

Prince Edward Island



PROVINCIAL CONTEXT

Number of children 0-12 yrs (2005 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0	1,300
1	1,200
2	1,500
3	1,200
4	1,300
5	1,400
6	1,400
7	1,500
8	1,900
9	1,600
10	1,900
11	2,100
12	1,900
Total	20,300

Number of children 0-12 yrs (2005 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0-2	4,000
3-5	3,900
6-12	12,400
Total	20,300

Children 0-12 yrs with mothers in the paid labour force (2005 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0	900
1	800
2	1,000
3	800
4	1,000
5	1,000
6	1,000
7	1,000
8	1,400
9	1,100
10	1,300
11	1,600
12	1,500
Total	14,500

Children 0-12 yrs with mothers in the paid labour force (2005 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0-2	2,700
3-5	2,800
6-12	9,000
Total	14,500

Children 0-14 yrs identifying with an Aboriginal group (2001)

Age	North American Indian	Metis	Inuit	Multiple	Other	Total
0-4	130	35	0	0	10	175
5-9	105	10	0	0	0	115
10-14	130	35	0	0	10	175
Total	365	80	0	0	20	465

Children 0-14 yrs with disabilities (2001)

Age	Number of children with disabilities	Rate of children with disabilities (%)
0-4	170	2.3
5-9	360	4.0
10-14	400	4.1
Total	940	3.5

Number of children by marital status of family (2001)

Age	Children in couple families	Children in lone parent families	(with lone mothers)	(with lone fathers)
0-4	6,125	1,440	1,340	95
5-9	7,420	1,605	1,375	230
10-14	8,280	1,680	1,380	300
Total	21,825	4,725	4,095	625

Number of children by mother tongue (2001)

Age	English	French	Non-official language
0-4	7,395	100	30
5-9	8,815	170	65
10-14	9,680	250	50
Total	25,890	520	145

Number of children living in families below the LICO (2004)

Age	Number	Percent (%)
0-2	400	8.7
3-5	390	9.8
6-17	2,520	11.4
Total	3,310	10.8

Workforce participation of mothers by age of youngest child (2005 rounded estimate)

Age of youngest child	Number of mothers	Participation rate (%)
0-2	2,900	80.6
3-5	2,100	84.0
6-15	7,700	86.5

FAMILY-RELATED LEAVE

Maternity leave

Seventeen weeks

Parental leave

Thirty-five weeks. The total parental leave for both parents cannot exceed 35 weeks.

Adoption Leave

Fifty-two weeks. The combined total leave for both parents cannot exceed 52 weeks.

Births and EI maternity and parental claims (2005)

Number of births	1,393
Birth rate per 1,000 population	10.1
Number of initial maternity claims allowed	970
Average length of maternity claim	14.5 weeks
Number of parental claims	1,010
Average length of parental claim	25.5 weeks
Number of adoptive parent claims	10
Average length of adoptive claim	35.0 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 \$423/week. See FEDERAL ECEC PROGRAMS for more information.

KINDERGARTEN

Prince Edward Island introduced publicly funded kindergarten in September 2000.

LEGISLATION

Child Care Facilities Act, Regulations, and Guidelines R.S.P.E.I. 1988.

Note: Kindergarten in PEI is part of the child care system although the Department of Education plays a key role.

PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR KINDERGARTEN

Department of Education and Department of Social Services and Seniors

The Department of Social Services and Seniors is responsible for licensing, teacher/staff certification and supports for children with special needs. The Department of Education is responsible for policy development, funding, curriculum development and in-service training.

Kindergarten contact

Carolyn Simpson

Provincial Kindergarten Program Administrator

Department of Education

3 Brighton Road, P.O. Box 2000

Charlottetown, PE C1A 7N8

Telephone: 902-569-7526

Facsimilie: 902-368-4622

Email: cesimpson@edu.pe.ca

Website: <http://www.edu.pe.ca/>

KINDERGARTEN SERVICES

KINDERGARTEN

School boards have no jurisdiction over kindergartens, even when they are located in schools. Kindergarten programs must operate for a minimum of three hours per day, five days per week or the equivalent, and provide 2.5 hours of instructional time. Programs may operate for between nine and 10 months in a 12 month period. Each kindergarten determines its own hours of operation.

A three hour day is available at no charge to the parent. Parents whose children attend a full day in a child care service either pay fees for the balance of the day or, if eligible, receive a child care subsidy.

Kindergarten programs are offered in 51 full-day child care centres and in 39 part-day stand-alone programs. Approximately 30-40% of these part-day centres are located in schools. Kindergarten programs located in schools must be not-for-profit and have either a parent or community board. The schools offer the space when a request has been made and space is available. Kindergartens are also provided in for-profit and non-profit full-day child care centres and as part-day stand alone programs.

Kindergarten is not compulsory and access is not legislated. Parents are responsible for transportation. School boards will transport kindergarten age children on buses if there is room available.

While there are enough licensed kindergarten spaces for every five year old, parents may not be able to access their program of first choice.

AGE ELIGIBILITY

2005/06: Five years old by October 31st

2006/07: Five years old by September 30th

PEI will continue raise the age eligibility until 2007/08 when children must be five years old by August 31st.

CLASS SIZE

There is no specified class size but child:teacher ratios of 1:12 are legislated under the Child Care Facilities Act. In 2005/06 the majority of classes ranged from 12 to 24 students.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

There is a philosophy of inclusion. Child-specific special needs grants are available to centres for additional staffing from the Department of Social Services and Seniors. A school-aged child with special needs may attend a second year of kindergarten.

In 2005/06, there were 65 kindergarten children with identified special needs. Sixty had services of a Special Needs Assistant.

ENROLMENT (2005/06)

Number of children enrolled in kindergarten (the year before Grade 1): 1,409

KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS

Qualification requirements: A two-year ECE diploma
Minimum requirement for an ECE supervisor in a kindergarten: ECE diploma plus two years of work experience

Thirty hours of professional development every three years is required for re-certification for all kindergarten staff.

Responsibility for certification: The Child Care Facilities Board

Representation: There are no unions representing kindergarten staff.

Average wage 2005/06: \$14 per hour. The Department requires all educators responsible for kindergarten to be paid a minimum of \$12 per hour (including benefits).

Note: Kindergartens are part of the child care system so kindergarten teachers are not part of the education system.

CLASSROOM ASSISTANTS

Title: Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)
Qualifications: 30 hours of training, and 30 hours of professional development every three years. In 2003/04 the Department of Education provided an introduction to

the curriculum outcomes in Language Arts and Math.

Role: To lower ratios to allow for a more successful transition and inclusion into the early childhood setting for children with special needs.

Funding for SNAs is provided by the Department of Social Services and Seniors.

CURRICULUM

The Department of Education is introducing core components of the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation curriculum K-12 for Atlantic Provinces. Language Arts and Math are integrated into the curriculum.

MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

See LICENSING, MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT in child care section.

The Department of Education has assigned a resource person to the Child Care Facilities Board and the Board has appointed this resource person as an inspector of child care facilities.

Curriculum Specialists and Kindergarten Mentors provide support to kindergarten teachers with curriculum and program development.

SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR KINDERGARTEN

The Department of Education funds kindergartens directly; there is no school board involvement. The Department also provides funding, which is matched by the Department of Health and Social Services to the Early Childhood Development Association to provide support to kindergarten and early childhood settings.

There are no fees for the kindergarten program; however, programs may charge \$25-\$50/year for consumable supplies.

PUBLIC SPENDING ON KINDERGARTEN (2004/05)

Average spending per kindergarten student

Per capita spending on kindergarten: \$2,193

Total spending on kindergarten

\$3,090,244 – covers operational costs of program, excluding Special Needs Assistants.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

In the fall of 2005 the Task Force on Student Achievement report was released. The report contained the following recommendations specific to kindergarten. The provincial government should:

- put in place more rigorous requirements regarding program content, the number of hours, and the length of the school year to ensure consistency and quality in the kindergarten system
- integrate francophone kindergartens into the public school system and investigate whether this would be advantageous for all kindergartens
- lead the way in identifying children with learning disabilities as well as those who may be academically and socially at risk
- develop an intervention program for children identified as being at risk

For the full report see: http://www.upei.ca/student_achievement/Reporta.pdf

In an effort to improve consistency, the range that kindergarten programs may operate was changed from 5-10 months to 9-10 months.

REGULATED CHILD CARE

LEGISLATION

Prince Edward Island. Legislative Assembly. The Child Care Facilities Act. 1988.

Prince Edward Island. Legislative Assembly. Child Care Facilities Regulations. 1988.

Prince Edward Island. Legislative Assembly. The Social Assistance Act. 2003

PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILD CARE

Sarah Henry Gallant
Healthy Child Development Coordinator
Department of Social Services and Seniors
Early Childhood Services
Sherwood Business Centre
161 St. Peter's Road
P.O. Box 2000
Charlottetown, PE C1A 7N8
Telephone : (902) 894-0260

Facsimilie: (902) 368-6136
Email: skhenrygallant@ihis.org

Early childhood contact:
Cathy McCormack
Coordinator of licensed early childhood programs
(902) 368-6518
Email: camccormack@ihis.org
Website: <http://www.gov.pe.ca/hss/hcd/index.php3>

CHILD CARE SERVICES

UNREGULATED CHILD CARE

Unregulated family child care

Maximum number of children permitted: Five, including the caregiver's own preschool-age children.

If all children are under two years, three are allowed, or five preschoolers if not more than two of them are younger than two years. Six are allowed in a mixed-age group up to 10 years with no more than two younger than two years.

REGULATED CHILD CARE

Early childhood centres

Group care for less than 24 hours/day for children from birth to seven years including part-day kindergartens for children aged five years old and part-day nursery schools for children aged 2-5 years.

School-age child care centres

Care outside school hours for school-age children (usually 6-12 years)

Family day care homes

Full-day care in a private home for mixed-age groups up to a maximum of seven children, including the provider's own preschool children, with a maximum of three children under two years.

Occasional centres

Care on a flexible basis for children between birth and 10 years.

Note: Kindergartens are part of the regulated child care system. See the KINDERGARTEN section.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

There are no segregated child care programs for children with disabilities.

Centres may apply for a special needs grant on behalf of a child. A grant of up to \$11.50/hour based on the training and experience of the staff hired is available. Their role is to lower ratios to allow for a more successful transition and inclusion into the early childhood setting for children with special needs. Some documentation is required in order to receive the additional support but it is flexible and social need of the child may be considered. Special needs funding usually provides for additional staff to lower the ratio of the group.

The funding is capped, and in 2001, there was a waiting list for the first time. Parents of children with special needs are not required to be employed or in training to receive a subsidy.

Staff who work with children with special needs require 30 hours of training and 30 hours of professional development every three years.

A pilot project is underway with the Department of Education and the Early Childhood Development Association of Prince Edward Island using the ECERS-R for all centres including those enrolling children with special needs.

ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE

Prince Edward Island does not fund or license child care programs on-reserve. There are no First Nations/Inuit Child Care Initiative programs in PEI. There is one unlicensed kindergarten centre on-reserve.

The Abegweit First Nation on the Scotchfort reserve operates an Aboriginal Head Start program. It serves 2-6 year olds, operates from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. and is unregulated.

SPACE STATISTICS (2005/06)

Number of regulated child care spaces

Centre-based	Full-day	*Part-day
Infants	120	0
Preschool	1,822	633
School-age	—	657
Kindergarten	777	630
Total centre-based spaces	2,719	*1,920

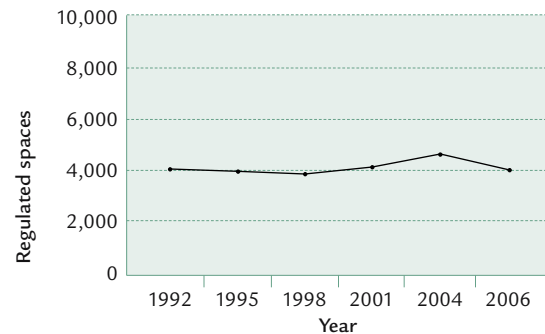
Note: there are a total of 1,407 children attending kindergarten, 657 who attend part-time kindergarten only and 777 who attend both kindergarten and child care for the balance of the day.

Family child care 42

Total number of regulated spaces 4,681

**For purposes of comparison with other provinces where kindergarten is in the public education system, the figure 1,290 part-day spaces (preschool-633 and school-age-657, excluding part-day kindergarten = 1,290) is used to calculate figures in Tables 10, 11, 13 and 31.*

Figure 2: Number of regulated spaces in PE, 1992-2006



Children with special needs in regulated child care 210

Children receiving subsidies 849

Number of centres and homes

Number of child care centres	131
Full day	70
Part-day nursery schools/preschools	2
Stand-alone after-school programs	17
Kindergarten centres	36
Number of individual family child care providers	6

Sponsorship of regulated centre-based spaces (2005/06)

Non-profit	2,034
For-profit	2,605

Note: For the purpose of comparison with other jurisdictions where kindergarten is in the public education system, the part-day kindergarten spaces are excluded from the figures in Table 11.

Openings and closings (2005/06)*

New child care centre licenses issued	6
Number of child care centre closures	6
Number of new licenses issued to individual family child care providers	0
Number of family child care agencies/individual providers who ceased providing care	0

**Note: the centres may not actually have closed but may have changed hands or been issued a new license (for example, several of the part-day kindergarten programs became full-day early childhood centres).*

STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

REGULATED CENTRES

Maximum centre size 50 spaces

Maximum staff/child ratios and group sizes

Age	Staff: child ratios	Max. group sizes
0-2 yrs	1:3	6
2-3 yrs	1:5	not specified
3-5 yrs	1:10	not specified
5-6 yrs	1:12	not specified
7+ yrs	1:15	not specified

Staff qualification requirements

Centre supervisors and one full-time staff member in each program must have at least a one year Early Childhood Development diploma or university Child Study degree.

Thirty hours of in-service training every three years is required for all staff.

Parent involvement

Not specified

Licensing, monitoring and enforcement

Each year centres are visited for licensing purposes by staff of the Departments of Social Services & Seniors, or by the Department of Education, who observe the administration and programming of the centre. Annual inspections are required by the Fire Marshall’s office and the Environmental Health Division of the Department of Health.

If a centre is not in compliance with the legislation it may operate under a regular license but is given a specific time frame in which to comply. A centre may have a provisional license for a period of six months, or it may have its license revoked or not renewed. A centre receiving a provisional license or having its license revoked or not renewed may appeal directly to the Minister who then must establish an Appeal Board. This Board must conduct an inquiry and render a decision within 30 days.

The staff of the Departments of Social Services & Seniors, the Department of Education and the Early Childhood Development Association provides training to the staff of early childhood centres to use the (ECERS-R) and the Canadian Supplementary Scale (CSS) developed for You Bet I Care! In addition, they also provide training to supervisors to use the SpecialLink Child Care Inclusion Profile (SCCIP) to maintain and/or improve inclusive environments.

REGULATED FAMILY CHILD CARE

Regulation

Providers are individually licensed

Maximum capacity

Up to seven children including the provider’s own children under school-aged, with a maximum of three children under two years.

Provider qualification requirements

A 30 hour training program, two letters of reference and current first-aid certificate

Licensing, monitoring and enforcement

Early Childhood Services conducts a program review using the Family Day Care Rating Scale (FDCRS). Annual inspections are made by staff of the Departments of Social Services & Seniors or by the Department of Education, who observe the administration and programming of the centre, an inspector for the Fire Marshall’s office and an Environmental Health officer.

FUNDING

CHILD CARE FEE SUBSIDY PROGRAM

Fee subsidies are paid directly to service providers on behalf of eligible parents. Eligibility is determined by an income test and by the following social criteria: parent(s) working or studying, parental medical emergency, child in need of protection, children with special needs, and school readiness (for five year olds). Eligibility assessments are conducted in person at local offices of the Department of Social Services & Seniors.

The provincial fee subsidy budget is not capped and in 2005/06 there was no waiting list for subsidy.

Any regulated non-profit or for-profit child care program is eligible to enrol children receiving subsidies.

There is no minimum user fee.

Centres and family day care homes may surcharge subsidized parents higher than the maximum subsidy. Approximately half the centres charge fees higher than the maximum subsidy but not all require subsidized parents to pay this difference.

Parents in receipt of social assistance have access to the Child Care Subsidy Program.

Eligibility for fee subsidy (net income 2005/06)

	Turning point	Break-even point
1 parent, 1 child	\$13,440	\$25,440
2 parents, 2 children	19,200	51,040

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 (2005/06)

0-2 yrs	\$30/day
2-3 yrs	23/day
3+ yrs	22/day
School-age	18/day

PUBLIC FUNDING FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE (2005/06)

All licensed non-profit and for-profit child care centres are eligible for all funding programs.

One-time funding none (See RECENT DEVELOPMENTS)

Recurring funding

Operating grants

Full-day centre-based programs	\$0.91/day/space
Part-time centre-based programs	
- 12 children or fewer	\$682/year
- 24 children or fewer	1,092/year
- 50 children or fewer	1,820/year

Note: Funding is calculated according to months of operation and is less than stated above if the program operates less than 12 months a year. Operating funding has been frozen since 1992; approximately half the regulated centres and homes receive no funding.

Infant incentive funding

\$500/year. An annual grant is provided to centres and family day care programs enrolling at least one child younger than two years on a regular basis for at least six months.

Special needs funding

Available to centre-based and family day care programs to pay staff to provide individualized programming for children with special needs. The funding will cover wages and benefits up to \$11.50/hour based on training and experience.

Family day care homes \$450/year

PROVINCIAL ALLOCATIONS FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE (2005/06)

Child care fee subsidies	\$3,300,000
One-time funding	None
Recurring funding	
Special needs funding	1,115,000
Operating grants	310,000
Total*	\$4,725,000

(See FEDERAL TRANSFERS below)

Other funding

Funding to the Early Childhood Development Association for the MIKE project	\$65,000
Partnerships for Children	110,000
Funding from other departments	
Kindergarten funding to early childhood centres	\$ 3,090,244

Note: For the purposes of comparison with other jurisdictions where kindergarten is in the public education system, kindergarten funding has been separated from spending on regulated child care. The allocation for kindergarten is \$3.2 million; the amount above is actual spending.

The provincial social assistance budget has \$50,000 for unregulated care for infants, or for extended-hour care when regulated care is unavailable, or for occasional “babysitting” costs.

Federal Transfers 2005/06

Multilateral Framework	\$1,000,000
Early Learning and Child Care Agreement	\$3,000,000

The majority of the Early Learning and Child Care funding is not captured in the provincial allocation above.

See RECENT DEVELOPMENTS section for description of spending.

SALARIES

Mean gross hourly wage for centre-based child care staff (full-and part-time staff combined - 2005)

	Median hourly	Median range (within which 80% fall)
Uncertified	\$7.01	<i>not available</i>
Certified ECEs	9.25	7.83 – 12.00
Certified ECEs in kindergarten	14.00	9.00 – 15.00
Special needs staff	9.00	<i>not available</i>

Source: Early Childhood Services survey in December 2005. Certified ECE’s based on 146 responses from 194 surveys. Certified ECE’s in Kindergarten based on 63 responses from 81 surveys.

Family child care

Information not available

FEES

Median monthly parent fees for centre-based full-time care (2005/06)

Infants	\$642	(\$30/day)
Toddlers	470	(\$22/day)
Preschool	428	(\$20/day)
School-age		<i>Information not available</i>

Source: Information provided by provincial officials from centre subsidy forms.

Average daily fee in family child care

Information not available

ADMINISTRATION

The Department of Social Services and Seniors is responsible for the regulation of child care services and management of government funds allocated to child care.

The Child Care Facilities Board is responsible for standards and regulations, monitoring, qualifications and certification of child care staff. The Board includes six members who represent the Department of Social Services & Seniors, the Department of Education, the Early Childhood Development Association and the public at large, and a Chair who is a public official.

The local offices of the Department of Social Services & Seniors are responsible for assessing eligibility for subsidy.

MUNICIPAL ROLE

There is no municipal role in development or delivery of child care.

CHILD CARE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Five principles guide the planning of child care: quality, affordability, accessibility, providing for children with special needs, and parent involvement.

Application to the Child Care Facilities Board for a license must include a needs assessment that documents the need for child care in a particular area.

■ RELATED PROGRAMS

Employment Initiatives

Employment Enhancement and Job Creation are programs for social assistance recipients. Parents enrolled in either program access regular child care subsidies to use the regulated system. The only exception is for those with infants who cannot find a space, or those who work odd, irregular hours. Those parents may access the same fund in the welfare system that provides for occasional babysitting. The provincial social assistance budget has \$50,000 for unregulated care.

■ HISTORY OF CHILD CARE AND OTHER ECEC SERVICES

1950s Head Start program for economically and culturally disadvantaged children was established in Charlottetown.

1969 Child care centres were initiated in north eastern rural Prince Edward Island with federal Regional Economic Expansion funding.

1971 St. Andrew's Child Development Centre was established as a full-time child care centre. The provincial Department of Social Services was responsible for monitoring and funding.

Funding arrangements were established to pay the full operating costs for six non-profit, community-based centres.

1973 The *Child Care Facilities Act* was enacted.

1974 The Early Childhood Development Association was established as a professional association of early childhood educators.

1977 The operating cost system was changed to a subsidy program for non-profit and for-profit programs.

1987 Implementation of direct grants to licensed child care programs.

1988 Introduction of special needs grants to child care programs enrolling children with special needs.

1993 Report of a working group set up by the Minister of Education recommended that the age of entry into kindergarten and Grade 1 remain as they were and that a standard kindergarten play-based curriculum be designed. Work of this committee was linked to the development of a common Atlantic curriculum for elementary and secondary schools.

Operating grants for both centre-based programs and family child care were reduced by 9% from 1992 levels (except for infants).

1998 \$600,000 from the National Child Benefit Reinvestment fund was used to raise subsidy eligibility levels 30% and to increase the subsidy rates.

Community Services, the Attorney General, and the Department of Education formed an interdepartmental health and social services committee on children. (The Coordinator of Community Services has the lead). Four objectives were developed:

- to encourage secure attachment
- to minimize known risks
- to maximize critical learning periods
- to support early intervention.

2000 Publicly-funded kindergarten was introduced for the first time.

November 2000 The government released *For Our Children: A Strategy for Healthy Child Development* and announced the establishment of the Premier's Council on Healthy Child Development to advise the premier on issues affecting young children in PEI. The Departments of Health and Social Services, Education, Development and Technology, the Office of the Attorney General, and Community and Cultural Affairs as well as community groups worked in partnership to implement the strategy. The Council monitored the implementation of the province's Healthy Child Development Strategy with a focus on child outcomes in the four goal areas identified by the Strategy: good health, safety and security, success at learning, and social engagement and responsibility. The Healthy Child Development Strategy is the responsibility of the five deputy ministers of the departments listed above.

2001 *The Review and Analysis of the Prince Edward Island ECE Industry*, based on *You Bet I Care!* and funded through a Labour Market Development Agreement with Human Resources Development Canada was undertaken.

2001/02 Funding was provided to the Early Childhood Development Association for a pilot project aimed at improving quality. The focus was children with special needs, based on the *Keeping the Door Open* model (see FURTHER READINGS, Lysack, M., 2001). Funds were provided for two staff to work with 200 child care staff in 29 centres. The goal was to expand the program to include all centres (this became the MIKE program, see 2003).

2001 The \$1.3 million Early Childhood Development Initiative funding was allocated as follows:

- early intervention for children with autism: \$700,000
- kindergarten: \$500,000
- support to the Premier's Council for the Healthy Child Development Strategy: \$100,000

A new Aboriginal two year ECE diploma program began development at Holland College.

2003/04 An accelerated ECEC program was introduced at Holland College under a Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA) with Human Resources Development Canada. To be eligible for the training, students must have at least three years experience in a child care centre, meet the Holland College entrance requirements and be a member of the Early Childhood Development Association. The program is a mix of classroom time and on the job training, which takes place in the centres in which the students are employed.

Partnerships for Children funding initiative was implemented to help develop and strengthen Children's Working Group networks. Activities included ECDA-developed salary scales and job descriptions, a public education campaign for parents on the work done by staff without qualifications, and a number of fact sheets.

June 2003 The first students graduated from the Holland College Aboriginal ECE diploma program.

July 2003 The Measuring and Improving Kids' Environments (MIKE) program, a partnership between PEI Department of Health & Social Services (DHSS), Early Childhood Development Association (ECDA) of PEI and licensed full-day early childhood centres across PEI, was introduced in an effort to improve quality. The on-site consultation model from *Keeping the Door Open* was used to inform and guide the work in the first 10-month cycle of the pilot (see 2001/02). The model uses external program consultants with training in early childhood education, experience in licensed centres and in the (ECERS-R), the Canadian Supplementary Scale (CSS), SpecialLink Child Care Inclusion Principles Scale (SCCIPS) and the Practices Profile. The consultation process involves gathering information and resources, conducting training and engaging individuals in an evaluation process. The program was funded by the DHSS as a component of the PEI Healthy Child Development Strategy.

September 2003 An Early Childhood Education and Care Committee was struck to make recommendations to the Healthy Child Development Deputy Ministers on future directions for ECEC programs and services. Recommendations were framed within the principles of the Multilateral Framework Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care.

Fall of 2004 Forty-nine early childhood centres (more than 50% of the full-day centres) received union certification from the Union of Public Service Employees (UPSE). Contract discussions began.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CHILD CARE AND OTHER ECEC SERVICES

Summer 2005 An Accelerated Francophone Early Childhood Education Diploma was offered to educators working within licensed francophone childcare centres by La Société éducative de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard, in collaboration with Cégep de St-Félicien. The program is offered over a three-period, with classes throughout the summers. Eleven students began the program in the summer of 2005 and will graduate in the summer of 2007.

November 2005 The Early Childhood Education and Care Committee developed a Criminal Record Check Manual to be used by PEI early childhood centres. The Early Childhood Development Association provides training to the centres in its use.

November/December 2005 Prince Edward Island received \$3 million through the Early Learning and Child Care Agreement in 2005/06 and \$2.8 million in 2006/07.

In 2005/06 the fund was used to provide:

- a one-time wage enhancement of \$3,000 per certified staff working in licensed early childhood centres;
- a \$10,000 resource and administration grant per pre-school centre, and
- a "parent share holiday" that provided parents receiving partial subsidy three months relief from their parental portion of the fees beyond any minimum required.

Child care subsidy rates were raised to \$30/day for infants, \$23/day for 2-year olds and \$22/day for 3-5 year olds.

The annual infant grant was increased from \$250.00 per infant space to \$500.00 per infant space.

Summer 2006 The BRIDGES program was announced. The Departments of Education, Social Services and Seniors and the Early Childhood Development Association will collaborate to offer seamless support in the areas of curriculum development, program delivery and parental engagement. The Bridges Project combines the work of the kindergarten mentors and the MIKE consultants under a new Early Childhood Resource Team. Included on this team will be other professionals as required, such as speech language pathologists and occupational therapists.

Collectively the team:

- Supports early learning and child care program Supervisors/Administrators/Owners with learning environments, training and mentoring
- Encourages quality of early learning programs
- Helps enhance the level of integration of children with special needs
- Encourages a community of learning within the early childhood sector

As of November 2006, contract negotiations were underway with Union of Public Service Employees (UPSE) and the majority of full-day licensed early childhood centres.

Effective April 2007 the subsidy eligibility levels were increased as follows:

	Previous annual net income thresholds	Annual net income thresholds effective April 1, 2007
1 parent, 1 child	\$13,400 - \$25,440	\$15,400 - \$27,440
2 parents, 2 children	\$19,200 - \$51,040	\$21,200 - \$53,040

■ KEY PROVINCIAL ECEC ORGANIZATIONS

Early Childhood Development Association of Prince Edward Island

40 Enman Crescent, Suite 147

PO Box 23055

Charlottetown, PE C1E 1Z6

Telephone: 902-368-1866 / 1-866-368-1866

Facsimile: 902-569-7900

Email: info@ecda.pe.ca

Website: www.ecda.pe.ca

Early Learning Operators of Prince Edward Island

c/o Campus Kids Child Care Centre

550 University Avenue

Charlottetown, PE C1A 4P3

Telephone: 902-566-0344