### **Births and EI maternity claims**

Number of births (2000): 127,408

Number of initial maternity claims allowed (2000-2001): 71,710

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

## **KINDERGARTEN**

### **LEGISLATION**

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

Ontario. Legislative Assembly. *Education Quality and Accountability Office Act*. 1996, S.O. 1996, c. 11.

### **PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR KINDERGARTEN**

Ontario Ministry of Education.

Ontario is one of three provinces that continues to fund and deliver denominational education. In all regions, both "public" and Catholic school boards are publicly funded.

### **KINDERGARTEN SERVICES**

#### **SENIOR KINDERGARTEN**

Services for five year olds are provided by school boards. Senior kindergarten is usually part-time except in francophone school boards where it is full day for five year olds as well as some four year olds.

#### **JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN**

Kindergarten for four year olds is provided by school boards, usually part-time. It is not mandatory that school boards provide junior kindergarten but most do so.

Neither junior nor senior kindergarten is compulsory; however, most eligible children attend.

Junior and senior kindergarten is delivered in public and private schools. Instructional hours are not defined by the Education Act. School boards decide on normal day schedule. Generally, there are four models:

– Half day; every day, Junior K or K

- Full day; alternate day, Junior K or K
- Full day; everyday. Junior K or K
- Combined Junior K and K.

## **CLASS SIZE**

There is a maximum average class size set (board-wide maximum average class size of 24 for JK to Grade 3).

The provincial average class size for JK to Grade 3 is 22.2 (2000-01).

School boards determine whether and when to employ teaching assistants.

## **AGE ELIGIBILITY**

Junior kindergarten: Four years old by December 31.

Senior kindergarten: Five years old by December 31.

## **CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

No information is available on policies, extra support, or number of kindergarten children with special needs.

## **KINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT**

JK (2001-2002): 114,669

SK (2001-2002): 133,686

## **TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS**

A valid Ontario Teacher's Certificate (undergraduate degree plus one year of teacher training) is required. While additional qualifications are not required, according to provincial officials, many JK and K teachers have them (for example, primary specialist, Early Childhood Certificate).

School boards set the criteria for hiring teaching assistants.

## **CURRICULUM**

A provincial curriculum is outlined in The Kindergarten Program (1998). It is "designed to help children broaden their base of information, form concepts, acquire foundation skills and positive attitudes to learning, and begin to develop their abilities and talents in a wide range of areas. It is also designed to prepare children for the new Ontario curriculum for Grades 1 to 8". The document "identifies a variety of learning expectations. Among these are expectations related to children's development of literacy (including technological and computer literacy) and of knowledge and skills in mathematics and science".

## **SPENDING ON KINDERGARTEN (2001)**

### **Estimate per pupil (FTE) amount**

JK: \$6,645

K: \$6,673

### **Total provincial spending on junior kindergarten**

Foundation Grant + other grants: \$383 million

### **Total provincial spending on senior kindergarten**

Foundation Grant + other grants: \$439 million

## **SPECIAL FEATURES**

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

## **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)

### **PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILD CARE**

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### **CHILD CARE SERVICES**

#### **UNREGULATED CHILD CARE**

##### **Unregulated family child care**

Maximum number of children permitted: 5  
Figure does not include the caregiver's own children.

##### **Family resource centres**

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

#### **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 a developmental disability.

##### **Supervised private home day care (family child care)**

Care for up to five children from 0-12 years old in a private home that is supervised by a licensed agency. Not more than two children may be under two years, and not more than three children may be under three years, including the caregiver's children under six years. If the caregiver's children are under six, she/he may care for two children age 6-12 years. For example, if a caregiver's children are ages three and four, then she/he may provide care for up to two more children between the ages of 6-12.

## 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. Responsibility for special needs resourcing programs have been transferred to Consolidated Municipal Service Managers or District Social Services Administration Boards (CMSMs or DSSABs). (These are usually municipal or regional governments.) Special needs resourcing provides assistance for staffing, equipment, supplies or services to support the inclusion of children with special needs in child care.

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 resource teachers who are working with children who have special needs.

## ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE

Ontario funds and regulates on-reserve child care.

As of September 2002, there were 86 licensed child care centres on-reserve with a licensed capacity of 2,756. There were also 13 centres off-reserve serving Aboriginal children with a licensed capacity of 407, and three family child care agencies with 61 homes serving Aboriginal children.

The Day Nurseries Act treats Indian Bands in a manner analogous to municipalities for the purpose of child care funding and administration. Expenses are cost-shared with the federal government through the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs under the 1965 Canada/ Ontario Agreement Respecting Welfare Programs for Indians.

## SPACE STATISTICS

### Number of regulated child care spaces (2001)

Infants (0-18 mos.)	5,478
Toddlers (18-30 mos.)	17,747
Preschool (2 1/2-5 yrs.)	82,030
JK (3yrs 8mos)	6,290
SK (4yrs 8 mos)	6,565
School-age (6-12 yrs.)	55,025
Family child care*	Estimate not available
Total (estimate)	173,135

*\*In 1998, it was estimated that approximately 18,000 of these spaces were in family child care.*

*Note: Breakdowns of full- and part-time centre-based and family child care are not available by age. These estimates were provided by provincial officials.*

**Children with special needs in regulated child care** 19,212 (estimate, 1998)

*Note: The Ontario government no longer collects this information.*

**Number of children in regulated child care receiving subsidies** 73,400 (estimate, 1998)

*Note: 2001 data or estimates are not available. The 1998 estimate was provided by provincial officials.*

**Percent of children in regulated child care receiving subsidies (estimate, 2001)** 44%

*Note: This estimate was provided by provincial officials.*

### **Sponsorship of regulated centre spaces (2001)**

Not-for-profit	143,522
For-profit	29,613

*Note: Current figures are not available for the number of municipally-operated child care spaces. In 1998, however, 18,143 of the non-profit spaces were municipal.*

### **Sponsorship of family child care agencies (2001)**

	Agencies	Homes
Not-for-profit*	120	7,294
For-profit	18	586
Total	138	7,880

*\*Note: This includes municipally-operated family child care agencies.*

## **STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS**

### **REGULATED CENTRES**

#### **Maximum centre size**

Not specified

#### **Maximum staff:child ratios and group sizes**

Age	Staff:child ratios	Max. group sizes
0-18 mos	3:10	10
18 mos-2 yrs	1:5	15
2-5 yrs	1:8	16
3 yrs 8 mos-5yrs	1:10	20
	(with Director's* approval)	
5-6 yrs	1:12	24
6-10 yrs	1:15	30

*\*Director is an employee of the Ministry appointed by the Minister as a Director for the purposes of the Day Nurseries Act.*

#### **Staff qualification requirements**

Centre supervisors must have a two year diploma in early childhood education from an approved 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 (CAAT) or equivalent.

A Ministry Director has the authority to waive the educational requirements for directors 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 the *Day Nurseries Act*.

#### **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 the *Day Nurseries Act and its Regulations*.

Program Advisors are not required to have training in early childhood education.

The annual license renewal process includes an inspection of the child care facility to ensure compliance with the regulatory standards. Unannounced drop-in visits are also conducted. Noncompliance with the legislation which does not pose an immediate threat to the children's well-being may result in a provisional license with a time frame in which the operator is required to correct the noncompliance. Repeated noncompliance of a serious nature or noncompliance which poses a likely danger to the children may result in a refusal to renew or a revocation of the license. However, the provincial Director of the child care branch must give notice of intent to close the centre to the operator who then has the right to appeal to the License 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 term "home child care" is commonly used.

### **Regulation**

The Ministry licenses family child care agencies that then enter into agreements with caregivers to provide child care. The agencies provide supervision 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 including the caregiver's own children under six years. Not 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.

If the caregiver's own children are under six years, then she/he may care for two children age 6-12 years. For example, if a caregiver's children are ages three and four, then she/he may provide care for up to two more children between the ages of 6-12.

### **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.

Caregivers are supervised 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 supervisory visits. The agency is responsible for ensuring that legislated requirements are met.

As part of agency licensing inspection, provincial program advisors may inspect homes to ensure that the agency is in compliance with the *Day Nurseries Act* and *Regulations*.

## FUNDING

### CHILD CARE FEE SUBSIDY PROGRAM FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE

Fee assistance is paid directly to non-profit and for-profit service providers on behalf of eligible parents. 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. These pay at least 20% of the approved cost of fee subsidies.

Eligibility is determined by a provincially-determined needs test with income being only one of a number of items considered. Each municipality can determine the rates within a range, a situation which creates considerable variation across the province. There are no province-wide maximum income levels for full or partial fee subsidies.

The province does not set maximum subsidy levels. The maximum subsidy varies across the province and is at the discretion of the local government (CMSM or DSSAB).

There is no provincial minimum user fee.

The provincial government permits subsidization up to the full cost of the program. However, in practice, municipalities set maximum subsidy rates.

Municipalities may allocate a specified number of subsidized spaces to particular programs or may allow them to float.

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

Fee subsidies for all children including those with special needs are determined on the basis of 80% contribution by the provincial government and 20% contribution by local governments.

Special needs resourcing is split 80/20 between the province and municipalities. The province does not require that parents of children with special needs be needs tested for fee subsidy eligibility but some municipalities have imposed a needs test.

#### **Average net income of families receiving child care subsidies**

Information not available.

#### **PROVINCIAL ALLOCATIONS FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE (2001)**

<b>Fee subsidies</b>	\$299,800,000
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<b>One-time funding</b>	none
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#### **Recurring funding**

Wage enhancements	116,200,000
Special needs resourcing	35,500,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$451,500,000</b>

#### **Other**

Family resource centres	\$19,700,000
Ontario Works child care*	34,000,000

*\*Ontario Works child care includes funds for both regulated and unregulated child care. (See other ecec services for more information.) Breakdown of expenditure is not available.*

#### **SALARIES**

#### **Mean gross hourly wage for centre-based child care staff (full and part-time staff combined) (1998)**

Assistant teachers	\$10.60
Teachers	13.48
Teacher-directors	17.48
Administrative directors	22.00

*Source: You Bet I Care! More recent information not available.*



### **Family child care**

Information not available.

### **FEES**

#### **Median monthly parent fees for full-time centre-based care (1998)**

Infants (Age 1-17 mos)	\$783
Toddlers (Age 18 mos - 3 yrs)	603
Preschool (Age 3 - 5.11 yrs)	541
School-age	not available

*Source: You Bet I Care! More recent information not available.*

#### **Average daily fee in family child care**

Information not available.

### **ADMINISTRATION**

The Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services is responsible for developing policy and legislation, coordinating planning, licensing programs and ensuring compliance with the regulations.

The Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services is a decentralized ministry. Licensing and monitoring of programs is the responsibility of nine Regional Offices. The Early Years and Healthy Child Development Branch is responsible for policy and legislation development.

Administration of funds has become a local responsibility (see section following).

### **MUNICIPAL OR OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROLE**

Responsibility for managing delivery of child care services lies with 47 Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) or District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs). (These are usually municipal or regional governments.)

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

This change means 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.

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

Beginning in 1992, school boards also were authorized to operate child care services.

### **CHILD CARE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Beginning in 2000, 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.

## **OTHER ECEC SERVICES**

#### **Family resource centres**

There are approximately 450 resource centres in Ontario. The Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services provides funds to approximately 180 of these programs.

### **Ontario Works child care**

Ontario Works child care funds may be used to cover:

- the actual cost of regular child care fee subsidies under the *Day Nurseries Act* as a transition measure where participants are in employment assistance activities or are entering the paid labour market;
- payment for unregulated child care arrangements or alternatives to child care (e.g. summer camp, supervised homework programs, recreational programs) up to established maximums.

Whether the payment goes to the parent or to a service provider is determined by each local government.

Ontario Works includes Learning, Earning and Parenting, which is mandatory for teen parents on social assistance and includes high school, parenting courses, peer mentoring, career counseling, job preparation and payments for child care.

## **HISTORY OF CHILD CARE AND OTHER ECECC SERVICES**

1881 Establishment of The Crèche in Toronto (now Victoria Day Care Services).

1883 Establishment of Canada's first public kindergarten by the Toronto Board of Education.

1887 Kindergarten for three to five year olds was recognized in the *Education Act*.

1926 Establishment of the University of Toronto's Institute of Child Study and its laboratory school, St. George's Nursery, to train nursery school teachers.

1942 Ontario was one of two provinces to sign the Dominion-Provincial War-Time Agreement with the federal government, enabling 50% cost-sharing for nurseries for children whose mothers were employed in essential war industries. The Day Nurseries Branch was established to administer funding and to support the development of new nurseries.

1945 Twenty-eight day nurseries in Ontario serviced 900 preschool children in 44 "school units" which served approximately 2,500 children. At the end of the War, federal funding was withdrawn and the province threatened to close all centres.

1946 The Day Nursery and Day Care Parents' Association in Toronto successfully lobbied to keep the day nurseries open.

The *Day Nurseries Act* was passed, providing provincial funds to cover 50% of net operating costs of child care programs and a system of licensing and regular inspection for centres. It provided Canada's first child care regulation.

1950 The Nursery Education Association of Ontario (now the Association of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario) was established.

1950s Kindergarten for four year olds was introduced in Toronto as a transition to school for immigrant children.

1966 The introduction of the federal Canada Assistance Plan resulted in the provision of fee subsidies in Ontario for low-income families.

1974 Ontario's first major policy statement on child care called it a welfare service for those in social/financial need.

The Day Care Reform Action Alliance successfully fought the *Birch Proposals*, the provincial government's proposed reduction in staff/child ratios and other standards to reduce costs.

1978 The *Day Nurseries Act* was amended to require licensing of private home day care agencies. The Regulation was amended in 1984 to provide requirements for private home day care.

1980 The Ontario Coalition for Better Day Care (later Child Care) formed to advocate for public funding for universally accessible, high quality, non-profit child care.

1987 In *New Directions for Day Care*, a Liberal government promised a “comprehensive policy that recognizes child care as a basic public service, not a welfare service”. A three year plan to provide additional funds to expand non-profit child care programs was announced.

1991 An NDP government made two announcements that reflected its intention to establish growth in the non-profit sector: a Wage Enhancement Grant for workers in non-profit care as a “down payment” on pay equity, and a strategy to encourage commercial programs to convert to non-profit status.

1992 The provincial government released *Child Care Reform in Ontario: Setting the Stage*, which stated four basic principles as the basis for child care reform: quality, affordability, accessibility, and sound management. The consultation paper promised dramatic reform of child care in Ontario with the goal of making high quality child care accessible to every family. New legislation was to be developed by the end of 1994.

The provincial government also released the *Ontario Child Care Management Framework*, establishing a context for the development of new programs and changes to existing programs.

School boards were granted eligibility to hold licenses to operate child care programs.

As part of the Jobs Ontario Training Fund, 8,200 child care subsidies, fully funded by the province, were targeted to assist unemployed parents looking for work or participating in job training programs.

1994 The report of The Royal Commission on Learning recommended introduction of early childhood education programs for all three, four and five year olds as part of the education system.

1995 The provincial government announced a major pilot project, the Early Years Program, the first step toward a “seamless day” for four and five year olds. School boards were asked to submit proposals for pilot status.

In June, a Conservative government was elected. Their platform, the Common Sense Revolution, promised to change the direction in child care made during the two previous (Liberal and NDP) governments.

1995 Before the end of 1995, the following changes were made:

- the proxy fund for pay equity for staff in non-profit child care centres was capped
- the Program Development Fund (start-up and minor capital) was eliminated
- major capital funding was cancelled
- funding that supported inclusion of child care facilities in new school sites was cancelled
- the Conversion (to non-profit) Program was cancelled
- the Early Years Program (to pilot a “seamless day” for four and five year olds) was cancelled
- the policy limiting new subsidies to non-profit programs was cancelled
- Jobs Ontario subsidies (fully-funded by the province) changed to 80-20% provincial-municipal cost-sharing.

1996 The proxy mechanism that allowed child care staff to benefit from The *Pay Equity Act* was eliminated.

A review of the child care program was conducted by the Ministry of Community, Family and Children’s Services. The Ministry produced *Improving Child Care in Ontario* in September 1996. Its proposals included:

- reduction of Wage Subsidy for staff in non-profit centres and resource centres
- minor capital (50/50 cost-shared) which included for-profit child care for the first time
- less frequent monitoring
- an increase in the preschool staff/child ratio
- an increase in the number of school-aged children permitted in regulated family day care
- a change in cost-sharing 87/13 to 80/20 for special needs children
- introduction of user fees in resource centres.

*Note: Not all of these proposals were implemented.*

1998 The government made amendments to the *Day Nurseries Act* through the *Services Improvement Act* outlining how delivery and additional funding responsibility for child care services would be transferred to local governments. Previously, 20% of municipal funding had been discretionary and was limited to fee subsidies with the provincial government paying for 100% of the other items.

The government announced its intent to transfer licensing to the local level. However, the authority for licensing was not included in the *Services Improvement Act* and no date for transfer was set.

The Ministry began developing a child care information system, the Child Care Data Warehouse, in collaboration with municipalities for local program delivery and for centralized performance-related data collection.

1998 A Workplace Tax Incentive was introduced to encourage businesses in building and renovating onsite and community-based child care facilities. Corporations may receive a tax deduction of 30% of qualifying expenditures and unincorporated businesses may receive a 5% refundable tax credit.

1998 A new funding formula for Ontario education was introduced. It was expected to have a profound effect on the security and tenure of these early childhood services. The new funding formula meant that school boards would experience shortfalls leading to new rent and other charges for early childhood services, as well as withdrawal of school board support for services considered not to be “education” as defined by the *Education Act*. The shortfalls, calculated to be massive in some boards, meant that schools would be closed and consolidated. Early childhood programs in closed schools would be lost and these early childhood programs in schools remaining open could be lost as their space would be needed to accommodate children whose schools closed.

Accurate statistics were not available but it was estimated that as many as a third to a half of Ontario child care centres were located in school space. Previous provincial governments pursued a policy, introduced in the late 1980s and ended in 1995, of locating child care centres in all new schools.

1999 The proxy mechanism that allowed child care staff to benefit from the *Pay Equity Act*, eliminated in 1996, was reinstated following a court challenge by the Equal Pay Coalition. Retroactive payments were made to eligible non-profit child care programs as a lump sum pay equity adjustment sent out in early 1999.

April 1999 *Report of the Early Years Study*, commissioned by the provincial government and led by Dr. Fraser Mustard and the Hon. Margaret McCain, was released. It concluded that the development in the first six years of a child’s life sets the foundation for lifelong learning, behaviour and health. It recommended the establishment of Early Childhood Development and Parenting Centres that are “accessible, affordable and optional for all children and families in Ontario from conception to entry into Grade 1 in the school system”. It further recommended that these become available for all children within five years, by 2004.

## **RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CHILD CARE AND OTHER ECEC SERVICES**

1998 Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families is established. It uses funds clawed back from families on welfare under the National Child Benefit to provide financial assistance of up to \$1,100 per year to low and modest income families with children under the age of seven. Eligible families include those where both parents are working or in school/training, single parents who are working or attending school/training, and working families where one parent stays at home to care for children under seven.

A national study of wages, working conditions and quality, *You Bet I Care!*, found that — based on a sample of full-time centres for children 0-6 years and regulated family child care — Ontario scored 4.9 on

the ECERS-R (preschool rooms), 4.1 on the ITERS (infant rooms), and 3.9 on the FDCRS (family child care). (See Table 25 for elaboration.)

1999 In October, the Ontario government announces five pilot projects (in South East Grey, London, North Bay, York Region and Ottawa) to “help Ontario’s children get the best start in life”.

A Task Group is appointed “to advise the government on key elements and standards for an Early Years Program”.

The Early Years Challenge Fund, a matching fund that challenges businesses, volunteer and charitable groups to “help communities promote early childhood development and parenting programs” is announced.

A study by KPMG, a consulting firm, finds that the shortage of child care spaces is a major obstacle to people obtaining a job under Ontario Works, the provincial workfare program.

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

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

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

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

2001 Ontario receives \$114 million for the first year from the federal/provincial Early Childhood Development Initiative.

The provincial government launches its Early Years Plan for children 0-6 which “fulfills the new way of thinking outlined in the Mustard-McCain study”. Of the \$114 million, \$30 million is announced to establish Early Years Centres across Ontario. Early Years Centres will be places where “parents can go to find the answers to questions they have about their children”; there will be one per provincial riding. In addition, funds are earmarked for the Early Years Challenge Fund, pregnant women with addictions, Community Health Centres, sexual assault services, autism, children’s mental health, to teen parent programming, Program Effectiveness Management, Injury and Family Abuse Prevention, and others. None of the money is spent on “early learning and care” in Ontario.

In September, the *Day Nurseries Act* regulations are amended to allow fee subsidies to for school-aged children to be used in unregulated recreation programs under purchase of service agreements with the local government.

The provincial government tightens eligibility criteria for subsidized child care; hardest hit are student parents.

An internal provincial policy paper is publicized in the *Toronto Star*. It outlines three options that each begin with a \$200 million cut to the child care budget (\$470 million). Two of these options propose eliminating the remaining child care budget (including family resource programs), turning the funds into cash payments for low income parents while the third option proposes retaining a provincial child care budget of \$270 million. The Ontario budget in June 2002 does not announce these expected cuts.

In December, the Provincial Auditor’s Report on education states that school boards in Ontario are spending \$95 million more than they receive from the government on special education services.

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

The provincial government appoints a Task Force headed by Mordechai Rozanski to review the funding formula.

People for Education calculate that more than \$1 billion has been removed from the provincial education budget with impacts in a wide range of areas. The effects of the education funding formula on programs including kindergarten and child care and family resource programs in schools are described at public hearings and in the press. Three of the largest schools boards do not bring in the balanced budgets required by the provincial government. The government appoints supervisors for these boards to replace the elected school boards.

## **KEY PROVINCIAL ECEC ORGANIZATIONS**

Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care

726 Bloor Street West, Suite 209

Toronto, ON M6G 4A1

Telephone: 416-538-0628

Facsimile: 416-538-6737

website: [www.childcareontario.org](http://www.childcareontario.org)

Association of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario

40 Orchard View Blvd., Suite 211

Toronto, ON M4R 2G1

Telephone: 416-487-3157

Facsimile: 416-487-3758

Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario

Administrative Office

331 Dufferin Avenue

Belleville, ON K8N 3X6

Telephone: 705-733-2052 or 1-800-567-7075

Facsimile: 1-800-567-7075

## **TEACHERS' ORGANIZATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS**

Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario

480 University Ave., Ste. 1000

Toronto, ON M5G 1V2

Telephone: 416-962-3836

Facsimile: 416-642-2424

Website: [www.etfo.ca](http://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](http://www.oecta.on.ca)

Ontario Teachers' Federation  
1300 Yonge Street, Suite 200  
Toronto, ON M4T 1X3  
Telephone: 416-966-3424  
Facsimile: 416-966-5450  
Website: [www.otffeo.on.ca](http://www.otffeo.on.ca)

People for Education  
P.O Box 64 Station P.  
Toronto, ON M5S 2S6  
Telephone: 416-410-3571  
Facsimile: 416-461-4107  
Website: [www.peopleforeducation.com](http://www.peopleforeducation.com)