

Saskatchewan

PROVINCIAL CONTEXT

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

0-2 yrs	37,500
3-5	37,900
6-12	93,400
Total 0-12	168,900

Note: Total may not add up due to rounding.

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

0-2 yrs	22,800
3-5	24,100
6-12	65,800
Total 0-12	112,600

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	14,325	4,365	90
5-9	13,710	3,985	40
10-14	11,585	3,715	30

Note: These 1996 data are the latest currently available.

Children 0-14 yrs with disabilities (2001)

Age	Number of children with disabilities	Rate of children with disabilities (%)
0-4	850	1.7
5-9	1,860	3.2
10-14	2,780	4.3
Total 0-14 yrs	5,480	3.2

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	21,000	64.9
3-5	14,000	73.5
6-15	46,000	81.7

FAMILY-RELATED LEAVE

Maternity leave

18 weeks.

Parental leave

Birth mothers may take 34 weeks immediately following maternity leave. The other parent may also take up to 37 weeks. These parental leaves may be taken consecutively.

Adoption leave

Primary caregiver may take 18 weeks of adoption leave, followed by 34 weeks of parental leave. Other parent may take up to 37 weeks which may be taken consecutively.

Births and EI maternity claims

Number of births (2000): 12,140

Number of initial maternity claims allowed (2000-2001): 5,280

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

KINDERGARTEN

LEGISLATION

Saskatchewan. Legislative Assembly. *Education Act*. 1995. E-02. Amended 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002.

PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR KINDERGARTEN

Saskatchewan Learning.

Saskatchewan is one of three provinces (and the territories) that continues to fund and deliver denominational education. Both "public" and Catholic school boards are publicly funded.

KINDERGARTEN SERVICES

KINDERGARTEN

Kindergarten is delivered in public schools under boards and private schools (as defined in *Education Act*). Part-time kindergarten is provided for five year olds. The *Education Act* requires at least 80 full school day equivalents. Schedules and total time vary by school division.

Kindergarten is not compulsory (although more than 90% attend) nor is it an entitlement; provision is determined by school divisions.

PRE-KINDERGARTEN

Pre-kindergarten may be provided part-day for children "at risk" in targeted communities that meet specified eligibility criteria (low socio-economic status, 40% Aboriginal population, high proportion of children with special needs). Schools in these communities may be designated "community schools" and if they choose to have pre-K, receive provincial funds.

Selected three and four year old children in community schools are referred by public health nurses, school board offices or Social Services. The family may also make a request because of inability to afford other options or the child may meet criteria for special education. The parents must make a commitment to participate in the program, which must be offered for a minimum of 12 hours per week. There are 89 pre-K programs.

AGE ELIGIBILITY

There is no provincial kindergarten eligibility age; this varies by school division. (For Grade 1, a child must be six years old by December 31.)

CLASS SIZE

There is no provincial class size limit in kindergartens. However, some school divisions set limits.

The average/mean class size is not known.

There is no provincial policy regarding teaching assistants.

In pre-kindergartens, there is a staff:child ratio of 1:8 with a group size of 16 (one teacher and one assistant).

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

There is a provincial policy (Special Education policy for K-Grade 12); children with special needs are included in regular kindergarten.

Provincial funds are provided for extra supports for children with identified special needs such as special needs assistants

KINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT

Five year olds (2001): 11,961

Three and four year olds: approximately 1,400

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Must have Saskatchewan teacher certification. There are no ECE requirements.

No qualifications are needed for teaching assistants.

CURRICULUM

There is a provincial kindergarten curriculum, Children First (1994). The approach is "learning through play" in a developmentally appropriate curriculum.

Pre-K

Schools are expected to develop a program based on the kindergarten curriculum and to collect data and information for evaluation purposes.

SPENDING ON KINDERGARTEN (2001)

Average per child spending on kindergarten

Grants per child

Rural: \$2,189

Regina/Saskatoon: \$2,069

Total spending on kindergarten

Information not available.

SPECIAL FEATURES

See pre-K programs for children “at risk”.

REGULATED CHILD CARE

LEGISLATION

Saskatchewan. Legislative Assembly. *The Child Care Act*. Bill 8, 1990 as amended by the Statutes of Saskatchewan, 2000.

Saskatchewan. Legislative Assembly. *The Child Care Regulations*. 2001.

PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILD CARE

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CHILD CARE SERVICES

UNREGULATED CHILD CARE

Unregulated family child care

Maximum number of children permitted: 8

Figure includes the caregiver’s own children under 13 years. Of the eight, five may be younger than six years; of these five, only two may be younger than 30 months.

Nursery schools

Part-time preschools that operate less than three hours/ day or three days/week are not regulated.

REGULATED CHILD CARE

Child care centres

Child care centres provide care to children in group settings. Centres must have a license from the Child Day Care Branch and may care for up to 90 children from six weeks to and including 12 years. Child care centres include non-profit services, governed by parent boards of directors, and for-profit services that have parent advisory committees.

School-age child care

Care outside of school hours for children 0-12 in a mixed-age centre, family child care home or in a program solely for school-age children. Programs in schools solely for school-aged children are not regulated.

Family child care homes

Family child care homes are operated by individuals in their principal place of residence. A person providing these services may care for up to eight children depending on the children’s ages (five children younger than six years; of these five, only two may be younger than 30 months).

Group family child care homes

Group family child care homes are operated by individuals in a residence and are licensed for up to 12 children. The caregiver must have an assistant adult caregiver in attendance when the numbers or ages of children permitted in family child care homes are exceeded (more than eight children, more than five preschool, or more than three infants).

Teen student support family child care homes

Teen student support homes are family child care homes formally associated with a high school providing child care services to children of parents attending the high school. Teen student support family child care homes are licensed to care for up to six children, depending on their ages.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The Child Care Inclusion Program provides funding to child care facilities to include children with diverse needs in child care programs. Individual inclusion grants are available to licensed centres and child care homes to include children experiencing a delay or a condition of risk that may result in a delay. For a centre to receive this grant, the child needs a referral but not necessarily a diagnosis and is required to attend the program for a minimum of 20 hours per month. The amount of the grant varies from \$200 to \$300 per month depending on the need within three defined levels. This grant is an entitlement for eligible children.

An enhanced accessibility grant of up to \$1,500/month may be paid to assist with the additional cost of including a child with exceptionally high diverse needs. For this grant, the child must have diagnosis and require significant additional support and the parents must be enrolled in an education program or employed. There may be waiting lists for enhanced accessibility grants if the budget is fully expended.

A training and resource grant of \$100 (\$200 for exceptional needs) per child with diverse needs may be available as well as a grant of up to \$600 (\$1,200 for exceptional needs) for adapted equipment required to meet the needs of the child.

Inclusion grants are approved for a one year period and then are reviewed; enhanced accessibility grants for a maximum of six months, after which time the facility must reapply for funding.

Funding for inclusive child care is intended to support the centre as a whole and not to provide a worker allocated to a specific child. Parents of children with special needs pay for the space, but not the additional supports.

ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE

Saskatchewan does not license child care programs on-reserve.

The First Nations/Inuit Child Care Initiative has resulted in the development of approximately 45 on-reserve child care centres.

Approximately 15% of all licensed child care programs not on-reserve have a strong Aboriginal program component.

SPACE STATISTICS

Number of regulated child care spaces (2001)

Centre-based spaces	
– Infants	283
– Toddlers	920
– Preschool	2,903
– School-age	845
Total centre-based spaces	4,951
Family child care	2,215
Total regulated spaces	7,166

Children with special needs in regulated child care (2001) 275

Note: This includes the estimated number of children with diverse needs in four centres receiving pilot funding of \$75 per licensed space.

Children receiving subsidies (2001) 3,684

Subsidized children as a proportion of total regulated spaces (2001) 51%

Sponsorship of regulated full-time centre spaces (2001)

Non-profit	4,878
For-profit	73

Note: 32 of the non-profit spaces are in a municipally operated centre.

STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

REGULATED CENTRES

Maximum centre size 90 spaces

Note: Maximum of 12 infant spaces.

Maximum staff:child ratios and group sizes

Age	Staff:child ratios	Max. group size
Infants	1:3	6
Toddlers	1:5	10
Preschool (30 mos-6 yrs)	1:10	20
School-age (6-12 yrs)	1:15	30

Staff qualification requirements

Saskatchewan has three levels of certification:

- ECE III – two year diploma in child care or equivalent
- ECE II – one year certificate in child care or equivalent
- ECE I – 120 hour child care orientation course or equivalent provided through regional community colleges

Centre directors hired after July 2001 must meet or exceed the qualifications of an ECE III (two year diploma in child care or equivalent). Directors appointed to a centre director position prior to July 2001 must meet or exceed the qualifications of an ECE II (one year certificate or equivalent) but must upgrade to a two year diploma if they accept employment with another centre.

Effective January 2002, all staff employed in a centre for at least 65 hours per month must meet the qualifications of an ECE I (120 hour child care orientation course or equivalent provided through regional community colleges). By January 2005, 30% of staff must have a one year certificate in child care or equivalent. By January 2007, a further 20% of staff must have a two year diploma or equivalent.

Individuals must apply to the Child Day Care Branch for certification. Child Day Care sets out the requirements for classification, and the courses required to achieve equivalency status.

All staff members in each centre must have completed a first-aid and CPR course.

Parent involvement

Non-profit child care centres are administered by parent boards; 51% of the board members must be parents who are using the program. For-profit child care centres are required to have parent advisory committees.

Licensing, monitoring and enforcement

Thirteen provincial program consultants develop, license, monitor and consult with both centres and family child care homes and conduct two visits annually. A provincial program consultant is not required to have a background in early childhood education.

A facility may be issued a conditional license; conditions may be continued as long as necessary, and may be amended as required. If the unmet requirements cannot or have not been remedied, a provisional license can be issued as long as the health and safety of children is not at risk. If the noncompliance is not corrected within the specified period (to a maximum of six months) the license will be revoked. There is no appeal board or formal appeal mechanism but the facility may appeal directly to the Minister of Social Services.

REGULATED FAMILY CHILD CARE

Regulation

Individually licensed.

Maximum capacity

Family child care homes

Up to eight children (including the provider's own children under 13 years) between six weeks and 12 years. Of the eight children, only five may be younger than six years; of these five, only two may be younger than 30 months.

Group family child care homes

Up to 12 children (including the provider's and assistant's own children under 13 years). Of the 12 children, only 10 may be younger than six years, of these 10, only five may be younger than 30 months and only three younger than 18 months.

Teen student support family child care homes

Up to six children (including the provider's own children under 13 years). Of these six children, no more than four may be younger than six years; of these four, only two may be younger than 30 months.

Provider qualification requirements

Must be 18 years old. All require an orientation session with a program consultant and first-aid/CPR training, plus six hours of professional development workshops each licensing year.

Providers whose homes are licensed after July 2001 must have a 40 hour introductory early childhood education course within the first year of licensing.

Providers in group family child care homes have three years to complete the 120 hour orientation course (ECE I). Assistants require first-aid and CPR training, plus six hours of professional development each licensing year.

Licensing, monitoring and enforcement

Program consultants conduct annual visits to renew licenses in addition to periodic drop-in visits throughout the year.

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. To be eligible for consideration, parents must be employed or seeking employment, attending school or a training program, receiving medical treatment, or have a child with special needs. If the parent meets one of these criteria, an income test is applied.

Subsidies are available only to non-profit child care centres or regulated family child care homes. The minimum user fee is 10% of the actual cost of care. Centres and regulated family child care homes may surcharge subsidized parents above the 10% minimum.

The average cost to a subsidized parent above the subsidy (surcharge) is 30-40% of the fee. The Child Day Care Branch pays the parent portion of the fees of children with diverse needs whose parents are on social assistance and not involved in a training, employment or rehabilitation program. The funding is paid to the centre or regulated family child care provider on behalf of the parent.

Although the number of subsidies is not capped, the total funding available for subsidies is limited. Centres must be approved to receive subsidies and new centres may be on a waiting list. Subsidies follow the child (provided the child attends a centre that is approved for subsidy).

Parents may be eligible for subsidy for up to four months while actively looking for work. A two parent family in which both parents are looking for work is not eligible for a subsidy. A parent who does not secure employment within the four months may not reapply for subsidy for the purpose of looking for work for one year unless he/she has been in school or a training program for at least four months.

Funding is provided to parents on social assistance who are involved in an employment, training or rehabilitation program to pay for the parent portion of regulated care, or the community average cost of unregulated care. Payment is made to the parent and is paid for by the Saskatchewan Assistance Program.

Eligibility for child care fee subsidy (gross income, 2001)

	Turning point	Break-even point
1 parent, 1 child	\$19,668	\$31,920
1 parent, 2 children	20,868	45,720

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.

(Note: Saskatchewan uses gross income level to determine eligibility; other provinces use net income. The figures, therefore, are not directly comparable across jurisdictions).

Maximum monthly subsidy by age of child (2001)

	Regulated centre	Regulated family child care homes
Infants	\$325	\$265
Toddlers	285	265
Preschool	235	235
School-age	200*	200*

**Increases to \$235/month for the summer months.*

PUBLIC FUNDING FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE (2001)

One-time funding

Start-up grants

Child care centres	\$600/space
Family child care homes	\$400/home
Family child care homes (north)	\$600/home
Group family child care homes	\$600/home
Group family child care homes (north)	\$900/home
School-age	\$300/space

Tuition reimbursement

\$70 per class, or \$200 per orientation course per centre staff

Recurring funding

Early childhood services grants

Infants	\$226.67/space/month
Toddler	\$136/space/month
Preschool	\$68.00/space/month
School-age	\$45.33/space/month

Grants are equivalent to \$680/month per staff as required by child:staff ratios

Teen support services grants

Centres

- \$325/infant space/month
- \$290/toddler space/month

Homes

- \$350/designated space/month (maximum three spaces)

Equipment grants

Family child care homes	\$100/space/year
Northern centres	\$100/space/year

Special needs funding

Individual inclusion

- Grants to assist centres and homes with costs with the additional supervision costs associated with caring for a child with diverse needs.

Level I program	\$200/month
Level II program	\$250/month
Level III program	\$300/month

Enhanced accessibility

- Grants to assist centres and homes with the additional supervision costs associated with the caring for a child with exceptionally high diverse needs whose parents are working or in training — up to \$1,500/month.

Training and resource grant

- \$100/child with diverse needs (\$200 for exceptionally high diverse needs)

Adapted equipment grant

- \$600/year (\$1,200 in exceptional circumstances)

PROVINCIAL ALLOCATIONS FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE (2001)

Fee subsidies \$9,850,392*

One-time funding

Start-up grants	118,200
Special needs equipment grant	10,199

Recurring funding

Centre operating grant	3,708,683
Family child care home equipment grant	240,750
Northern equipment grant	22,800
Northern transportation grant	10,200
Inclusive child care grants	754,750
Teen/infant centre grants	711,700
Preschool support programs	470,563

(See HISTORY, 1997 for details)

Other funding

Community solutions	316,746
Pilot projects	116,928
Total	\$16,311,911

**The subsidy funding includes \$124,000 paid to regulated child care facilities for the parent portion of children with diverse needs whose parents are on social assistance and not involved in an employment, training or rehabilitation program.*

Other funding

Funding from the Social Assistance Program paid directly to parents on social assistance who are involved in an employment, training or rehabilitation program. (\$1,000,000 for the parent portion of regulated care and \$800,000 for unregulated care.)

SALARIES**Mean gross hourly wage for centre-based child care staff (2001)**

\$10.95

Source: Figure provided by the Child Day Care Division. Calculated adding the impact of government wage funding to You Bet I Care! (1998) data as a baseline.

Family child care

Information not available.

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

Infants (Age 0-17 mos)	\$481
Toddlers (Age 18 mos-3 yrs)	420
Preschool (Age 3-5.11 yrs)	384
School-age	277

Source: Figure provided by the Child Day Care Branch from the database of attendance records of the child care centres.

Average monthly fee in family child care (2001)

Infants (Age 0-17 mos)	\$435
Toddlers (Age 18 mos-3 yrs)	413
Preschool (Age 3-5.11 yrs)	377
School-age	286

Source: Figure provided by the Child Day Care Branch from the database of attendance records of family child care homes.

ADMINISTRATION

The Child Day Care Branch (Income Security Division), Department of Social Services administers the legislation and is responsible for initiating child care services,

consultation, and standards and training. Monitoring, licensing, and consultation are provided through two regional offices and five sub-offices.

MUNICIPAL AND OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROLES

Saskatchewan legislation provides for child care centres administered by municipalities. As of 2001, one centre had been licensed under this provision.

CHILD CARE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

A government-appointed Child Care Advisory Board advises on child care issues and may assist in the establishment of long-term program directions.

Currently, new non-profit or for-profit centres and family child care homes apply to the province for a license to operate. If the regulations are met, a license is granted. Subsidies and grants are subject to approval and availability.

There is neither a formal written government statement of principles for child care nor a plan.

RELATED SERVICES

Kids First

Established in 2001, this is a five-year initiative to provide “early childhood supports” targeted to “high risk” families and their children. It is the responsibility of the Early Childhood Development Unit overseen by the departments of Health, Social Services, Education, Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs. Unit staff assist targeted communities with the development and implementation of the program. The initiative contains several program elements including early childhood education, child care and parent support, home visiting to identified families and pre-natal outreach and screening to assist in Fetal Alcohol Syndrome prevention.

Funded through the intergovernmental Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI), \$8.4 million of the \$10 million 2001 funding is allocated to Kids First to address the needs of vulnerable children and their families during the pre-natal period to age five. In its initial year, nine targeted communities in the province are receiving funding.

Community Solutions Program

The Community Solutions Program provides funding to community organizations for projects that promote and support inclusion of children and families with special needs, that support labour force attachment, that are workplace sponsored or that meet the needs of rural or northern communities. Projects must have an attachment to a regulated child care service.

HISTORY OF CHILD CARE AND OTHER ECEC SERVICES

1975 New child care regulations were passed under the authority of *The Family Services Act* describing eligibility, the process of licensing, standards of operation and available grants and subsidies. Family day

care homes and child care centres that were incorporated, non-profit and parent controlled could be licensed and were eligible for funding.

1980 An interdepartmental government report, *The Day Care Review*, identified affordability, availability and quality as key issues.

Action Child Care, an advocacy group based in Saskatoon, was established.

1980s Period characterized by very little expansion in services or funding and growth of unlicensed centres. (It should be noted that it was possible to operate an unlicensed centre because there was no limit set on the number of children in unregulated child care).

1990 The *Child Care Act* and *Regulations* were proclaimed. They required licensing of all centres and establishing training requirements of 130 hours.

1992 The Minister of Social Services appointed a Child Care Advisory Board to advise on current child care issues and to assist in the establishment of long-time program directions; this included eight community participants representing provincial and national child care organizations. The province introduced a tuition subsidy of one third of the cost of the 130 hour required orientation course for child care staff.

A review of child care in Saskatchewan was completed, resulting in the report *Breaking New Ground in Child Care* which provided a framework for child care reform in Saskatchewan. The review identified these guiding principles for child care:

- parents should be free to choose their preferred child care (licensed or unlicensed);
- affordability should not be a barrier to choice;
- child care should be community-based and provide responsive programming.

1993 Grants were introduced to encourage initiation of work-related child care centres. They will cover 50% of development and capital costs up to a total of \$10,000.

1995 A number of initiatives in response to the principles for reform identified in the child care review were introduced. An education campaign was introduced to assist parents in selecting and monitoring child care arrangements. Child care resource centres were established throughout the province. Subsidies for infants and toddlers were increased and new child development grant rates were established. Funds were also made available for the development of pilot projects in rural and northern Saskatchewan.

Differential subsidies by age group were introduced.

1996 A child care wage enhancement was announced as part of Saskatchewan's *Action Plan for Children*. The grant is for trained staff (those who had completed the 130 hour training program) and is based on required staff: child ratios. In 1996, the grant was \$75/staff/month and was increased in each of the three subsequent years. By 1999/2000, the grant was \$262.50/staff/month.

1997 A one time capital grant program for renovations was announced.

Saskatchewan Education introduced a pre-kindergarten prevention and early intervention program for three and four year old children "at risk".

Development of Aboriginal child care continued with the aim of a child care centre on each of Saskatchewan's 72 reserves if it is appropriate (most centres are quite small).

Saskatchewan Education and Saskatchewan Social Services released *La Loche and Prince Albert Preschool Support Pilot Projects: Year Three Report and Program Summary*. It describes the implementation and evaluation of two preschool pilot projects established. The projects emphasize self-help, intellectual and social skill development. Medical care, such as immunizations and dental checkups were part of the program.

The report states that most children showed gains on observational checklists, particularly in areas of social and intellectual development, as well as improved health and easier transition to kindergarten. In addition, it notes that parents participated more in upgrading programs and that family function and parental self-esteem also improved.

After the pilot period ended, the programs were licensed as child care programs and were provided with full operational funding, as there were no other mechanisms or alternatives to maintain viability.

A child care review identified a need for flexible options for licensed child care for rural Saskatchewan. Extended family day care homes each accommodating a maximum of 12 children were piloted in rural communities.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CHILD CARE AND OTHER ECEC SERVICES

1999 A review of the Child Development (special needs) program was completed which resulted in a new direction away from individual assessments and supports to inclusive and mainstream services. The Community Solutions Grant was created to support inclusive services and partnerships, the Enhanced Accessibility Grant was implemented to support access for very high need children of working families, and a Centre Inclusion Grant (block funding) was piloted in four centres with large numbers of children with special needs.

1998 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 — Saskatchewan scored 4.1 on the ECERS-R (preschool rooms), 4.2 on the ITERS (infant rooms), and 4.5 on the FDCRS (family child care). (See Table 25 for elaboration.)

2000 The wage enhancement grant was amalgamated with the centre operating grant to become the Early Childhood Services Grant. The grant is based on the required staff:child ratios and is currently the equivalent of \$680/month/required staff.

2000 and 2001 *The Child Care Act* and accompanying Regulations were amended to allow for group family child care homes to change the funding mechanisms and to increase early childhood training requirements.

2001 \$1.019 million of the \$10 million in Early Childhood Development Initiative funding was allocated to child care for:

- enhanced operating funding to child care centres
- training and equipment grants for family child care
- professional development.

In addition, \$370,000 was allocated to the Early Childhood Intervention Program (ECIP), \$200,000 to Saskatchewan Learning to expand their pre-kindergarten programs and \$100,000 for an initiative to reduce infant mortality. The balance (\$8.4 million) was allocated to Kids First (see related services).

KEY PROVINCIAL ECEC ORGANIZATIONS

Saskatchewan Early Childhood Association
510 Cynthia Street
Saskatoon, SK S7L 7K7
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Facsimile: 306-975-0879

TEACHERS' ORGANIZATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS

Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation
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Email: stf@stf.sk.ca
Website: www.stf.sk.ca