
MOVING FROM PRIVATE TO PUBLIC PROCESSES TO CREATE CHILD CARE IN CANADA

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This project has been a team effort, with all members contributing and collaborating on various aspects of the project. However, some pieces of the work were led by specific team members with particular expertise or interest.

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Carol Ann Young was Senior Social Planner with the City of Vancouver Social Policy and Projects department. Her expertise was key to the material on land use planning, demand forecasting, the section on planning and in other elements of the report.

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About the Childcare Resource and Research Unit

The Childcare Resource and Research Unit (CRRU) is an independent policy research institute that focuses on early childhood education and care (ECEC) and family policy. Founded in 1982 as part of the Centre for Urban and Community Studies at the University of Toronto, CRRU has been an independent non-profit organization since 2007. With a mandate to work towards to a universal, high quality, publicly funded, inclusive ECEC system in Canada, CRRU's basic operating premise is that the best possible evidence about policy and practice drawn from data, multidisciplinary research and policy analysis has a key role to play in informing, developing and interpreting public policy.

About Employment and Social Development Canada's Early Learning and Child Care Innovation Fund

The federal [Innovation Initiative](#) – backed by \$100 million over a decade is part of federal/provincial/territorial/Indigenous/community collaboration on early learning and child care for all children and families. These activities are shaped by two policy statements, the 2017 [Multilateral Framework Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care](#) (MFA), which defines five common principles for ELCC: Accessibility, Affordability, Quality, Inclusiveness and Flexibility, and the framework agreement on Indigenous Canadian early learning and child care and the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework (IELCC) (2018). The project was funded under this Initiative and is consistent with its intention to “improve early learning and child care services for all Canadian families and their children by developing innovative approaches...”.

1 What is this project about? What are its starting points?

One of the characteristics of Canada's child care situation is that accessibility¹, defined as availability of a place, is limited. As the numbers and waiting lists illustrate, spaces in regulated child care are in short supply. This is especially true for some age groups, language and cultural groups, for some categories of parents such as non-standard hours' workers, Indigenous Canadians, newcomers to Canada, and families living in some provinces, regions or neighbourhoods. This is not a new situation; limited access due to the short supply of regulated child care has been identified as an issue since the Royal Commission on the Status of Women highlighted this in 1970. Limited availability of child care spaces was discussed again in detail in the first federal study of child care in Canada, the Report of the [*Task Force on Child Care*](#) (1987) and has remained a perpetual fixture of the Canadian child care debate in subsequent years.

As long ago as 1981, an Ontario government policy paper, Day Care Policy: Background Paper observed that:

The responsibility for planning and developing day nurseries in Ontario is left to initiatives in the community. There is no legislation requiring that day care be provided. Because of the reliance on community initiatives, the Province has little ability to influence the extent or location of services; the Province marginally influences the types of centres that are developed

1 The term "accessibility" is usually used to mean child care is available, affordable and appropriate for the child and family. In the Multilateral Framework Agreement, "accessibility" is used to mean "availability", so the term is used that way in this paper.

by providing capital grants only to public and non-profit organizations. As a result, there are great variations in the types and distribution of services from region to region, county to county and municipality to municipality (Ministry of Community and Social Services, Ontario, 1981: 24).

The approach to developing child care across Canada has not fundamentally changed since this 40-year-old observation, although there have been, at different times initiatives for developing child care by provinces, territories and municipalities. This project is exploratory because—in contrast to the other issues identified as principles by the Government of Canada in the Multilateral Framework Agreement – Affordability, Quality and Inclusivity—there has not been cause-and-effect exploration of why the availability of child care has remained such a lasting long-term problem in Canada. Thus, this exploratory project’s long-term goal is to contribute to improving the availability of child care services to improve access. We propose to do this by contributing to informed debate aimed at motivating a shift away from the historical Canadian practice of treating creation of child care services as a primarily as a private responsibility.

The alternative to treating child care service creation as a private responsibility is a more proactive, publicly managed, planned, intentional and integrated approach based on assumption of greater public responsibility for the availability, characteristics and distribution of licensed child care. Our supposition is that greater public management will build more available and accessible, more equitable, and more effective distribution of child care services. The project aims to strengthen understanding by policy makers, service providers, advocates, community members and parents that the Canada-wide problem of limited, uneven, inequitable child care space availability must be tackled more systemically if ELCC services are to become more widely and equitably available.

As a report on municipal involvement in child care in Alberta noted, “For families in all parts of Canada, one’s ability to find and to afford child care services depends on where you live, the age and developmental level of your children and your household income rather than your specific

needs for ELCC” (Muttart Foundation, 2011: 4). The special situation of the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the danger of relying heavily on the private sphere’s development, delivery and maintenance of what is demonstrably an essential service (Friendly, Ballantyne & Anderson, 2020) or – as an Ontario municipal child care official described it – by “relying on the good will of people deciding to open up child care services”.

Going forward over the next few years as Canada moves from the acute phase of the pandemic to recovery and to reconstructing the economy, reliable child care services to support parents’ employment and children’s well being will be critical. Not only is there the reality that some child care supply has already been, and will continue to be, lost to the pandemic through closures and reduced capacity, but employed parents who could not access regulated services pre-pandemic also need to be supported with child care. Consequently, there has emerged in Canada, and elsewhere, a greater imperative than ever before for finding more effective ways of creating and maintaining child care services than has been the case in Canada to date.

It is important to keep in mind that child care availability and child care affordability cannot be divorced from one another as separate “wicked problems” to be solved, nor can these issues be divorced from a third problem—the importance of improving the wages and working conditions of the child care workforce (Cleveland, 2018; Child Care Now, 2019). The child care workforce is one of the main determinants of child care quality and child care availability, as quality child care services need educated child care workers to operate. Finally, staff wages are closely linked to affordability in Canada, as parent fees remain the primary revenue by which services pay their staff. Thus, it is necessary to focus on three elements simultaneously: **accessibility/ availability**, making child care affordable, and **improving quality** by tackling child care workforce issues. While recognizing that these three elements are intertwined and of equal importance in building a child care system, this project’s main focus is on service availability—creating and expanding child care services to meet families’ needs.

Overview of the paper and the project

This paper examines the private creation of Canadian child care services in contrast to the more publicly managed approaches used in countries with further developed child care systems. We make the argument that moving to a more publicly managed, planned and intentional model is necessary for addressing Canada's child care dilemma, as the insufficient supply of early learning and child care services will remain a barrier to meeting families' need for child care equitably, fairly and effectively, impeding Canada's ability for a vigorous recovery from the pandemic.

The paper first sets out goals and a set of assumptions for early learning and child care. Then as a starting point, it elaborates on the view that Canada's current market model of child care provision is the key over-arching structural reason that a sufficient supply of the services families and children need has not developed; indeed, the market model is the wrong model for the purpose. We explore the consequences of the market approach and examine it in more detail, including how the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 has exacerbated and highlighted child care market failure and made more urgent the need for a more effective way of developing reliable, quality child care services as a high priority for economic rebuilding (Friendly, Forer, Vickerson & Mohamed, 2020; Friendly, Ballantyne & Anderson, 2020). This is followed by a description of how Norway rapidly expanded its child care services including the context, structures, initiatives and levers.

The next chapter's sections explore a selection of public management resources, or tools that can play a role in moving child care creation toward a public management model based on greater public responsibility and effective use of "tools". This aims to encourage on-the-ground adoption of more public management resources that can be useful for moving towards a more intentional, public approach to child care service creation and expansion. Each resource section identifies the issue addressed, the context, its current state in Canada, illustrative case "spotlights" or examples and other useful resources such as readings, video, links and other supportive material related to the topic are provided.

A first phase of this project focused on consultation with child care community experts about what kinds of approaches to more intentional child care service development would be useful in Canada’s “mixed model” of child care provision. We also reviewed relevant literature, which is referenced throughout and listed in the References section at the end of the paper. The public management resources included are not assumed to constitute an exhaustive list. They include:

- Planning for child care;
- How municipal roles in child care contribute to creating services;
- How publicly delivered child care services contribute to accessibility;
- Building critical mass in the non-profit child care sector;
- Non-standard hours child care, a hard-to-serve need;
- Assessing child care needs and forecasting demand.

Vision, goals and assumptions underpinning this project

This project’s approach begins with a vision consistent with the federal Frameworks on Early Learning and Child Care. The federal Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care (MLF) sets out a vision of a country “where all children can experience the enriching environment of quality early learning and child care that supports children’s development to reach their full potential”, also stating that “the further development of early learning and child care systems is one of the best investments that governments can make to strengthen the social and economic fabric of our country.” It calls for systems to be “respectful of language and culture and in particular recognize the unique needs of French and English linguistic minority communities and those identified by provinces and territories in their action plans, and of Indigenous peoples” (Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC, 2017). The MLF also sets out five principles for ELCC provision: accessibility, affordability, quality, inclusivity and flexibility. The Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework (IELCC) also sets out a vision—one that sees Indigenous “children and families supported by a comprehensive and

coordinated system of ELCC policies, programs and services that are led by Indigenous peoples, rooted in Indigenous knowledge, cultures and languages, and supported by strong partnerships of holistic, accessible and flexible programming that is inclusive of the needs and aspirations of Indigenous children and families” (ESDC, 2018b).

Our conviction is that the best way to achieve this vision and principles is through a high quality ELCC system made up of multiple elements based on the best available evidence. Work explicating this perspective and based on comparative evidence, the [Quality by Design](#) project, drew on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) initial work on Starting Strong, based on a 20 country Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care (For documents making up this international work, see [OECD Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care](#)). The Quality by Design project concluded that “a system made up of a series of linked elements is the best way to ensure that high quality early learning and child care (ELCC) programs are the norm rather than the exception” and that “the elements that make up the system need to be taken into account together. Considered individually, their potential to have a positive impact will be weaker” (Friendly & Beach, 2006: 1).

In the last decade or so, the view that to achieve the vision, principles and goals for ELCC shared in Canada, a more public approach to a child care system is needed has been widely endorsed. A [Shared Framework](#) statement, developed and supported by child care and other community organizations, presented an analysis that is generally consistent with the government Frameworks subsequently adopted (Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, Canadian Child Care Federation, Childcare Resource and Research Unit & Campaign 2000, 2016). This statement identifies a universal child care system as the starting point. It emphasizes that ELCC is not a commodity but a public good and a human right, and that equity is a core value for ECEC policy and services. Since 2015, the work of the child care community has continued to strengthen these views ([Child Care Now](#), 2019).

Based on the evidence and the prevailing views about achieving accessible, affordable, high quality, inclusive early learning and child care, the following set of assumptions frame the work of this project:

- An ELCC system should be universally accessible – services should be available, affordable and equitable;
- An ELCC system should be publicly managed and treated as a public good, not a private responsibility, a commodity or a business opportunity;
- An ELCC system should be publicly funded, that is, not reliant on user fees. Public funding should encompass operational, supply-side funding and capital funding;
- An ELCC system should be based on early childhood education and child care integrated in a “strong and equal partnership”;
- An ELCC system should be supported by appropriate infrastructure such as data/research and legislation;
- An ELCC system should be based on partnerships and collaborations among levels of government, community and other experts;
- An ELCC system should be seen as complementary to and aligned with other family and social policy.

2 How, and by whom are child care services created in Canada?

Canada's "popcorn" model of child care service development

We often hear about new child care spaces or a centre being “created”, sometimes by a provincial or territorial government or even the federal government. What usually isn't spelled out is how those spaces are actually created, and by whom. Who is responsible for initiating a child care program? Who determines where it is, what groups of parents and what ages of children it's intended for? What language will be spoken? Will it be inclusive? How is it decided what kind of physical space or building it will be in or what curricular or pedagogical approach it will take? And what financial and human resources are available to do all this?

In Canada, whether or not child care services are available so parents can go to work and children can be well cared for mostly rests on whether private individuals initiate their creation, take it through the development process, maintain it, finance it, and sometimes decide when to shut it down. A local [Ontario news story](#) illustrates this. When Community Living Thunder Bay, which had operated a centre for toddlers, preschoolers and kindergarteners for 25 years, suddenly announced they would not reopen after the first COVID-19 shut down, working parents counting on their child care space had one day's notice to find an alternative, while all the staff suddenly lost their jobs. The non-profit organization – struggling to survive like others during the pandemic – commented that “the provision of non-specialized daycare services no longer fits our mandate” (Diaczuk, 2020).

Too often, what is now widely considered to be an essential community service is at the behest of private interests, which may be policy or mandate-related or associated with [private financial needs](#) or interests. This is not merely anecdotal. A study by University of British Columbia researchers Kershaw, Forer & Goelman titled *Hidden fragility: Closure among licensed child care facilities in British Columbia* found that 34% of surveyed centres and 48% of surveyed licensed family child care homes closed down over a four-year period (2005), showing that the child care service so many parents rely on is a fragile and too often ephemeral operation.

Child care researcher Susan Prentice has called this a "[popcorn model](#)". She observes that much of Canadian child care "pops up" rather than being planned intentionally and systematically, and she notes the limited, unequal access that is the result. Prentice observes that in Manitoba—where some elements of child care funding policy such as systemic operational funding and set parent fees have been developed in a more systemic, "public" way than in some other provinces—the responsibility for initiating and developing services is almost entirely carried out by non-profit² community groups (Robertson, 2019). In all provinces/territories, developing a child care centre is ordinarily set in motion, maintained and may be closed down by voluntary organizations, parent groups or large and small entrepreneurs — all private actors with their own limitations, agendas and interests. Though there are some notable exceptions to this approach across Canada, the default assumption is that developing child care is a private responsibility, with governments' usual roles in developing and maintaining child care being secondary and relatively limited.

Governments have many responsibilities for child care in Canada. Since 2017, the federal government has transferred funds to provinces/territories under bilateral agreements associated with the Multilateral Framework Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care (Pasolli, 2019), and to Indigenous organizations in association with the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Agreement. Provincial/territorial governments—which have the main jurisdictional responsibility—and municipi-

² As a result of provincial child care policy, most Manitoba child care has long been not-for-profit, with a very small for-profit sector.

pal governments in Ontario administer, define, facilitate and fund many elements of child care. All provinces/territories regulate characteristics of physical facilities and environments, such as square footage per child, presence, size and proximity of outdoor space, kitchen facilities if food is prepared on site. All provinces/territories provide some operating funding and some lower-income eligible families receive help paying fees in the form of fee subsidies in all jurisdictions except Quebec (Friendly, Feltham, Mohamed, Nguyen, Vickerson, & Forer, In press). At different times, some provincial/territorial governments have made capital funds available to private non-profit or occasionally to for-profit child care operators, often through grant programs or by identifying general priorities for service development, for example, child care in workplaces. Some of the provinces/territories have – at different times – undertaken proactive initiatives at different times to assist with or motivate development of child care services to meet identified priorities. In [one example](#) under Newfoundland and Labrador's Capacity Initiative, community groups have conducted surveys and documented the need for child care in their communities; in 2017, five centres were chosen and announced, all to be developed and maintained by not-for-profit community organizations. In another example, Nova Scotia's [Strategic Growth Initiative](#) prioritized creation and expansion of child care in under-served communities, including Acadian/Francophone, African Nova Scotian, Indigenous, newcomer communities and rural communities, especially infant-toddler care. Across Canada, there have been a number of such initiatives, some of which are explored in more detail in subsequent parts of this paper.

But across Canada, developing child care provision has most often been treated as a private responsibility, with government playing a regulatory, supporting and occasionally facilitating role for the creators and managers of most Canadian child care services—large and small non-profit "third sector"³ groups and large or small entrepreneurs— rather than by ensuring through ongoing public processes that child care services are

3 The **third sector** is defined as neither profit-making nor public; it includes charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups that deliver essential services, help to improve people's wellbeing and contribute to economic growth.

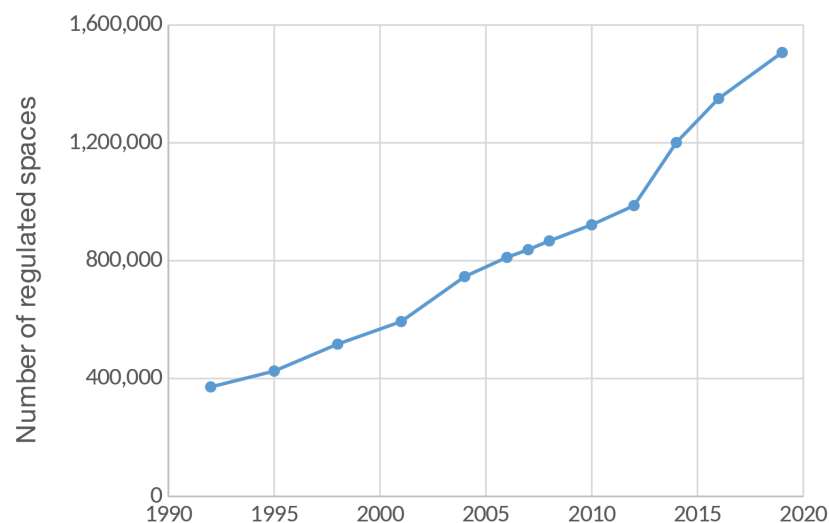
available where, when and for whom they are needed like schools, roads, electricity or sewers — part of the infrastructure.

The current context for early learning and child care in Canada

Canada's child care supply

As local news articles, government press releases and the available data describe, new child care is regularly being created in cities and towns across Canada. As a result, the net supply⁴ of licensed child care has regularly increased in every region of Canada over the years. Considering child care across Canada as a whole, data from the Childcare Resource and Research Unit show that availability of licensed child care for children aged 0-12 years grew from more than 370,000 spaces in 1992 to 1,506,658 spaces in centres and regulated family child care in 2019 (Friendly et al., In press). This means that regulated child care spaces grew more than three-fold over almost 30 years. Thus, there is no doubt that new child care is being created in Canada.

FIGURE 1 Number of regulated child care spaces (centre and home) for children 0-12 (1992-2019)

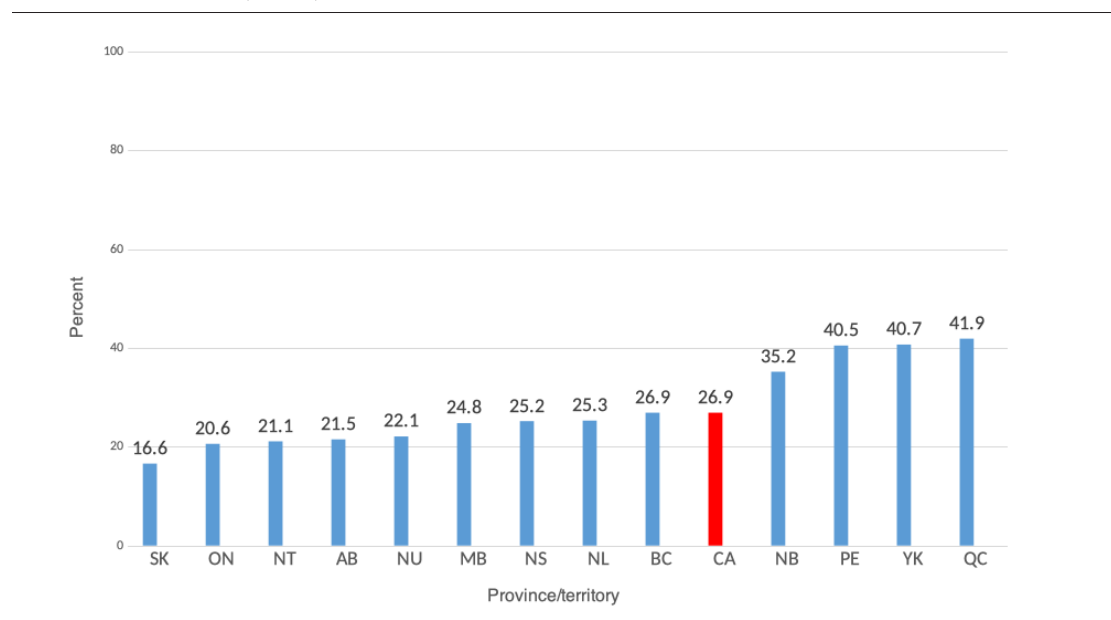


4 The data reported here represent net child care space growth, not new or additional spaces. Although data on licensed child care spaces that ceased to operate are not consistently available, it appears that there may be significant numbers of these. See Kershaw, Forer and Goelman, 2005, cited earlier.

At the same time, the employment rate of mothers has increased considerably to 72% of mothers with a 0-2-year-old (youngest child) and 78% with a 3-5 year-old youngest child, while the number of children, though fluctuating, has remained approximately the same over that time period (Friendly et al., In press).

What do these data show about Canada’s track record on growing the child supply to meet the need? Over the past 30 years, [coverage](#)⁵ in child care centres for 0-5 year olds grew from 11.5% in 1992 to 29.7% in 2019 (Friendly et al., In press). But although that is a substantial increase, the coverage rate remains at only a little more than one-quarter of the population—after 50 years of debate about child care needs and provision. Over that same period of time, provision of early learning and child care has grown in many other countries to cover virtually all children from age three, with coverage rates for younger children at significantly higher rates than in Canada (UNICEF, 2008). (See the section on Norway expansion).

FIGURE 2 Percent of children 0-5 years for whom there was a centre space by province/territory (2019)



5 “Coverage” is defined as the percent of children for whom a regulated child care space is available. It does not take into account whether it is affordable, high quality or fits parents’ work or other schedules, culture or preference.

Child care coverage in Canada is also uneven in multiple ways. Total coverage is very uneven between provinces/territories, with overall coverage ranging from 16.6% in Saskatchewan to 41.9% of 0 – 5 year olds in Quebec in licensed centres. When it comes to infants—under 18 months or two years, depending on the province/territory—the availability of licensed child care for the age group is much lower than the total coverage. For example, fewer than 80,000 of 465,000 spaces in centres in Ontario in 2019 catered to 0-2s while 21,363 of 115,487 spaces in British Columbia were for the same youngest age group in 2019 (Friendly et al., In press).

Child care coverage is uneven within individual provinces/territories as well. A 2018 Canadian study which defined a child care “desert” as a postal code where there are at least three children in potential competition for each licensed space, illustrates this well (Macdonald, 2018). The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternative’s analysis of [child care “deserts”](#)⁶ showed that while Canada’s larger cities generally had better child care coverage than areas with less population density, this did not apply to all cities. Additionally, within cities, it did not apply to all neighbourhoods either; even in the cities best supplied with child care, services were likely to be limited or unavailable in some neighbourhoods, and for some populations. This consistent unevenness means that today, many or most rural, suburban communities and smaller towns can be described as “child care deserts”, with very few or even no child care centres or regulated family child care at all, as can some neighbourhoods in larger cities (Macdonald, 2018).

Why is Canada’s track record at providing an adequate supply of child care so dismal compared to a number of our peer OECD countries? Over the years, there has been considerable attention to Canada’s underfunding of child care services and the high parent fees that result; affordability is clearly a long-term significant child care issue in Canada (Cooke, London, Edwards, & Rose-Lizée, 1986; Friendly & Prentice, 2009; Cleveland, 2018; Macdonald & Friendly, 2019) especially for costly-to-deliver services like infant care and child care for non-standard hours workers (Lero, Prentice, Friendly, Richardson and Fraser, 2019).

⁶ Defined as a postal code where there are at least three children in potential competition for each licensed space.

The low staff wages and staff shortages that are a result of the low level of public funding are also clearly a significant issue for child care provision, as well as being significant women's equality issues (Anderson, Sing, & Haber, 2020; Lawson et al., 2018).

But there is also clearly a lack of available supply of child care spaces, especially in some communities, as waiting lists, waiting list fees, and on-going parental pressure indicate. Based on the available evidence from research and comparative analysis, this project takes the position that a reasonable explanation is that there is no organized, regular, systematic approach to plan and “create” services where and when they are needed, as in countries with better distributed and available child care (Korpi, 2007). Thus the questions “Who’s creating child care services?” and “Is Canada using the best, most effective ways of creating child care?” are appropriate, significant and timely.

Child care and the COVID-19 pandemic: New, critical implications for child care accessibility

As we have discussed, the issue of shortages, uneven distribution and inequity of child care is nothing new in Canada. But the COVID-19 pandemic raised this key child care policy issue in a new way, highlighting why—in the wake of the acute phase of the pandemic—being able to manage child care supply in a more public way is more important than ever before (Friendly, Ballantyne & Anderson, 2020).

For Canada, like other countries with fragile, weakly publicly supported early learning and child care provision such as the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States, the pandemic has brought home to many new players the realization that child care is an essential service. That is, accessible child care is required if mothers of young children are to participate in the workforce, and if they are unable to fully participate in the workforce, this is not only a problem for their family finances and career aspirations but it will impede recovery of the economy from COVID-19. The acute phase of the pandemic made it painfully obvious that there must be quality, reliable, affordable child care for parents

deemed “essential workers” – medical workers and others – if they are to get to their critical jobs. It has also become just as obvious that child care is necessary for all parents in the paid labour force including parents who are working from home, who have found it impossible to work fully or productively without child care (Ferguson, 2020). Mothers, particularly, had to balance their paid work with the unpaid work of caring for, or “home schooling”, their children. Indeed, parents reported, a [Statistics Canada survey](#) found that their “top concern was balancing child care, schooling and work” (74% were very or extremely concerned) (2020). Research and analysis of Statistics Canada labour force data by Qian and Fuller shows women are bearing the brunt of the burden (2020).

Paradoxically, the pandemic also revealed the fragility of Canada’s child care provision in a new way. Child care—with only limited public funding in most of Canada—relies heavily on parent fees to support the patchwork of child care services, which is delivered by an underpaid, almost all female workforce. Without sufficient public funding, most child care services are financially tenuous. A national Canada-wide survey of more than 8,000 regulated child care services⁷ reported that more than one-third of centres closed by the pandemic said they were uncertain whether they would reopen, with anticipated lower enrolment due to new COVID19-related smaller groups (thus, fewer parent fees) overwhelmingly a significant threat to their financial viability (Friendly et al., 2020).

But it is not only the low level of public funding that keeps Canadian child care services fragile. The failure of governments to assume responsibility for ensuring access to child care by funding, creating and maintaining quality child care services is a pervasive issue. Thus, as health and safety issues associated with the pandemic have created chaos for service providers, parents and policy makers alike as financially weakened child care services have reopened at reduced capacity, the practical responsibility for determining which services will open, when and how remains the private decision and responsibility of voluntary groups and

7 The survey included full and part time child care centres and regulated family child care homes for children aged 0-12 years. There were valid surveys for 8,300 services - 5,729 centres and 2,571 family child care homes.

entrepreneurs. The national survey of regulated centres and family child care homes found that in May, more than one-third of closed services (36% of centres and 38% of family child care providers) were uncertain that they would reopen (Friendly et al., 2020).

Practically, this means that even a smaller proportion of children can be served than before the pandemic. Without an established public management approach to recovering, maintaining and expanding child care provision, economic activity in Canada will continue to be impeded as parents but especially women cannot secure affordable quality child care⁸ so they can go to work. This may well mean that when the economy begins to recover as the pandemic moves out of the critical phase, reduced child care services will be far from able to accommodate parents trying to return to work. Thus, the question “who creates child care?” is a critical one –not only personally but for Canada’s well-being.

Canada’s child care market

Canadian child care provision did not become a fragile privatized patchwork services with the coming of the COVID-19 pandemic. Child care in Canada has always followed a market model. In Canada’s marketized child care model, there is a close relationship between availability of services and affordability of parent fees. Public funding to operate child care is limited in most of Canada, so whether or not a service can set up and operate sustainably depends on whether a critical mass of parents who can pay the fee is available. Thus, relying on the market to create child care almost always fails to deliver needed services when, where and for whom they are needed.

But whereas many countries’ early learning and child care systems characterized by much less commodification and much more public management began in a way similar to Canada—Sweden, Norway, Denmark, France, Slovenia—these have since been reshaped into more publicly managed systems (OECD, 2001, 2006; Stropnik, 2001). A Swedish

⁸ This paper does not address the question of de facto provision of child care by elementary schools as their closure too, created child care chaos for parents.

government report describes the public policy, funding and ongoing initiatives that created a ten-fold expansion of child care provision in Sweden beginning in the 1970s when “the informal child care sector, primarily private day care mothers who in the absence of other alternatives provided a large part of child care” was replaced by largely municipally delivered services as “the expansion of child care became the increasingly dominant task of family policy” (Korpi, 2007: 33).

UK child care researchers Eva Lloyd and Helen Penn have described a child care market as “a situation in which the state has relatively little influence on or interest in how services for young children are set up, maintained and delivered rather than a public or publicly-managed system based on the ideas of communal obligations and social citizenship” (Lloyd & Penn, 2012: 19). This is a good description of the Canadian child care experience. Rather than building a public, or publicly managed system, market forces shape, create, maintain, deliver and finance Canadian child care. In every part of Canada, federal and provincial/territorial government policy or its absence has encouraged reliance on the child care market, though there is substantial variation in how, and how much, child care services are publicly funded among the provinces/territories.

A market approach to child care is multifaceted; a number of characteristics make up market approaches to child care. In Canada, relying on a market model for child care means that:

- 1 Parents pay the bulk of the cost of operating child care in most of Canada. Although services receive some public funding, they primarily rely on parent fees;
- 2 Much of the available public funding is aimed at individual parent-consumers, either as parent subsidies that pay fees on behalf of individual parents or tax breaks such as the federal Child Care Expense Deduction or provincial demand-side financing schemes such as Quebec’s refundable child care tax credit for parents using “non-reduced contribution child care”, a second tier of regulated child care and Ontario’s C.A.R.E. tax credit (See Fortin, 2015 or Cleveland, 2019) for analysis of these). These all are “demand-side” funding

intended to allow consumer purchasing rather than publicly funding services operationally, or supply-side, global or “base” funding;

- 3 Maintaining, managing and sustaining regulated child care services is almost always a private responsibility in Canada, with voluntary boards of directors—parents or voluntary organizations—or entrepreneurs taking responsibility for financing and decision making, and little public delivered child care⁹ (Friendly et al, In press);
- 4 Regulation is limited to only some child care (most child care centres and some family child care homes, in contrast to unregulated/unlicensed/informal child care, which is primarily family child care, usually in providers’ private homes). Unregulated child care in which there is only the most limited public oversight (upon complaint or a crisis situation) still provides child care for a substantial number of Canadian children;
- 5 Almost all child care in Canada is private — private non-profit or private for-profit. That is, there are very few regulated child care services operated by public entities such as municipalities or education authorities. About 36% of regulated child care centre spaces are operated on a for-profit basis, with much bigger for-profit sectors in some provinces/territories (Friendly, 2019);
- 6 Where, when, for whom, and how child care services will be developed, or “created” are almost always private decisions, as is whether a child care service shuts down.

As we have noted, this project is focused on this last aspect of a child care market—creation of child care services. The following sections consider this in a variety of ways, describing and examining alternatives that contribute to moving away from relying so heavily on the market.

9 Note that this paper is primarily about regulated child care, not about kindergarten provided as part of school systems across Canada. Nevertheless, kindergarten is clearly part of “early childhood education and care” and part of many families’ child care arrangements, as is elementary school. This is an important issue which is beyond the scope of this particular paper.

RESOURCES - *How, and by whom are child care services created in Canada*

- [*OECD thematic reviews of early Childhood Education and Care \(2001-2017\)*](#)
- [*Early childhood education and care in Canada 2016*](#)
- [*Shared framework for building an early childhood education and care system for all*](#)
- [*Quality by design project*](#)
- [*Canadian child care: Preliminary results from a national survey during the COVID-19 pandemic*](#)
- [*Affordable child care for all plan*](#)

Video

- [*A Vision for universal child care*](#)

Interactive

- [*Child care deserts in Canada*](#) (report), Interactive map: [*Child Care deserts in Canada*](#)

3 More than spaces: creating universal child care in Norway¹⁰

Norway is among the countries in the world in which early learning and child care has become a legal right. Today more than 90% of children 1-5 years attend full-time, regardless of where they live, parental employment or financial circumstances. This chapter examines the key levers, structures and policies used by the Norwegian national state to ensure that sufficient child care to achieve close to universal coverage was created and accessible to all, with special attention to the period of rapid expansion between 2003-2009, at the end of which ELCC became a legal entitlement. It emphasizes that it has been successful because Norway has done more than “create spaces” but has built an accessible, affordable, quality system for all children.

The chapter includes:

An overview of the context in which ELCC growth occurred;

A chronology of key events and measures leading to ELCC becoming a statutory right;

The levers used to reach the goals including:

- A champion for ELCC within the national government, who achieved multi-party support for full provision and ensured support for allocation of necessary resources to achieve it;
- Setting national goals to be met locally by municipal governments;

¹⁰ The information in this chapter comes from three main sources: documents related to the OECD Thematic Review of ECEC, including the Norway background reports from 1998 and 2015; statistics from the Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training and Statistics Norway, and from key informant interviews conducted with officials from local and national governments, the Directorate of Education and Training, the unions representing ELCC staff, and other key stakeholders, in October and November 2019.

- Significant national grants earmarked to child care;
- Other financial measures to ensure municipalities had necessary resources to reach full affordable provision;
- A strong regulatory framework to ensure equity of access and quality provision;
- Ongoing data collection and analysis to monitor and assess progress, identify issues and adjust policies and regulations as necessary

Description of other measures aligned with ELCC or integral to its provision.

The chapter does not address measures taken to support quality and development of the workforce but these have been important factors closely linked to ongoing demand for access and parental satisfaction.

About terminology

The term used in Norway for all forms of ELCC is *barnehager*, which translates to “kindergarten” in English. All English translations of Norwegian documents use the term kindergarten but to avoid confusion in the Canadian context, the terms *barnehager*, child care or ELCC are used in this chapter (except when “kindergarten” is used in titles of English translations of Norwegian documents). This chapter uses the Canadian term “early learning and child care” or ELCC rather than the more commonly used “early childhood education and care”, or ECEC.

In addition to “ordinary *barnehager*” (child care centres), where more than 98% of participating children are enrolled, there are also a small number of *familiebarnehager*, (family child care homes), in which approximately 1.5% of children are enrolled. Both forms of provision are covered by the same Kindergarten Act and Framework Plan but efforts for creating expansion have been focused on the ordinary *barnehager*. The term municipal *barnehager* is used to describe programs directly owned and operated by a local municipality. The term private *barnehager* is used in Norway to describe all other types of provision not run by the municipality or other public entities (e.g., the national state run University of Oslo child care centre), including parent co-ops, religious organizations, non-profit organizations and foundations, individuals and

corporations. In this report, “non-municipal *barnehager*” is used to describe all ELCC not operated directly by a municipality, consistent with most Norwegian usage.

What’s the Norwegian context?

Norway, like its Nordic neighbours of Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Iceland, is a social democracy, and— like Denmark and Sweden—a constitutional monarchy. The Storting is the national parliament, elected every four years. Norway is geographically large relative to its population of 5.2 million, and has one of the lowest population densities in Europe. Norway has low levels of unemployment and child poverty, and high levels of maternal labour force participation, with more than 80% of mothers with children 0-6 years in the labour force.

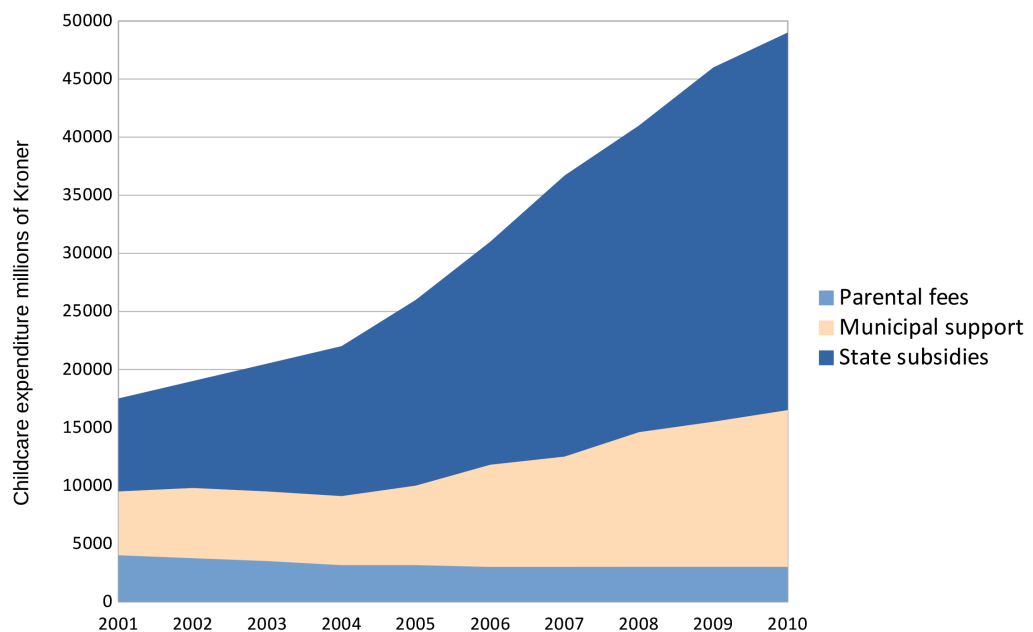
The national government is primarily responsible for funding and legislation and is directly responsible for public universities and university colleges. Public education, including primary, lower secondary, upper secondary, vocational training and university education is free. ELCC is the only part of the education system that charges parent fees. The national Ministry of Education and Research, and two subordinate agencies, have responsibilities for ELCC. The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training is responsible for overseeing ELCC, and primary and secondary education. It is responsible for quality development in *barnehager*, supporting them to effectively implement the *Kindergarten Framework Plan*, analyzing all statistics related to child care and presenting the information, and financing and management of child care (Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training.) The National Parents’ Committee for Kindergartens (FUB), was established in 2010 to ensure parents’ interests and concerns are considered, to strengthen cooperation between child care and home, and to keep parents informed about Ministry activities.

Two levels of local government have responsibilities specific to education, health and social programs. Municipalities have the main responsibility; they are responsible for delivery of ELCC, primary and lower

secondary school, child welfare and primary health care. County authorities are directly responsible for upper secondary education and training and for administrative oversight of municipalities to ensure they are operating and supervising *barnehager* in accordance with national regulations. The counties are the regional link between the national government and the *barnehager*. There are 11 counties and 356 municipalities.¹¹

Child care is publicly financed through a combination of national grants, parent fees and municipal funds; municipalities have considerable taxation power in Norway. Prior to 2009 when the target of universal provision was reached, national grants were earmarked specifically to child care. The system of earmarked grants was explicitly used to provide incentives to create new child care services, especially where coverage was low or uneven. The national funding earmarked to child care was a key lever for increasing coverage in a relatively short period of time. After full coverage was reached, the earmarked grants became part of the general- purpose block funds transferred to municipalities. As Figure 3

FIGURE 3 The composition of financing in child care 2001 to 2010



Source: Eckhof, Anderson & Haynes 2018 (replicated by the author)

11 Effective January 1, 2020, the number of counties was reduced from 19 to 11 and the number of municipalities from 428 to 356.

shows, as funding increased over the years of rapid expansion of ELCC, the proportion paid by the national (state) government increased considerably more than municipal funding, while the parent fee portion was reduced.

Norway has a history of decentralization and local autonomy. Municipalities and counties are the key players in providing significant social and education programs including child care, education and health care. Responsibilities for delivering services require all municipalities to provide the same services regardless of size, revenues and expenditures. As a result, both expenditures and taxes are equalized.

The Indigenous peoples of Norway, the Sámi, have an independent Assembly, elected by the Sámi people and have special rights identified in the Kindergarten Act.

An important part of the Norwegian context in the development of ELCC is the emphasis placed on the intrinsic value of childhood and the rights of children in society. The principles of children's right to participate (right to be heard), and the principle of the best interest of the child are contained in the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child and are a fundamental part of the Kindergarten Act and the Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens. In 2014, special provisions and protections for children treating the child as a rights holder were added to the Norway Constitution.

Children have the right to be respected for their human value. They have the right to be heard in questions regarding themselves, and their opinion shall be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity.

In actions and decisions regarding a child, the best interests of the child shall be a fundamental concern.

Children have the right to protection of their personal integrity. The authorities of the State shall create conditions enabling the child's development, hereunder secure the necessary economic and social safety, as well as the necessary standard of health, for the child, preferably within its own family.

— *Constitution of Norway*

The road to universal child care

Child care in Norway is widely accepted as a public good and a public responsibility. It is considered beneficial for all children, for reducing social inequities and for ensuring equal opportunities. In addition to a child's right of access, *barnehager* are considered an important part of the government's health policies, and as well, must be taken into account in local and regional planning processes. Child care is one of several "provision rights" for parents and children; others are parental leave, family leave, cash benefits for families of children 1-2 years not attending child care, tax provisions, transfers and family allowances.

Norway's ELCC system has been built over many years, with growth in supply growing for more than 40 years. However, before the period of rapid expansion, services were in short supply, unaffordable for many families, and access to child care varied considerably across municipalities despite provision of public funding. The period of rapid expansion was prompted by the Kindergarten Agreement of 2003. Between 2003-2009, substantially increased public funding improved availability of services and affordability for parents until full coverage was reached. Following is an overview of the key milestones along the road to Norway's universal child care.

The very early days

1840s Norway's early ELCC history resembles Canada's in many ways. Norway's first children's facility was established in 1837. In the 1840s, crèches were established for children of poor, single working mothers, providing basic care. Parallel to these, the first Fröbel-inspired part-day kindergartens opened in the late 1840s, introducing play-based learning, recognition of the importance of childhood, and support for physical, social, emotional and cognitive development. Over time, asylums and crèches were converted to nurseries and kindergartens but remained few in number for more than 100 years.

By 1960, 2% of children participated in *barnehager*, rising to 7% by 1975,

with much participation part-time. Between 1953 and 1975, *barnehager* were regulated as a part of the Child Welfare Act. Centres had to meet strict national regulations and standards, with little flexibility to address local concerns.

1963 National funding began in 1963.

Period of uneven but continued growth: 1975 - 2003

1975 The first Kindergarten Act was enacted in 1975, and with it came a new national grant system. This Act gave local governments increased responsibility and ability to respond to local conditions. Both municipal and non-municipal *barnehager* could be funded but many municipalities supported only municipal *barnehager*. As a result, fees in non-municipal *barnehager* were often unaffordable for many families.

In 1993, parental leave was extended to one year. As a result, demand for *barnehager* places for the youngest children dropped.

In 1996, the first Framework Plan for Kindergartens (a regulation to the Kindergarten Act), came into force. It defined the goals and functions of *barnehager* and set guidelines for their responsibilities to provide care, play and development of social, cognitive and physical skills. Each *barnehager* had to establish an annual plan for pedagogical activities, and a plan to evaluate its program.

In 1998, the national government introduced the controversial Cash for Care benefit for parents with one year olds not enrolled in *barnehager*, somewhat reducing demand for *barnehager* for very young children. This was extended to include two year olds in 1999, and limited again to one year olds in 2012.

By 2000 the national government set a goal of full or part-time access to child care for all parents who wanted it by 2000 and made municipalities responsible for reaching the goal. They estimated demand would be met when 53% of children younger than three years and 80% of children over three years had a place in *barnehager*, anticipating that as access increased so would demand (Eknes, 2000).

1997 By the end of 1997, 60% of children 1-5 years were enrolled in child care but coverage varied considerably across municipalities – from less than 30% up to 90%. Also in 1997, the age for compulsory school was lowered from seven to six years. With the removal of 6 year olds from *barnehager*, additional spaces for children under the age of three were created, increasing coverage for under threes by 30%. Also at this time, the national government determined that the operating costs of *barnehager* should be shared 40% by the national government, 30% by the municipality and 30% by parents. However, municipalities were covering an average of 27.9% of the costs in municipal centres but only 8.2% in non-municipal *barnehager*, with large fee discrepancies between municipal and non-municipal facilities (Norwegian Ministry of Children and Family Affairs, 1998).

By 2000 public funding covered 56% of operating costs, not the 70% called for. Thus, the goal of a place in *barnehager* for all parents who wanted it was not achieved by 2000. Inequities in funding and access were increasingly highlighted: many families still relied on private babysitters and family members and ELCC participation by low income and immigrant families was considerably lower than by more affluent families. Non-municipal *barnehager* played an important role in meeting increasing local need when municipalities did not increase public services to meet demand but due to lack of funding, had to charge higher fees.

By 2001 most political parties agreed that lack of equitable access to *barnehager* was a problem but no significant changes were made. However, a champion for change emerged. In 2002, [Kristin Halvorsen](#), a member of the Socialist Left party, built an unlikely coalition of the Socialist Left Party, the Labour Party, the Centre Party, and the right wing Progress Party, and set out to reform the financing of *barnehager*. This coalition demanded increased national and local funding to cover 80% of costs together with establishment of a maximum parent fee.

The period of rapid expansion: From the Kindergarten Agreement of 2003 to legal entitlement in 2009

In 2003, in response to Ms. Halvorsen's group in Parliament, the national coalition government—the Christian Democrats, the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party— presented White Paper no. 24 *Kindergartens for all – economic diversity and freedom of choice* and a bill to amend the Kindergarten Act. Following parliamentary debate, broad political agreement was reached on the proposed financial and regulatory changes, with the goal of universal coverage with reduced parent fees.

Significantly, key levers for achieving this included both making municipalities responsible for fulfilling the national goal of universal child care and significantly increasing national funding through earmarked grants to enable municipalities to achieve the goal. Municipalities took different approaches to creating access; some focussed on building their own *barnehager*, some provided capital funding to non-municipal *barnehager*, some provide low-interest loans, others required *barnehager* to fund raise or provide their own capital and some municipalities put out calls for proposals for establishing new *barnehager* on publicly owned land. Operating funds to non-municipal *barnehager* were based on average operating costs of the municipality's public *barnehager*. With increased funding from the national government and strong demand, municipalities, for the most part, did what they could to facilitate the establishment of new *barnehager*. There was ongoing dialogue among all stakeholders to plan towards full coverage. The national grants covered both operating costs and funds to create and expand the number of *barnehager*. Municipal and non-municipal *barnehager* were to receive equal funding.

In 2004, the national government introduced a regulated maximum parent fee for all *barnehager*, with a 30% reduction for a second child in *barnehager* and 50% for three or more children.

By 2005, municipalities were required to ensure an adequate supply of *barnehager* places although access did not become a statutory right until 2009.

In 2005 a centre-left coalition (red-green coalition) of the Labour Party, the Socialist Left Party and the Centre party won the parliamentary election. It was the first time the Socialist Left was part of a government in power, and Kristin Halvorsen was appointed the first female Finance Minister. During the election campaign, she threatened to quit if the government was not able to provide access to *barnehager* for all families within four years.

The 2005 Kindergarten Act and 2006 Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens (regulation) legislated children's right to participate and provided clear roles for municipalities and counties, as well as *barnehager* operators. The framework was updated in 2011 and 2017.

In 2006, responsibility for *barnehager* was transferred from the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs to the Ministry of Education and Research to recognize it as the first step in lifelong learning and to create better coherence between *barnehager* and primary school.

A **2008-2009** White Paper (No 41) on *Quality in ECEC* identified three goals for ELCC quality:

- Ensure equity and high quality in all *barnehager*;
- Strengthen the *barnehager* as a learning area;
- All children should participate in an inclusive community.

In 2009 access to *barnehager* became a statutory individual right for all children.

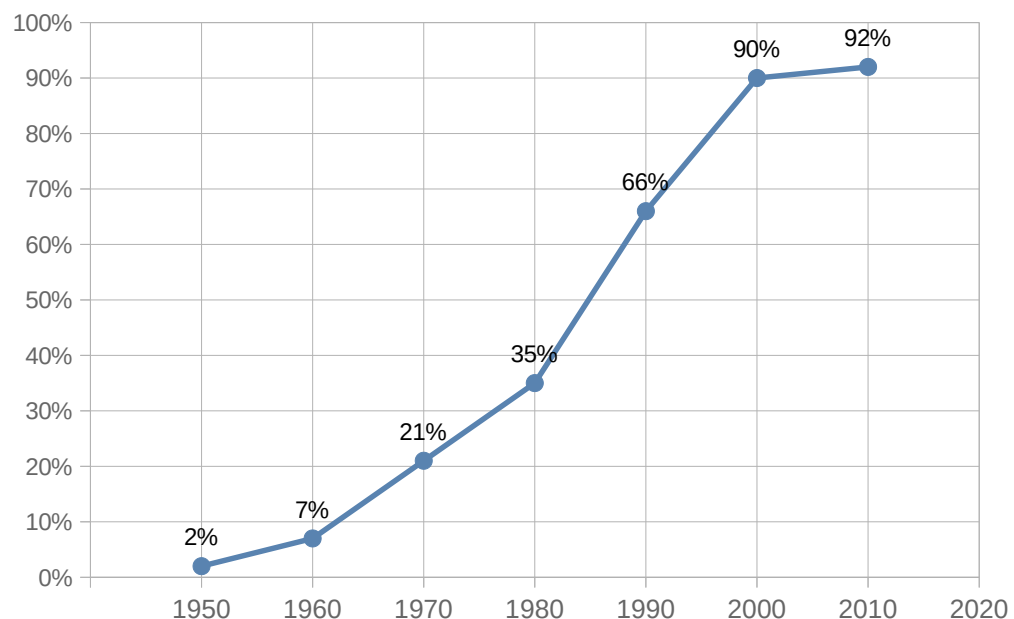
Through the period of rapid expansion, the government worked closely with the Norwegian State Housing Bank, Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (the employer association representing all municipalities and counties) and the Private Kindergarten Association (PBL), (the employer association representing non-municipal *barnehager*), to facilitate the development of new *barnehager*.

In the final push for universal coverage, a committee of state secretaries (deputy ministers) from all relevant ministries was struck, including the Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, responsible for housing and building policy, and municipal land use planning and county

planning under the Planning and Building Act. For years the Ministry has required municipalities to include *barnehager* as part of long-term planning and land use planning. The need for child care is considered as part of the necessary community infrastructure and is included in Norway's Planning and Building Act. Zoning plans are required for major construction projects and the Act states that development of an area cannot take place “until technical installations and public services such as energy supply, transport and road networks, health and social services, child day care services, public outdoor recreation areas, schools etc., are adequately established” (12-7, 10).

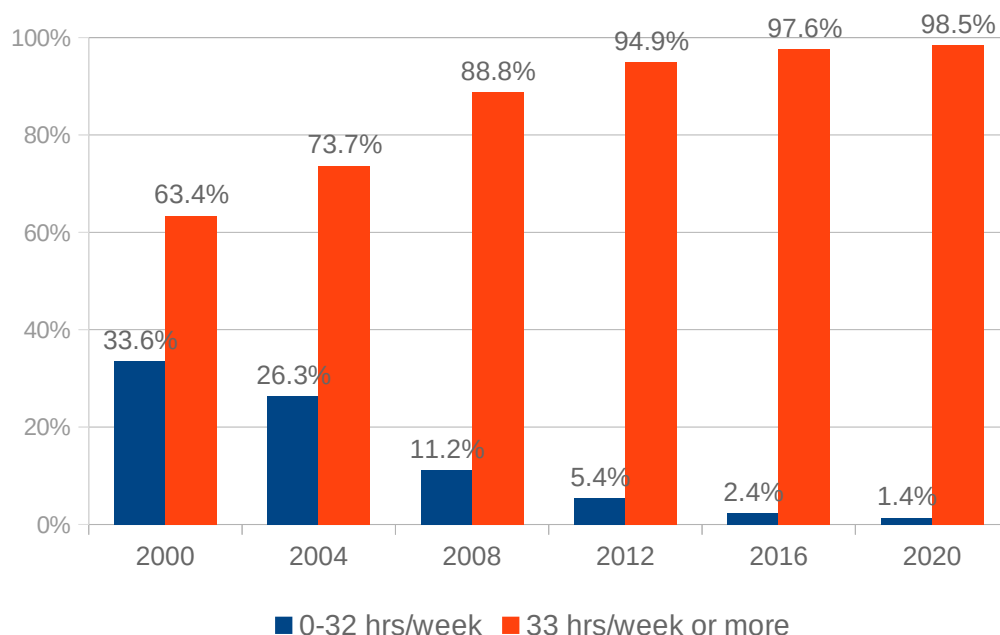
In 2009, the year access to *barnehager* became a statutory right, the “[red-green coalition](#)” won another term in government, and Kristin Halvorsen was appointed the Minister of Education and Research, responsible for *barnehager*.

FIGURE 4 Percent of children 1-5 years enrolled in *barnehager* 1960-2020



Source: OECD 2015; Haug & Storø 2013; Statistics Norway 2019, 2020

FIGURE 5 Percent of children enrolled in *barnehager* full- and part-time, 2000-2020



Source: Statistics Norway 2019, 2020

Figures 4 and 5 show the increase in ELCC provision¹² before and after the rapid expansion including the shift by parents from part-time to full-time use as access grew. As Figure 5 shows, full-time enrolment increased from 63.4% in 2000 to 98.5% in 2020.

In 2011 funding was devolved to the municipalities, moving from earmarked state funding specific to kindergarten to block funding. Municipalities must fund all non-municipal *barnehager* that were approved when block funding was introduced. They can still choose to approve and fund non-municipal *barnehager* developed after this time, but now decisions about whether to provide new municipal or non-municipal *barnehager* rests more heavily on the municipality.

¹² Even though the percentage of children attending *barnehager* almost doubled between 1990 and 2000, many children were enrolled part-time. By 2000, when 66% of children between 1-5 years were enrolled in kindergarten, more than one-third were enrolled on a part-time basis. At that time, fees were not regulated and were unaffordable for many. As availability increased and fees reduced, full-time enrolment increased considerably.

Early learning and child care in Norway: The current state

The maximum parent fee is established annually in the national budget. *Barnehager* cannot charge above this fee, except for the cost of food. In 2019 the maximum monthly fee, which is geared to income, was NOK 2,990 (CAD \$445); fees are the same for children aged 0-2 and 3-5 years. As of 2015, parents pay no more than 6% of household income, up to the maximum ceiling. In 2015, free core hours were introduced, initially for four and five year olds, extended to three year olds in 2016 and two year olds in 2019. Families with annual household income below a certain threshold are entitled to 20 hours per week of free provision; in 2019, the income threshold was NOK 548,500 (CAD \$82,000). Families pay the cost of additional hours beyond the free entitlement.

In 2018, national and municipal grants for ELCC totalled NOK 46.4 billion¹³ (CAD \$6.9 billion), which accounted for 14.4% of all municipal spending. The average expenditure per child was NOK 124,000 (approximately CAD \$18,000) (Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, 2019). Parents (collectively) pay 14% of the total cost; public funds cover 86%.

The main entry point to kindergarten is in August, as for primary schools. Children who turn one before the end of August are entitled to a place in kindergarten that August. Children born in September, October and November are entitled to a space by the end of the month in which they turn one. Children born after November are entitled to a space when their child turns one but have no statutory right until the following August. If no space is available, they may receive the cash for care benefit until they have a place. Families who move during the year may have to go on a waiting list in their new community until a place becomes available.

Parents are entitled to a place in the community in which they live. While there are slight variations across municipalities, parents submit an

¹³ Norway has a population of 5.2 million people.

application to their municipality with a list of (typically) five preferred programs in March. Priority is given to children with additional support needs and those involved with child welfare services. If parents do not receive their first choice, they may remain on a waiting list for their preferred placement and take a place in their second choice in the meantime.

Municipalities post a list of all *barnehagers* on their websites, with information about location, size, hours of operation, public or private operation, facility type, percentage of trained staff, results of parent satisfaction surveys and any additional costs for food.

The Kindergarten Act stipulates that children with additional support needs are entitled to special educational assistance as needed, including transportation, sign language education, alternative and supplementary communication. Municipalities must ensure this right to special assistance is provided.

The Kindergarten Act and regulation states that Norway has a responsibility to safeguard the interest of Sámi¹⁴ children by supporting preservation of language, knowledge and culture, regardless of where they live. The Act also stipulates that municipalities are responsible to ensure that “kindergartens for Sámi children in Sámi districts are based on the Sámi language and culture. In other municipalities, steps shall be taken to enable Sámi children to secure and develop their language and their culture”. (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2005).

Special efforts have been made to increase the participation of minority-language children¹⁵ and children from low-income households, who tend to have lower than average enrollment rates in *barnehager*. Multi-language information videos have been produced, health clinics promote the benefits of *barnehager* and, in some cases, door-to-door outreach provides opportunities for all families to learn about the availability and benefits of *barnehager*.

14 The Sámi are the Indigenous people of Norway, as well as Sweden and Finland. Most Sámi live in the northern part of the country but they also live in cities, primarily Oslo.

15 The definition of minority language children in Norway excludes those whose mother tongue is Sami, Swedish, Danish or English.

ELCC within the context of broader family policies

ELCC in Norway is well-supported by a solid infrastructure of predictable and generous public funding, ongoing workforce development, well defined quality measures, clearly articulated roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders, and ongoing data collection and analysis to assess the impact of policies and other measures. ELCC fits within a larger system of family supports that help families balance work and family life, and provide a range of options and programs to accommodate different family situations.

Maternity and parental benefits

Women who have been employed for at least six of the previous 10 months prior to taking leave, and who are members of the National Insurance Scheme are eligible for benefits. Some benefit periods are specific to each parent and some may be shared. Benefits may be taken for 49 weeks at 100% of regular salary (to a ceiling of six times the basic amount in the National Insurance Scheme – NOK 599,148 – approximately CAD \$87,685) or 59 weeks at 80%.¹⁶

- Three weeks must be taken by the mother before the due date. Beyond the three weeks, 15/19 weeks are allocated to the mother, 15/19 weeks are allocated to the father (or co-mother) and the remaining 16/18 weeks can be shared between them.
- Additional benefits and leaves apply in the case of multiple births (e.g. 66/80 weeks in the case of twins).
- Parental leave can be combined with work to extend the overall benefit period. Partial return to work, combined with leave must be agreed upon with the employer.
- Parents may take a combined three years of unpaid leave at any period before the child turns 12.
- Mothers whose income does not qualify for parental benefits are eligible for a lump-sum payment of NOK 84,720 (approximately CAD \$12,390), providing they are a member of the National Insurance Scheme.

16 Parental benefits and family leaves are included in the Working Environment Act.

Family leaves

In addition to parental benefits related to the birth of a child, there are a number of other leave entitlements. Each parent is entitled to a leave of absence to care for a sick child under 12, to accompany a child to a medical appointment, or if the person usually responsible for the child is ill. Employees with one or two children are entitled to a maximum of 10 days leave, and up to 15 if they have three or more. Parents with sole responsibility for a child are entitled to twice the number of days. Parents are also entitled to three days paid leave to support their child's transition from home to *barnehager*. Finally, all employees are entitled to 25 days paid vacation after one year of full employment.

Cash for Care benefit

The tax-free Cash for Care benefit is available to parents who have been a member of the National Insurance Scheme for at least five years, whose children are between ages one and two, and who are not enrolled in full-time *barnehager*. As of 2018, the full monthly benefit was NOK 7,500 (approximately \$1,100). Partial benefits are available for children who attend *barnehager* on a part-time basis. The benefit can be received for a maximum of 11 months, starting in the month the child turns 13 months. Eligibility is not related to employment.

Not just “creating spaces”

Norway has done more than “create spaces”. It has built an accessible, affordable, quality system for all children. Elements of that system include:

An overall plan, framed by articulated values and principles to guide development;

- Political support across all parties to facilitate implementation over time;
- Adequate resources to ensure viability for programs and affordability for parents;

- A well-qualified, fairly compensated, engaged and supported workforce;
- A quality framework and measures to ensure equitable access to quality programs for all children and families;
- Regular consultation and engagement with all key stakeholders;
- Ongoing data collection, monitoring and assessment to determine if goals are being met, and to inform ongoing quality improvement.

Meeting every child's need for care, security, belongingness and respect and enabling the children to participate in and contribute to the community are important values that shall be reflected in kindergarten.

Kindergartens shall promote democracy, diversity and mutual respect, equality, sustainable development, life skills and good health.

— *Framework Plan for the content and tasks of kindergartens 2017*

No system is perfect, and one concern about ELCC in Norway is the recent growth of large for-profit chains. Quality seems to be less a concern than in other countries that have experienced this, attributed both to Norway's "provision of kindergarten services [never having been] a typical economic activity" and to strong regulations and accountability measures (Jacobsen & Vollset, 2012). Affordability is not an issue as maximum fees apply to all municipal and non-municipal facilities, while wages and working conditions are very similar across all types of programs as a result of central bargaining and high rates of unionization. However, since all non-municipal *barnehager* are funded at the average rate of municipal centres, some amount of profit can be made by hiring less experienced staff who are lower on the pay scale, and by serving fewer children with additional support needs. It also would appear that considerable profit can be made through property development and the value of real estate. For example, TryggeBarnhager (Safe Kindergarten) is a construction company that has established 501 *barnehager* for municipalities, non-profit organizations, private individuals and companies. (See [TryggeBarnhager website](#)). A separate arm of the company, [FUS](#),

owns and operates 180 centres in 82 municipalities. The Læringsverkstedet chain, opened their first centre in 2003 and now operates more than 200. In recent years several small non-municipal barnehager have sold their centres to the larger chains.

In 2012, the Storting amended the Kindergarten Act to ensure that public funds are used to benefit the children in the barnehager and meet a number of accountability measures. All non-municipal barnehager have to submit financial statements to the Directorate of Education and Training, which are used to monitor the use of public funds and parent fees. In spite of all the checks and balances in place, there is concern about public funds ending up as private profit.

While challenges remain, Norway has spent many years creating a high quality ELCC system that has broad public support and support across all political parties — a system where all children are valued for who they are today as well as for who they will become, a system that allows women to full participate in the labour force, and a system that is aligned with other social and educational programs and supports.

RESOURCES - *More than spaces: creating universal child care in Norway*

Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training documents

[*The Norwegian Mirror, 2019: Cost of kindergarten provision and primary and secondary education*](#)

[*Framework Plan for the content and tasks of kindergartens*](#)

[*Inspection of kindergartens and education in Norway*](#)

The Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research

[*OECD – Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Norway Background Report \(2015\)*](#)

[*The Kindergarten Act - No. 64 of June 2005*](#)

The Norwegian Ministry of Children and Family Affairs

[OECD – Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care
Policy Background Report from Norway \(1998\)](#)

Video

[*Outdoor Arctic kindergarten*](#)

[*Kindergarten - The Nordic Way*](#)

4 Public management resources for creating child care services

Overview of this chapter

The public management resources or tools in this section have been included to provide ideas and resources to enhance availability of regulated child care services. They are intended for use in “improving early learning and child care (ELCC) services for all Canadian families and their children by developing innovative approaches”, as the federal government Innovation Initiative funding this project defines. As the first chapter of this paper describes, the public management resources are linked to a long-term goal of improving the availability of child care services, aiming to contribute to and motivate a shift away from the historical assumption that creation of child care services is primarily a private responsibility to a more effective, planned, public approach. This is based on the evidence-based supposition that more public responsibility for creating child care services would be more reliable and could more easily “steer” access to child care services than can Canada’s current market approach. This would contribute to the accessibility element of building an inclusive, equitable child care system for all.

Each of the public management tools that follow in this section follows a similar format. The issue and defining terms are first defined, then any relevant context and history are described, including current thinking, and comparisons within Canada or internationally are explored if relevant. Then the current state of the issue is described. Spotlights or examples relating to the topic may be included for illustrations of what was done, who was involved, what the outcomes were and what insights can be taken from the experience. Relevant resources including links to

literature, visuals or other materials are included in each section. References for each section are found in the consolidated reference list at the end of the report.

Readers will find some redundancy in the following sections. Recognizing that some readers may selectively read parts of this chapter, some redundant material has been included where necessary to ensure a full picture in each section.

The chapter includes the following sections:

- Planning for child care;
- How municipal roles in child care contribute to creating services;
- How publicly delivered child care services contribute to accessibility;
- Building critical mass in the non-profit child care sector;
- Non-standard hours child care, a hard-to-serve need;
- Assessing child care needs and forecasting demand.

Planning for child care”

What’s the issue?

Creation of child care services in Canada is not ordinarily determined through a public planning process, although there are some limited exceptions to this. Most often, private individuals or groups make the decisions about where, when and for whom services will be created, expanded or closed. The absence of sufficient systematic public planning linked to creation or expansion of child care services is but one part of an overall policy model that fails to ensure that child care services are available when and where they are needed, with pervasive gaps and inequities of service across the country.

In this section, we explore several approaches to public planning that could make a significant contribution to improving the availability and distribution of child care services if they were integrated into child care policy and implementation. As Canadian decision makers plan to expand child care and increase accessibility, a number of kinds of planning processes have emerged that have the capacity to make a positive impact on child care availability, distribution and appropriateness.

This resource explores how more regular, explicit public planning, especially at the local municipal level but also by provinces/territories could play a key role in achieving a higher level of accessible child care services, recognizing that improved planning is but one part of the robust policy and public funding needed to build an accessible, affordable, high quality child care system. We primarily focus on local planning, both land use planning and more generic service planning, but also include an illustration of focused systematic provincial planning for child care creation and expansion.

What is planning for child care ?

The Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) provides a high level definition of planning as “the scientific, aesthetic, and orderly disposition of land,

resources, facilities and services with a view to securing the physical, economic and social efficiency, health and well-being of urban and rural communities”. The CIP’s Healthy Equity and Community Design fact sheet states that “numerous studies from across Canada and around the world demonstrate a relationship between the physical design and layout of cities and towns – also known as “the built” environment” – and the physical and emotional health of people living in them.... According to the Canadian Senate, some 50% of population health outcomes are attributable to social and economic determinants, with an additional 10% related to our physical or built environment” (Canadian Institute of Planners, 2020).

The CIP also “envision[s] a future in which reconciliation is meaningfully embedded in planning practice in Canada and planners build relationships with Indigenous peoples based on mutual respect, trust, and dialogue... Planners have a unique role to play in reconciliation, as their profession connects people, land, livelihoods, and governance. To fully realize this role, planners have a responsibility to embed reconciliation in their practice” (Canadian Institute of Planners, 2020). The CIP has developed a policy to guide this process for planning professionals.

Planning approaches are generally twofold: thinking ahead to accommodate growth, and set out a long-term vision, and addressing issues in developed communities. Planning in this sense has historically tended to refer to the physical environment. Urban and regional land use planning is defined as “the process by which communities attempt to control and/or design change and development in their physical environments” (Simmins, 2011).

Over time, planning as an instrument for social betterment has become more important, sometimes implemented through specified social planning and social development processes. In one definition, social planning has been defined as “the process by which policymakers - legislators, government agencies, planners, and, often, funders - try to solve community problems or improve conditions in the community by devising and implementing policies intended to have certain results” (Centre for Community Health and Development, retrieved 2020).

What's the context?

In a study of the distribution of child care in Winnipeg by income and other characteristics, Prentice attributed child care distributional inequity to “planning failure”. She noted that “neither the Community Services nor the Planning, Property and Development departments has any responsibility to address childcare as an element of either community or economic development” (2007: 103). A 2006 paper by Mahon and Jenson, examining eleven large Canadian cities from a planning perspective, found that at that time “with the exception of Ontario municipalities, Canadian cities do not plan, manage, fund or operate child care” (2006: ii), although there have been some notable changes in this since.

In an analysis of the links between child care in Canada and municipal planning, urban planner Carley Holt (2018) examined “municipal policies and strategies already in place” in Winnipeg and four other Canadian municipalities. Holt (2018) observed that “there is only limited research about the linkage between planning (policies and strategies) and the development of early learning and child care” despite the “American Planning Association recognition in its Policy Guide on the Provision of Child Care (1997) that child care is a critical component of livable communities for many families in urban, suburban, and rural areas, and that local planning policies can play an essential role in ensuring adequate ELCC services” (2018: 2). Using the idea of the “just city”, she argues that “planners and policymakers have a role in shaping supports and services, such as child care, and to make such services more accessible and available within a city. If individuals are left to struggle on their own in order to obtain the resources that are of necessity, a community can be compromised” (Holt, 2018: 15).

Holt (2018) notes that the role local planning can play is well documented but that child care is often overlooked in newest and existing residential, commercial and mixed-use development. The municipal role in land use planning and zoning regulations, use of revenues from local taxation, building regulation, licensing, permitting and specific local policies are key planning tools that enable the planning and creation of

child care. Municipalities can use these tools to enable or restrict use of the land and thus, the creation of quality child care facilities.

Holt examined the impact of planning policies and strategies on the development of early learning and child care spaces in Winnipeg, Vancouver, Burnaby, Toronto and Mississauga. She identified four key themes that supported early care and learning at the local level: policies, financing tools, zoning and regulatory requirements and partnerships (2018). Thus, through municipal policies, rezoning by-laws, community amenity contributions and development cost levies, some municipalities are trying to address the child care shortfall and include child care needs assessments in their community development processes. (See the section on child care needs assessments and demand forecasting).

In addition to these somewhat narrowly defined and specific conceptions of land use and social planning, more generic planning associated with achieving established targets and timetables, strategies for implementation, and evaluating successes or failures can be integral to good public policy-making. Experts and organizations such as the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) that are familiar with concepts associated with high quality systems of child care highlight the importance of planning in policy development (OECD, 2001). The OECD has specifically noted that community plans provide a vision and policy framework for land use and development and are often informed through public engagement, and set out strategies and tools to operationalize a vision (OECD, 2017). It is here that municipalities can begin to recognize the role that child care can and does play in creating healthy, sustainable communities. Plans are influenced by individuals, the private sector and public agencies who should be that often have specific interests. Planning processes build on data, research and public engagement and attempt to balance competing interests for the overall good of the community.

Elements that contribute to quality planning to achieve high quality universal systems of early learning and child care have been identified by the European Commission as: clearly identified goals, targets, time-lines, responsibilities and accountability measures from co-operating minis-

tries and federal bodies, and specific funding (European Commission Network on Childcare and Other Measures to Reconcile the Employment and Family Responsibilities of Men and Women, 1996).

Planning-relevant activities in the European Union's 40 targets for Quality Targets in Services for Young Children (1996)

TARGET 3: Governments should draw up a program to implement the policy which outlines strategies for implementation, sets targets, and specifies resources. At a regional/local level, the department or agency responsible should similarly draw up a program for implementing policy and developing practice.

TARGET 4: Legislative frameworks should be created to ensure that the targets are fully met within specified time limits and reviewed regularly, and which should outline the competencies of regional and/or local government in fulfilling the targets.

TARGET 5: The government department or agency responsible at national level should setup an infrastructure, with parallel structures at local level, for planning, monitoring, review, support, training, research and service development.

TARGET 6: The planning and monitoring system should include measures of supply, demand and need covering all services for young children at national, regional and/or local level.

As a comparison to the limited role in planning for child care creation in Canada, child care in Norway (described in chapter 3 of this paper), is enshrined in planning policy and tools at a high level. In the period when universal child care was being developed, a committee of state secretaries (deputy ministers) from all relevant ministries was struck, including the Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, which is responsible for housing and building policy, as well as for local

municipal land use planning. The need for child care is considered as part of the necessary community infrastructure and has been included under the national Planning and Building Act since 2008. The Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation requires municipalities to include planning for barnehager as part of land use planning. The national Planning Act states that development of an area cannot take place “until technical installations and public services such as energy supply, transport and road networks, health and social services, child day care services, public outdoor recreation areas, schools etc., are adequately established” (12-7, 10). It is noteworthy that in addition to addressing the need for child care, the Norwegian Planning Act also includes more general needs of children in planning such taking into account the principle of universal accessibility in design.

What’s the current state?

There is no federal role or legislation on planning in Canada. Under constitutional definitions of the division of responsibility between federal and provincial governments, provinces/territories have full autonomy over land use planning through framework legislation, except for lands under federal control. Bradford attributes the absence of a national urban agenda to the reality that “municipalities are under provincial jurisdiction”. He goes on to state that –while it lacks an explicit urban agenda, Canada now has an implicit urban agenda through the federal infrastructure program funded in the 2017 budget (Bradford, 2018), which includes the federal funding for early learning and child care under the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care, framed as “social infrastructure”.

Although Canada has no national planning act, provincial Acts which govern planning in each province and territory include physical, social and economic planning, depending on the province/territory. These make municipalities responsible for carrying out planning using a variety of tools and planning instruments including municipal plans, by-laws, zoning, permits and approvals. However, child care is not iden-

tified or alluded to in any of Canada's provincial planning acts.

The American Planning Association, a professional organization representing the field of urban planning in the United States, recognizes that, "child care is a critical component of livable communities for many families in urban, suburban and rural areas, and that local planning policies can play an important role in ensuring adequate, child care." While the Canadian Institute of Planners, a professional organization representing over 7000 Canadian urban planners sets out various policy and position papers on such issues as healthy cities and reducing child poverty, it does not appear to have an explicit statement and/or policy on the role child care plays in urban planning. It does however, identify opportunities for planners to elevate healthy community design, one of which is a better legislative enabling environment for healthy communities. It states

a positive legislative enabling environment is a critical driver for expanded healthy community policy implementation and awareness building in Canadian cities and towns. A supportive and clear enabling environment for healthy community design includes clear and detailed provincial legislation that defines healthy communities, provides explicit policy directions for connecting health and the built environment, and provides a more robust and defensible rationale for it (i.e., links population health outcomes with local level policy, investment and planning decisions) (Canadian Institute of Planners, 2019).

In this way, just as communities are acknowledged to have a role to play in building sewers to ensure the health of the community, it can easily be argued that they also have a role in building child care facilities for healthy, sustainable communities. This can be facilitated through municipalities' role in land use planning. This may be an area for child care advocates to provide guidance to the CIP and opportunities for expanded policy initiatives.

The planning for creation of child care centres also occurs in a separate public process led by school boards/divisions under provincial

legislation or policy in some Canadian jurisdictions. In each new and renovated school in both Ontario and Manitoba, policy requires that a child care centre is included in the new/renovated building. Capital funding from the province provides school boards/divisions with the resources to achieve this goal.

In Ontario, this policy has helped to shape the location and availability of child care in many cities, suburbs and rural areas since its inception in the early 1990s. Recent data for Ontario show that 63% of child care centre spaces (268,461) are located in publicly funded schools, an increase of 151% since 2008-09 (Ministry of Education, 2018), although many of these were initiated outside provincial plans, funding or legislation. Issues of tenancy (rent, areas of shared space etc.) are determined at the local level between the child care operators and the school boards (Ministry of Education, 2018). The province provides a provincial reference guide which spells out that “Transparency, equity, participation, accountability, and integrity should guide the development of early years’ accommodation costs” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2018). In Manitoba, the Public Schools Act (2011) subsection 173 (7) similarly requires the inclusion of child care facilities as part of the building/extensive renovation process. Available data indicate that more than 42% of child care centre spaces were located in schools or on school property as of 2017 (Manitoba Laws, 2011; interview with Manitoba Child Care Association).

To illustrate mandated and voluntary planning processes that have been developed in Canada in specific regions, three descriptions are included here. These are:

- The land use planning process as it is implemented at the municipal/regional level in the City of Vancouver;
- The service planning process that municipal/regional child care system service managers in Ontario are required to complete as per the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014;
- The systems change approach used by provincial officials in Prince Edward Island to implement policy and program development of non-standard hours and seasonal child care.

How land use planning is used to create child care services in Vancouver

Including child care in land use planning in Vancouver has been well established, with a 30-year history of experience. The provincial legislative framework in BC governing municipalities is the BC Local Government Act (2015) and the Community Charter (British Columbia, 2003). The City of Vancouver's framework is primarily set out in the Vancouver Charter, BC (1953). This is unique to Vancouver, as the Vancouver Charter sets out land use "enablers" no other municipality has at its disposal. The Charter (section 523D subsection c) authorizes the use of development cost levies (DCLs) for "capital projects" which "means establish day care facilities in premises leased or owned, and acquiring property for such facilities". It also established the Vancouver Park Board (VPB) which is the only such elected board in the country. The Charter gives VPB sole control over parks and facilities located on park lands. This has been significant as there are now more than 1,400 licensed child care spaces serving infants, toddlers, preschool-age and school-age children housed in 44 park facilities such as community centers or stand-alone buildings.

The City of Vancouver occupies the unceded lands of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nation and is situated within the Metropolitan Vancouver area. Vancouver is the largest city in BC, population wise (2016 census - 631,486). Within Vancouver, there are 22 local planning areas. Currently, a City-wide plan is under development. However without such a plan, local area plans have been developed for many neighbourhoods, albeit some are in need of updating. As these plans are updated, the child care calculations are included in estimating the need for child care spaces.

The overall social sustainability plan for the City is the Healthy City Strategy. This policy builds on the social determinants of health, with the first goal being "A Good Start". This goal sets out targets and actions for healthy childhood development when thinking about planning a healthy city for all. The Healthy City Strategy won the Gold Award of Excellence in Planning from the Planning Institute of BC in 2015 (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0kcQ4JQyqek>).

Several other policies have guided the land use and development of child care in the City over a number of years. The Civic Child Care Strategy (October 1990) set out that “the City of Vancouver is committed to being an active partner with senior levels of government, parents, the private sector and the community in the development and maintenance of a comprehensive child care system in Vancouver”. It supports the growth of non-profit child care and sets out clear policy directives regarding capital programs, planning, operating assistance, development and administrative support and advocacy. The capital component of the strategy sets out direction for purchase of portable buildings, a land inventory, facility design guidelines, direction around collection and use of DCLs; requiring child care as a condition of rezoning along with operating assistance as a condition of rezoning, and, the inclusion of child care planning as a standard part of all local area planning processes. This progressive and visionary strategy set the stage for 30+ years of proactive planning, development and delivery of high quality child care facilities during which the City has built/facilitated over 5,400 licenced child care spaces.

The 1993 Child Care Design Guidelines were developed to assist planning staff, developers, architects and child care operators in the design of child care space and facilities as a condition of rezoning and for development applications for all new group care facilities. These guidelines exceed existing minimum provincial licensing standards, considering size, relationship and connection between indoor and outdoor spaces. (see <https://vancouver.ca/docs/planning/child-care-design-guide-line-1993-February-4.pdf>). It is noteworthy that although the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development’s (OECD) review of early childhood education and care in Canada reported that physical spaces for child care in Canada were generally poor even in newly built facilities, selected child care centres in the City of Vancouver were the exception to their findings, perhaps attributable to Vancouver’s design guidelines (OECD, 2004).

Following the design guidelines, the City of Vancouver Child Care Technical Guidelines were developed to augment the design guidelines. These apply to the design and construction or renovation of any child

care secured by the City of Vancouver as a capital asset, and are used as a tool to estimate facility costs early in the design process. The technical guideline was created to provide detailed guidance to architects and developers on the construction and level of fit out and type of finishing of a child care facility and includes such items as millwork, type and size of toilets, counter heights, storage, landscaping etc. (See <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/child-care-technical-guidelines.pdf>).

In 2002, *Moving Forward – Child Care, A Cornerstone of Child Development Services*, built on the Civic Child Care Strategy and set out a vision, framework and strategies to move toward a renewed vision. It envisioned child care as the anchor for a range of children's services for children 0-12 years. Child care would be co-located or coordinated with part-day preschool, family place, out-of-school care, toy lending, early intervention services within a hub to provide seamless services delivery for families. Key components include service coordination, establishing priorities and planning processes to realize the vision of child development hubs; facilitating stable, flexible, quality child care on which to build hubs; strengthening public/private partnerships and facilitating effective community collaboration among partners and consumers (<https://council.vancouver.ca/020423/a13.htm>)

Following the approval of this strategy by Council, a number of activities occurred that impacted child care going forward, including a renewed understanding and commitment to child care expansion, creation of the Joint Child Care Council, setting targets for growth, endorsement of the Coalition of Child Care Advocates BC [\\$10aDay plan](#) and the funding of a number of research reviews to deepen the knowledge base for future planning (e.g., financial analysis of \$10aDay plan for Vancouver, review of Westcoast Child care and Vancouver Society of Children's Centers, reformatting of Child care Design Guidelines, Post Occupancy Review of Purpose Built Family Child Care, revisions to calculator, review of preschool, mapping census and child care space related data and development of culturally competent ECE curriculum).

Another turning point in strategic policy development was the creation of the Financing Growth policy in 2004 which set out standard rates

for development cost charges. Development Cost Levies (DCLs) pay for growth and are charged on new development. They are cash payments and commonly assessed on a per square foot basis. They help pay for new capital facilities needed due to growth—only for parks, replacement housing, child care and engineering infrastructure (transportation, sewer, water, drainage). Within British Columbia, only the City of Vancouver is allowed to use DCLs for child care.

Community Amenity Contributions (CACs) are more flexible than DCLs, as they are part of a rezoning, which is a Council-approved change in the city's land use. They may fund community amenities, e.g., library, daycare, community center, community police office, park and park improvements and neighbourhood house. CACs apply only to rezoning when additional density is approved by City Council in order to provide amenities. CACs are less available as much less development happens through rezoning. CACs are also frequently provided as in-kind and on-site facilities. They have provided significant in-kind assets (City of Vancouver, 2004). These tools have had a significant impact on the ability to fund child care facilities and historically fund some start up and operating costs.

Density Bonusing is enabled by zoning and development bylaws and can be used to create child care at the discretion of Council. Developers may be granted additional floor space ratio (FSR) or height in return for amenity bonus space such as child care, to ensure ongoing viability and public benefit, such space is leased to the City for the life of the building. Developers may also be permitted to exclude space from FSR calculations in a development where child care resides.

The City of Vancouver capital plan takes into account all financing tools including tax-base revenues. There has been an increase in the capital plan for child care from \$30M in 2015-2018 to \$123M in 2019-2022 to maintain existing facilities in good repair, ensure no loss of space and increase supply (City of Vancouver, 2004).

Child care facilities that result from new development are typically secured through a long-term lease arrangement between the developer

and the City and secured at a nominal rate. These facilities may take the form of a head lease, air space parcel or ground lease or in some case such as a public institution ownership is retained by the developer. Once secured, the City enters into a sub-lease with a non-profit organization to operate the child care facility for a total of a 15 years (three - five year terms) at a nominal rate, typically \$10 per year. The sub-lease may set out service objectives, operational expectations and maintenance requirements of both parties.

The Civic Child Care Strategy originally set out that child care should be operated by neighbourhood based organization. In the late 90's with creation of a number of new facilities, the City supported the creation of Vancouver Society of Children's Centers (VSOCC), a non-profit organization which operates the new spaces in the downtown core. Operators of new child care facilities supported by new developments in the City outside of the downtown are typically negotiated through a Request for Expression of Interest process (see a description of VSOCC in the section on non-profit child care).

City supported child care facilities have been created in low-rise Facilities including renovated heritage homes (e.g., Pooh Corner and Mole Hill), portables on city land (e.g., Brant Villa, Sunset), portable on school land (e.g., Simon Fraser), portable on school land with park right of way (e.g., Gingerbread), community centers (e.g., Three Corners, Creekside), neighbourhood houses (e.g., Kiwassa and Collingwood Neighbourhood Houses), roof of a school (e.g., Sir Sandford Fleming and Tennyson Elementary Schools) and stand-alone facilities (e.g., Dorothy Lam). Mid Rise Building Types include a hospital site (West Village) and post-secondary institutions (Vancouver Community College). High Rise Building Types: podium style residential towers (e.g., Shaw Tower, Bayshore) and on a parkade (Waterview and Portside). Purpose-built family child care homes have also been developed as part of the child care landscape.

Despite the many successes resulting from these policies and practices related to land use planning, challenges remain. Some City of Vancouver communities remain "child care deserts" with no or little provision as a result of no new or redevelopment and/or lack of space/land to build

new facilities. There is also competing demand for DCLs and CACs; given the limitations of these sources of funding, child care may not be the top priority. Land use planning is, however, one tool that clearly has a role to play in a more publicly managed early learning and child care system.

The role of service planning in enhancing child care accessibility in Ontario

In Ontario, regular local service planning or child care was first initiated by the provincial government as part of the Day Care Initiatives in 1981. As the Ontario government's first policy paper outlined:

the Ministry will introduce a joint planning approach to the funding of large-scale municipal day care programs. As has been true in other areas of children's services, the current budgeting and funding processes and arrangements between the Ministry and municipalities and other direct providers of services have not occurred within a framework of joint planning (Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1981: 64).

Thus, service planning began as early as 1981 in Toronto and Ottawa, which were then the largest administrators of child care in Ontario. Through the service planning process, these municipalities began to draw upon demographics, trends, experience with a range of service providers, relationships with partners including school boards, knowledge of municipal and provincial budgeting and other procedures to develop multi-year plans to guide child care in their respective regions.

In the late 1990s, Ontario municipalities underwent a radical ideologically motivated re-structuring. As urban scholar Zachary Spicer has written, “hundreds of municipalities across the province [were] consolidated and the regional municipalities of Metropolitan Toronto, Hamilton-Wentworth, Sudbury, and Ottawa-Carleton forcibly amalgamated” (Spicer, 2012: 2). The amalgamation was tied to the contention that “we must rationalize the regional and municipal levels to avoid the overlap and

duplication that now exists” (Ontario Progressive Conservative Party 1994: 17, cited in Spicer). Restructured in 1998 as part of this larger process, child care administration in Ontario today has 47 administrative units, Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) and District Social Service Administration Boards (DDSABs).

In 2000, the Ontario government began to require all the new municipal entities to develop and submit regular service plans. Service plans produced by each municipal entity on regular five year cycles have become integral to how child care services in that geographical area are developed, funded, maintained and prioritized. Some of the processes that contribute to service planning (such as community consultation) are outlined in the Ontario guidelines for the 47 local service managers. Today CMSMs and DSSABs are designated as local service system managers who are responsible for administering regulated child care services and early years’ programs at the local level, contributing some funding to child care and may deliver public child care services in addition to developing their mandated service plans.

The Ontario government provides guidelines for municipal development of service plans but the content and direction of service plans vary widely among service system managers, with each reflecting the goal of municipal service system management to support the social and economic development of the broader community. For example, in Peel Region, a rapidly growing jurisdiction just west of Toronto, [Service Plan 2019 – 2024](#) is aligned with the Peel Children’s Charter that sets out twelve rights for its children, and with the Region’s Poverty Reduction Strategy. The plan identifies six strategic priorities with actions, outcomes, measures and timelines for each. In an easily accessible format, this plan is publicly available. In Wellington County’s [plan for 2015–2018](#), the focus was on quality enhancement through the child care workforce and the Quality Child Care Initiative, full inclusion of children with disabilities and special needs in child care; and a system review of special needs resourcing in conjunction with Ryerson University’s Inclusive Early Childhood Service System research project. The City of Toronto’s [Service Plan 2015 – 2019](#) sets out a vision and principles,

specifies its commitments to collaboration with the community, a well planned and managed high quality system, equity, fairness and diversity, and expansion through public and non-profit service delivery.

The City of Toronto explained how the process of developing service plans has contributed to its management of child care services, noting that it is:

... a tool for guiding the funding and management of Toronto's children's services system over the next five years. The plan is approved by Council, and is a framework for action for the City's role in managing services that meet the early learning and care needs of Toronto children and families. The plan provides a comprehensive overview of child care service needs, gaps and issues, and identifies the mix and level of child care services appropriate to local needs and priorities within a framework of provincial legislation, regulations, standards, policies and priorities (City of Toronto, 2005, cited in Friendly, 2011: 10).

Ontario's systematic, regularized approach to service planning sets goals, targets and timelines and action plans has been a valuable tool for municipal decision makers and stakeholders working to increase accessibility to child care. Challenges remain with regard to reconciling provincial and municipal directions as shifts in policy and budgets occur.

A systems-change approach to policy development to expand child care availability in PEI¹⁷

Prince Edward Island, Canada's smallest province, is primarily rural, with many seasonal workers in agriculture and fisheries. Since 2017, the federal government's Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care has provided transfer funds to provinces/territories to develop initiatives consistent with its principles of: accessibility, affordability,

¹⁷ Note that the material in this section is based on a case study and key informant interviews developed for Lero, Prentice, Friendly, Richardson & Fraser, 2019.

quality, inclusivity and flexibility (Pasolli, 2019). In its first three-year bilateral agreement with the Government of Canada, PEI undertook to:

- Create spaces for children whose parents work non-standard hours and/or seasonally using several strategies;
- Create up to five new Early Years Centres with a focus on serving these Populations;
- Work with stakeholders and industry to identify flexible ELCC needs;
- License additional spaces for non-standard hours to serve these populations.

To do this, PEI used a community planning and development process aimed at creating child care to support families working non-standard hours and/or seasonally. In advance of developing the services, PEI child care officials collaborated with public sector health care organizations that operate 24 hours seven days a week to identify their employees' child care needs and also provided funding to a community group to assess child care needs and make recommendations to the government more generally.

An initial step in the development of services was to establish a grant program with a Request for Proposals with two streams: one for extended hours child care and one for seasonal child care. Once the services established began to operate in the summer of 2019, the provincial government convened the service providers in a provincial “think-tank group” which has been monitoring the progress of this initiative. This group continues to share information and knowledge about their experiences and problem solve among themselves. This process is on-going and involves the child care sector and parents with the goal of learning the successes and challenges of this initial stage of non-standard/ seasonal child care and to improve the next phases.

When analyzing the policy planning process used in this PEI initiative, several best practices can be taken from the experience:

Fit programs to community need: In Prince Edward Island, research had shown non-standard hours work to be

intertwined with seasonal working patterns in the province's fishing and agriculture industries. Therefore, it made sense in their community to prioritize seasonal non-standard hours care (and associated funding) rather than other forms of non-standard hours child care that were not as needed in their communities, such as overnight care.

Assess demand in multiple sectors: As well as creating seasonal care for workers in the fishing and agriculture sectors, PEI also conducted a survey at 24 hours/seven days a week health care facilities across the province to identify the child care needs of their staff. They are also working with a funded community group exploring the gaps in access to child care that limit women's participation in the workforce more generally.

Engage in ongoing collaboration with community stakeholders: Throughout the process of increasing seasonal care in PEI, the provincial government worked closely with the child care sector and broader community to ensure programs were fitting their needs and were sustainable. The licensed child care sector, employers, community organizations and parents were all regularly consulted and brought into the discussion of how to innovatively increase access to child care outside traditional work schedules.

Connect programs to larger policy goals in early learning and care: The PEI seasonal child care initiative was designed and implemented to align with the larger goal of increasing access to child care across the province, meeting both parents' employment needs and children's development and well-being needs. With this in mind, the fee subsidy program was modified to allow eligible families to continue accessing their subsidy after their seasonal employment hours ended. This allowed many children to access regulated child care for the first time, including children with disabilities whom may

not have been included previously, directly tying into PEI's goal of meeting more children's development and well-being needs.

RESOURCES - *Planning for child care*

City Beautiful (January 16, 2017). *An Introduction to Zoning* – Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kVWDWMcLT4>

esabaq (February 28, 2019). *Principles of Land Use Planning*. Presented by Rehaan. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RrS9Rwa3Gdo>

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. *Governance of land use*. Retrieved from <https://www.oecd.org/gov/governance-of-land-use.htm>

Planetizen (November 8, 2019). *What is Urban Planning* – Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=URLOGQhJWj0>

The Audiopedia (May 1, 2018). *What is Land Use Planning? What Does It Mean?* Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=64PLDARXcdE>

[Centre for Community Health and Development Community Toolkit](#)

Winnipeg

[Planning for child care: impact of planning policies and strategies on the development of early learning and child care spaces in Winnipeg, Manitoba](#)

County of Wellington, Ontario

[Child care service plan](#)

City of Toronto

[Early Learning and Child Care Service Plan](#)

Peel Region, Ontario

[Early years and child care service system plan](#)

City of Vancouver

[*A healthy city for all: Vancouver's Healthy City Strategy*](#)

[Civic Childcare Strategy](#)

[Child Care Design Guidelines](#)

[Childcare Technical Guidelines](#)

[Moving forward – Child care: A cornerstone of child development services](#)

How municipal roles in child care contribute to accessibility

What's the issue?

As part of this project's goal "to contribute to improving the availability of child care services", this section explores the key roles municipalities and other local government entities can play in enhancing public management associated with creating child care services. In many countries, and to a considerably lesser extent in Canada, local municipal level governments play a variety of roles in child care services. These include planning, administration, financing, service delivery and creating services, all of which can contribute to improving child care availability. This section concentrates primarily on how municipalities can facilitate and assist creation of child care services. A separate section addresses local government's direct provision of child care services.

What is a municipal level government?

In Canada, municipal governments are defined as "local authorities created by the provinces and territories to provide services that are best managed under local control. They raise revenue (largely from property taxes, local charges and provincial grants) and impact people's daily lives in numerous ways, from garbage pick-up and public transit to fire services, policing and programs at community centres, libraries and pools. Municipal governments include cities, towns, villages and rural (county) or metropolitan municipalities" (Plunkett, 2013). While municipalities may be defined somewhat differently in other countries and may have different roles and responsibilities from their Canadian counterparts, they are a local level of government — "the level that best understands the needs of local populations and where participation can most easily occur" (Jenson & Mahon, 2002: ii).

Canadian municipalities have an important, defining characteristic they may or may not share with municipal governments in other countries:

they are “creatures of the provinces”, or “located under provincial jurisdiction in the Constitution”, with limited capacity to generate revenue (Good, 2019). This arrangement has been described as “a set of intergovernmental relations that were designed in the 19th century, when many more people lived in rural than urban areas” (Jenson and Mahon, 2002: 1). It is noteworthy that municipal level entities relevant to child care can have quite different definitions and characteristics in different Canadian provinces. For example, Ontario has defined 47 amalgamated municipal and regional entities (Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) and District Social Services Boards (DSSABs), while in Saskatchewan there are 775 municipalities, most of which have very small populations. In this section, the term “municipality” is used to mean “local level” of government, as regional entities play a role in child care.

What’s the context?

In many countries, the local level of government plays an important variety of roles in early learning and child care. In countries with well-developed ELCC systems such as Sweden, Denmark, Norway, France, Slovenia, Germany (a federation like Canada with intermediate level sub-national states/provinces) and others, it is the local, municipal level of government that is charged with the responsibility for administering child care services, planning, developing new services, and ensuring service availability. Contributing to financing ELCC services along with the national government may also be a municipal responsibility, as is the case in Sweden and Norway (which have quite differently arranged tax systems than Canada).

The idea that service management and delivery should be determined and managed locally is consistent with the concept of subsidiarity, the principle that tasks are best handled by the lowest level competent authority. In this view, one of the benefits of local management of program delivery is that it enables democratic participation of community members, parents and children in the ELCC services so as to best ensure responsive programming. Looking at this in the Canadian context, Torjman and Leviten-Reid observed that “local governments are in a posi-

tion to promote awareness of the pressing social needs in the community and of the importance of social investment. They can foster a sense of responsibility for social well-being among all sectors including business, community groups and other levels of government” (2003: 4).

However, as child care scholar Rianne Mahon (2004) has pointed out, although communities are the place where the policies of senior levels of government are best put in place, local management is sustainable only if it is supported by the policy and financing to which senior levels have greater access, particularly in Canada where municipalities have no legal status and limited revenue generating power. It is also in the interest of local governments to deliver and manage early learning and child care programs to meet local needs because adequate child care is important for ensuring the sustainability, prosperity and growth of local communities (Jenson & Mahon, 2002; Korpi, 2007).

Sweden’s well-developed child care system exemplifies how the national government’s making municipalities central to child care policy facilitated and strengthened it from the beginning. As early as 1975, with introduction of the first national Preschool Act, child care became a mandatory municipal task: “municipalities were obliged to take responsibility for its expansion” (Korpi, 2007: 26).

It was during the rapid expansion of child care in Sweden in the 1970s that the municipal role in creating services came into full force, as “given the lack of land for building, flats were used for day care centres... In Stockholm...the city had an option on all vacant flats on the ground floor of apartment blocks which they could inspect to see if they might be suitable as premises for day care centres” (Korpi, 2007: 33). Korpi also commented that “the arguments for attracting people and companies to specific municipalities were now not just good living conditions, schools and outdoor life, but also easily accessible child care of high quality. Soon there was not a single new housing area planned without premises for child care” (2007: 36).

As discussed earlier, part of the context for considering the role of municipalities in child care in Canada is their legal status: in Canada,

municipalities are “creatures of the provinces”, with “no inherent powers — only the powers given by the province, generally in a statute” (City Solicitor City of Toronto, 2000). Considering the differences in approaches to municipalities in different provinces, this commentary went on to observe that “because the powers of cities depend on the political will of the province concerned, municipal powers vary greatly across Canada. Like a parent, one province can allow municipalities little discretion while another allows extensive independence” (City Solicitor, 2000: 1-2). This status does not prevent municipalities from being assigned (as in Ontario) or assuming (as in British Columbia) various roles in child care. However, depending on the province, the specific roles and responsibilities that may have an impact on child care vary.

A key paper by Jenson and Mahon, which examines the balance of government roles and responsibilities with respect to child care notes: “Until the 1960s, most public involvement in child care came from municipal authorities. Then in 1966 the establishment of the shared-cost Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) brought both the federal and provincial governments into the field” (2002:ii). They observe that at this time Canadian municipal level governments lost their status in children’s services. A more recent report from the Muttart Foundation notes:

Municipal level governments across Canada play limited roles in the support or delivery of early learning and care. The provinces’ jurisdiction over education and social services leaves municipal level governments outside Ontario without mandated roles or responsibilities for the oversight or management of services, while the reliance on markets for the financing and delivery of child care presents them with organizational and funding barriers to overcome should they choose to take on more discretionary ones (Muttart Foundation 2016: 8).

Nevertheless, the various roles of municipalities in ELCC have never been very well developed in Canada. Prentice has noted that Canada has instead primarily relied on the “third sector” to “initiate and deliver child care, part of a long tradition of voluntary sector delivery of social

and personal services” (2007) in addition to relying on entrepreneurs to develop and deliver child care. This has been true throughout Canada, including in Ontario, despite its unique approach amongst provinces and territories when it comes to the role of municipalities in planning, funding and administering child care.

Two provinces have a long history of municipal involvement in child care, Ontario and Alberta, with Ontario standing out for its long-time administrative role in child care. Municipalities have been a key part of the child care picture in Ontario for more than 75 years. Ontario’s first child care policy paper stated “The significant municipal role contributes to greater appropriateness of local services...and should be retained and strengthened” (Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1981: 58). The role of municipalities was amplified in Ontario with *New directions for child care*, a significant policy document that –among other things— further increased support for local planning, community participation and funding for local initiatives (1987). Ontario’s municipal roles have included operation of public services, funding, local service planning (described elsewhere in this report), and administration. Ontario has historically played, and continues to play, a unique role among Canadian provinces in administering child care and other early years programs.

Alberta is the only other province that has historically had a significant municipal role in child care. It was different from Ontario’s approach as—while it was provincially designed, the role was not mandated. Unlike Ontario, where municipalities have played multiple roles, Alberta municipalities were more focused on delivering child care, operating, and funding a share of, the more than 60 public child care centres between the 1970s and 1990s (Langford, 2011).

Under Alberta’s 1966 provincial Preventive Social Services Act, municipal level governments could then deliver “approved preventive social services” (i.e., child care) while the federal Canada Assistance Plan, also introduced in 1966, allowed transfer funds to support them. As in Ontario, the eligible costs of provincially approved services were shared among three levels of government (20 % municipal – 30% provincial – 50% federal funds) (Muttart Foundation, 2011). At the end of the 1970s, the

Alberta government changed its approach to funding child care services, “largely removing the financial capacity of municipal level governments to develop, support and deliver child care services in response to community needs, and repositioned them as potential service providers or supporters of services, on a similar footing with private non-profit and for-profit organizations” (Muttart Foundation: 2011: 10). The large municipalities sought and were granted direct transfer payments for child care through the Canada Assistance Plan with no provincial contribution (called a “flow-through” by Jenson & Mahon, 2002) but by 1996, the combination of changes to provincial and federal funding and policy changes¹⁸ led to the demise of almost all Alberta’s municipal child centres.

The current state

Ontario

Today Ontario is the sole Canadian province that delegates authority and responsibility to municipalities while retaining control over child care policy overall, as well as key aspects of child care provision such as licensing and many elements of financing. Since 1998, when provincial legislation amalgamated a number of social programs, Ontario’s roles in child care has been managed through the amalgamated Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) and District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs) or local system managers. Provincial child care legislation defines the municipal government role in roles in regulated child care, which include contributing some financing, administration and local service management, service planning and directly operating child care services, which is discretionary. School boards and CMSM and DSSABs work together planning for child care in schools as well as developing priorities for creating child care spaces in schools.

Municipalities finance at least 20% of the budget for fee subsidies, operating funds, EarlyON centres (family resource programs) and resources for children with disabilities, and 50% of administration costs (the

¹⁸ Including the replacement of the cost-shared Canada Assistance Plan with the block fund Canada Health and Social Transfer

remaining 80% and 50%, respectively, are paid by the provincial government). Municipalities may also implement their own initiatives to raise revenue or resources for child care, although their discretionary options for this are limited. For example, at times, Toronto has used community benefit contributions under Section 37 of Ontario's Planning Act. A "Section 37" under Ontario's Planning Act allows a municipality to negotiate for community amenity benefits when a development requires a zoning by-law amendment. Although a number of child care centres in Toronto's urban core were at one time the result of this process, competition for development of other community amenities through this route has grown significantly.

Ontario municipalities are responsible for administering the public financing and administering other aspects of provision of regulated child care in their area. This includes administering provincial funding for fee subsidies for eligible families, wage subsidies to enhance staff salaries and benefits of staff and special needs resourcing funds to support the inclusion of children with disabilities in child care. Since 2012, when the provincial government "modernized" the funding formula determining funds transferred from the provincial government, municipalities have had considerably more discretion about how funds were to be spent between child care funding categories.

The local service system management role in Ontario also includes municipal administration of "service contracts" for parent fee subsidies with operators and managing the wait list for fee subsidies, although the provincial government sets the criteria under a provincial income test for family eligibility for a fee subsidy. Overall, the provincial government determines which services are eligible to receive subsidized families but local system managers can further define the operation of the subsidy program. For example, in Toronto since 2004, new for-profit operators are ineligible for service contracts for subsidy provision. Cleveland reported in 2018 that 16 of the 47 CMSMs/DDSABs had a moratorium on service contracts with new for-profit operators and restricted funding in various ways (Cleveland, 2018).

In addition to financing and local service system management, each municipality is required to engage in service planning for child care, creating a Service Plan that guides the development, funding and maintenance of child care in their geographical area. (For more information on service planning in Ontario, see the section on planning).

A number of Ontario municipalities still directly operate public child care programs in their community although the proportion of child care spaces delivered through municipally operated centres has significantly declined in the last thirty years. Changes to the provincial funding formula and other funding decisions led some municipalities to close publicly run centres as a cost-cutting measure. (See the section on public child care provision).

Finally, many municipalities in Ontario have “grown into” being what Cleveland called “caretakers of quality”, as half of the municipal entities use a quality measurement tool (Cleveland, 2018), with some (Wellington County and the City of Toronto, for example) also engaging in research.

Alberta

In Alberta, the situation of municipal involvement in ELCC is quite different today than it was when there were provincial and federal funding arrangements that encouraged and supported the large municipalities to become involved in child care. Today Alberta has only a small municipal service provision role, with four smaller municipalities supporting services. For some years, the municipalities of Beaumont, Jasper, Drayton Valley and the Municipal District of Opportunity all have had centres benefitting from municipal support of one kind or another, including operating the centres as the license holder, to providing the facility. (See the section on publicly delivered child care).

Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan also has a small municipal role in supporting or operating as the license holder child care centres in a number of municipalities—all very [small rural villages](#).

British Columbia

British Columbia does not have any legislated role for municipalities in child care but municipalities in Metro Vancouver have played a significant voluntary role in the planning and funding of child care since the 1990s. The City of Vancouver took the lead when it began involvement with the *Civic Child Care Strategy* in 1990 (Molina, 2017). The City of Vancouver is currently involved in child care in several ways through a comprehensive strategy that includes policy on child care directions, an approach to demand forecasting that is unique in Canada, creating non-profit services and negotiating for child care as an amenity in the land use planning and development process and providing capital grants to non-profit service providers. (See the section on needs assessment and demand forecasting). These grants are funded through direct municipal investment (mainly developer fees), and comprise three percent of the city's capital investments overall (Molina 2017). Although the City of Vancouver does not directly operate child care facilities, they do contribute funding and provide first refusal for new centres to the Vancouver Society of Children's Centres (VSOCC), which the City of Vancouver initiated and now operates 14 non-profit centres.

There are 17 municipalities in the Metro Vancouver area, and a number of them play similar (although somewhat less extensive) roles in supporting child care through zoning, demand measurement and rental provisions. Seven municipalities have their own child care strategies, and eleven include child care objectives/policies in their Official Community Plan (Spicer, 2015).

In addition to Vancouver's long-time municipal role, the provincial government has begun to support municipalities across BC to take on a formalized role in child care planning as part of the provincial child care expansion plan. Using funds secured through the BC bilateral agreement with the federal government under the federal Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework, the provincial government has implemented two new funding programs for municipalities, both facilitated by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM). Since 2018, UBCM has administered funds to municipalities for the Child Care

Community Planning Program and the [*Community Child Care Space Creation Program*](#) (Government of British Columbia, 2018).

Under the *Child Care Community Planning Program*, eligible local municipal government projects can receive up to \$25,000 to engage in child care planning activities, and develop a community child care space creation plan. This program represents a new role for local government in BC to play in planning and creating child care, and also allows the provincial government to collect data on local demand to be used to their own province wide planning. The local projects funded collect information on child care needs, create an inventory of existing child care spaces, identify space creation targets over the next 10 years; and identify actions that can be taken to meet those space creation targets. Unlike Ontario, participation in this kind of planning is voluntary and by application; only 74 local governments have been approved of the 189 local governments in BC (UBCM 2019).

The Community Child Care Space Creation Program is also administered by the UBCM and provides local governments with up to \$1 million to create new licensed child care spaces for children aged 0-5. These spaces can be within their own facilities or in a facility under a long-term lease agreement by the local government, with a priority on programs child care directly operated by the local government or public sector organization (i.e. school district), for underserved populations and non-standard hours child care. Notably, unlike the province's *Childcare BC New Spaces Fund*, which allows for-profit operators to directly apply, the spaces created through UBCM's program must be with non-profit and public operators. (For more information about the difference between the *Space Creation Program* and *Childcare BC New Spaces Fund*, see [*Two Programs, More Spaces*](#)). As of 2019, there were nine municipalities that received funds through the *Space Creation Program* (UBCM 2019). Several municipalities have been able to access the various programs in tandem, significantly developing their child care system in a short period of time. For example, the small town of Qualicum Beach received \$2 million (from *Space Creation* and *New Spaces* programs) to build a new non-profit child care centre on publically owned land and also partnered with other

municipalities in their region to develop a shared Community Plan using \$125,000 from the *Community Planning Program* (PQB News, 2020).

British Columbia provides an illustration of how municipal involvement in child care can play a key role even without the long history and mandate illustrated by Ontario's delegation of responsibilities to them. The funding through UBCM engages the BC municipalities to build capacity for local child care planning linked to creating child care services and to begin integrating child care into local initiatives. There are many creative ways in which municipalities can leverage their own fiscal tools and responsibilities to support child care, as demonstrated by Metro Vancouver municipalities. Funding and capacity support from other levels of government are essential to expand child care through increased municipal involvement.

RESOURCES - *Municipal role in child care*

- [Bringing cities to the table: Child care and intergovernmental relations](#) (2002)
- [Affordable for all: Making licensed child care affordable in Ontario - Chapter 3: The municipal role in managing the child care system \(p.71\)](#)
- [Alberta's day care controversy from 1908 to 2009 and beyond](#) (book)

City of Ottawa

- [Children's services: Child care and early years' service system plan](#) (2019 – 2023)

Municipality of Whistler, B.C.

- [Whistler child care planning project](#) (August 2020)
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How publicly delivered child care services contribute to accessibility

What's the issue?

There is little doubt that the private initiatives Canada relies on to create child care services fail to meet the need. As a result, there are too few child care services to meet families' needs in all regions in Canada. This section focuses on one of the roles played by local level governments in child care in many countries and to a smaller extent in several Canadian provinces: delivering public child care services. It offers an exploration of how public delivery of child care by local government entities can be a significant tool for increasing service availability and equity.

What is publicly delivered child care?

Publicly delivered child care services are operated¹⁹ directly by a public government²⁰ body such as a municipality or school board rather than by a private non-profit or private for-profit entity. A City of Vancouver report defines public delivery as

services operated directly by local or senior government agencies, such as school districts, municipalities, regional districts or public health authorities. The public agency holds the operating license and directly delivers the service to the community. Employees delivering the service are considered public employees. Public delivery contrasts with a non-profit delivery model, whereby the entity to hold the operating license and deliver a service is a non-profit organization. Employees delivering the service are considered employees of the non-profit operator (Gautreaux, 2019: 3).

19 In Canada, which uses a licensing, or permit system for child care services, "operating directly" assumes that the licensee or license holder is a government body such as a municipality or school board.

20 This definition of publicly delivered child care does not include ECEC services such as Canadian kindergarten or French écoles maternelles, also programs for children under elementary school age, that are part of public education systems.

In many European countries, most, or many child care services are publicly delivered, meaning that a public entity, usually the municipality, is the operator, or owner. This is the case in Sweden, Norway, Finland, Iceland, Denmark, France, Slovenia and others, although typically these also have at least a small number of private non-profit and for-profit services.

By contrast, in other countries (often those typically defined as liberal democratic, more market-oriented welfare regimes), child care is mostly privately delivered²¹. None of these countries—the United States, the UK, Australia, Ireland and Canada—that mostly rely on private child care delivery have evolved well-developed ELCC systems (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2001, 2006). Gautreaux, writing on municipal child care in British Columbia observes that “research indicates that public delivery of child care (childcare operated directly by local or senior government agencies) is one necessary component of achieving a system of universal child care” (Gautreaux, 2019: 1).

In addition to publicly delivered child care that fits this description, most countries also have publicly delivered ELCC programs for children younger than elementary school age, usually down to age two or three years, that are part of public education systems. These include, for example, Canadian kindergarten²² and four year old kindergarten, Spanish escuela infantil and French ecoles maternelles, which are compulsory from age three. These tend to be conceptualized more as “education” than “care” but act as child care for working parents during school hours, as elementary school does. They are not overtly included as part of this discussion as they are provided as a matter of course by public school authorities, almost always at no fee to parents. Participation in public ELCC programs that are part of education systems may or may not be compulsory, as they are in France and in several Canadian provinces.

21 The idea of ideologically-defined social welfare regimes was developed by sociologist Gösta Esping-Andersen. For an explanation see his *Three worlds of welfare capitalism* (1989) or Friendly and Prentice, 2009.

22 Note that this is complicated by terminology: “kindergarten” refers to child care in some countries with integrated care and education systems like Norway, for example.

What's the context?

A number of ELCC policy specialists have commented on the benefits of publicly delivered municipal child care. Swedish ELCC expert Barbara Martin Korpi has described how public child care delivery was a key factor in the rapid growth of child care in Sweden beginning in the 1970s. Korpi also commented that publicly delivered child care brought benefits to Swedish municipalities, as the availability of quality child care strengthened the attractiveness as places to live for families (Korpi, 2007).

In an exploratory study, prominent European ELCC scholar Matthias Urban considered the process, conception and effects of privatization in 14 countries in Europe, North and South America and Asia. Using detailed case studies, it begins with the “a privatisation trend that threatens to overshadow public ECEC”. It’s interesting that Urban’s study addresses pragmatic aspects of ELCC provision such as quality and the situation of the workforce as well as more “philosophical” issues such as the understanding of equity and social justice. He explains

This study identifies that there are implications for the quality of the provision regarding child/adult ratios, the variety of ECE programmes being offered, and the training/qualifications of many ECE educators. The increasing privatisation trend has fostered discrimination towards the ECE workforce in terms of the reciprocity between teachers’ qualifications, contracts and remuneration. And it has boosted possible features of power or domination related to political, social, and economic change that influences ECE and subsequently the ECE workforce.... These features confirm the assumption that market mechanisms have a significant impact on equity in education, not just in widening gaps between the privileged and the disadvantaged, but also in changing how equity and social justice in education are understood (Urban, 2014: 65).

“Steering” with regard to child care has been used by the OECD to mean linking planning and implementation more effectively than waiting for

the market to respond. This can include initiating new services, addressing shifting age or cultural groups, addressing needs of hard-to-serve populations/areas, such as parents working non-standard hours or rural communities. In a presentation to an Ontario committee considering municipally delivered child care, Friendly identified “steering” as one of a number of benefits of publicly delivered child care in the Canadian context:

- Better control, or “steering”, of access, equity and inclusion;
- Easier integration of child care and kindergarten;
- More consistently higher quality²³;
- Responding to community needs;
- Experimentation with programming and models (Friendly, 2015).

Historically, public delivery of child care services has been relatively limited in Canada compared to many other countries, especially those in Europe. Although as public child care has diminished dramatically in Ontario – once its most established provider – new interest in public child care has arisen in British Columbia. An analysis commissioned by the City of Vancouver to explore public child care delivery in British Columbia used interviews with municipal stakeholders to identify potential benefits as they perceived them, as well as challenges experienced. Identified benefits included:

- Publicly delivered services offer consistency and reliability service to the community;
- Public delivery of quality programs facilitates trust;
- Public delivery has financial advantages;
- Public delivery facilitates greater control and ability to leverage space for community needs;
- Public delivery facilitates staff integration and collaboration;
- Childcare delivered at schools helps children transition into K-12 education;
- Greater control and ability to leverage space for community needs;

²³ See Cleveland, 2008.

- Better wages and working conditions for ECEs as compared to the private and non-profit sectors;
- Greater integration of ECEs into the public agency (vs. being outside the organization as a contractor (Gautreaux, 2019).

According to Prentice, “when child care is conceived of as a public good rather than a market commodity, its close relationship to social capital and social inclusion become obvious” (2005: 18). She notes that the idea of municipally owned, operated and delivered child care programs would reinforce the idea that ELCC is a public good that is good for children, good for women, and good for the economy.

What’s the current state?

In five of Canada’s provinces – Quebec, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia – some (some quite limited) child care services are operated by municipalities and school boards, both public entities.

Quebec

While Quebec child care services for children younger than school-age are all run by either private non-profit and for-profit operators, school authorities operate almost all services for school-age children. School-age child care, which includes kindergarten-age children, is under the aegis of the Ministère de l’Éducation et de l’Enseignement Supérieur (MEES), not the Ministère de la Famille, which is responsible for child care for children 0-5 years. School authorities are required to provide school-age child care, charging a flat parent fee, when there is sufficient demand. Proportionately, Quebec has more child care for school-age children than preschool-aged children, reporting more than 350,000 school-aged child care spaces in 2019 (Friendly et al., In press).

Ontario

Public child care has been a key part of the child care picture in Ontario for more than 75 years, as many of the war-time day nurseries established during World War II in Ontario were operated by municipalities. When the war ended, and with it the first federal financial support for

child care, many of these closed but a number of centres (28 centres for 2-5 year olds and 42 programs for school-aged children) including some municipal centres were retained. In Toronto, the municipality operated most programs for preschool-age children while school boards were responsible for child care for older children. This participation by local government in the operation of child care programs was the first substantial publicly operated child care in Canada and was to play a significant role in future development of child care in Ontario. Initially supported through provincial/municipal cost-sharing, such funding as was available became federal/provincial/municipal with the coming of the federal Canada Assistance Plan²⁴ in 1966 (Friendly & Prentice, 2009).

TABLE 1 Municipally operated full and part time child care centre spaces in Ontario 1998 - 2019

	# of full and part time centre spaces	% of total full and part time centre spaces
1998	18,143	12
2010	10,230	4
2012	7,192	3
2016	5,305	1.4
2019	5,508	1.2

Data source: Early childhood education and care in Canada, 1998, 2010, 2012, 2016, 2019. These data were unavailable for all years. ([All ECEC in Canada publications](#))

Saskatchewan

In Saskatchewan, which has the lowest child care coverage in Canada on a per child capita basis, a number of municipalities have chosen to offer municipally connected child care on a voluntary basis. A survey of 12

24 The Canada Assistance Plan supported social welfare and preventative social service programs across Canada including child care through 50-50 federal/provincial cost sharing. It was ended in 1996 and replaced by a federal block funded, the Canada Health and Social Transfer, now the Canada Social Transfer.

centres²⁵ identified as municipally connected by the provincial government found that of the 12 centres, three²⁶ are operated directly by the municipality in that the municipality is the license holder and employer of the child care staff. These are located in the small rural centres of the Village of Vibank, the Town of Carnduff, and the Village of Hazlet, each with a population of no more than 1,100. All three of these centres were developed with the support of the local municipal government. In 2019, the Saskatchewan government reported that 116 child care spaces were municipally operated (Friendly et al, In press).

Alberta

At one time, Alberta had a substantial publicly delivered child care sector. In the mid 1970s, Edmonton, Calgary, Medicine Hat, Red Deer and Grande Prairie, and some smaller municipalities operated 66 child care centres as well as home child care (Langford, 2011). By the mid 1990s, a variety of provincial and federal funding and policy changes had²⁷ led to the demise of almost all Alberta's municipal child centres. Although four other municipal governments—[Beaumont, Jasper](#), Drayton Valley and the [Municipal District of Opportunity](#), a large remote area in central northern Alberta which is predominantly Indigenous —now support and/or operate child care centres, they no longer provide a critical mass of centres in Alberta as they once did. (A “spotlight” on Drayton Valley's municipally operated child care is provided at the end of this section).

British Columbia

British Columbia does not have the same long historic experience with public child care that Ontario and Alberta have; publicly operated child care is a relatively recent development in the province. In a report for the City of Vancouver, Michelle Gautreaux described it as “a small but impactful component of the childcare landscape. Currently in BC, publicly delivered childcare is provided primarily by municipal Parks and

25 All 12 centres are in small rural municipalities.

26 In the other eight centres, a non-profit organization guided by a board of directors operates the program including holding the license and employing the staff.

27 Including the replacement of the cost-shared Canada Assistance Plan with the block fund Canada Health and Social Transfer

Recreation departments, along with two School Districts” 2019:1). She identified the following public entities operating child care programs:

- Recreation Oak Bay
- City of Surrey Community and Recreation
- District of Tofino
- Cowichan Valley Regional District Recreation and Culture Division
- Langley City Parks and recreation
- Delta Parks, Recreation and Culture
- Township of Langley Recreation and Culture
- Resort Municipality of Whistler
- School District 49 Central Coast
- School District 60 Peace River North

Among the municipalities offering public child care are several urban-suburban communities and several rural communities of different types. Six of these provided full day or close to full day child care, six provide part day preschools and five offer school-age child care; several offer multiple child care services. Most are located in public buildings. The programs provide from 16 spaces to more than the 1,000 spaces provided in Surrey, in the Lower Mainland (Gatreaux, 2019).

In addition, the current provincial initiative in collaboration with the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) that has motivated local planning and municipal needs assessments (described in the previous section on municipal roles in child care) seems to be resulting in additional publicly delivered child care centres in varied BC communities.

The following section presents several examples of publicly delivered child care services that showcase the variety of approaches that have been used successfully in Canada.

Drayton Valley Early Childhood Development Centre

Drayton Valley in central Alberta with a population of 7,000 had identified lack of quality child care as a barrier to attracting oil sands workers in 2006. A plan was developed by an outside organization that recommended the town establish a publicly delivered child care facility to address the need. Funding through a loan and capital funds from the Alberta government allowed an 88 space purpose built centre to be built in 2009.

Today it provides child care for children from 1-12 years of age. Staff are employees of the town. They are paid at union rates, though they are not unionized. Most of the staff meet Alberta maximum qualification requirements (Child Development Supervisor).

Drayton Valley does not experience the recruitment and retention of qualified staff challenges facing many other centres. Prior to becoming an ELCC site, the town contributed approximately \$200,000/year to keep the fees affordable for parents while ensuring good wages and benefits for staff. The centre works in close collaboration with the elementary school, and until the 2020 funding cuts for children with disabilities, served a number of PUF-eligible children in the child care centre. The centre freely shares all the operating policies, procedures and related documentation with other centres and when a new centre is being developed in the region, the licensing officer has often asked the centre manager to provide support, advice and mentorship to the new operation. The support of the municipality has helped ensure a stable and well qualified workforce to deliver quality care, and the financial security to remain operational in the current environment of provincial cuts and the challenges of COVID-19.

Due to the pandemic, beginning in September, the centre announced they would no longer take any children younger than 19 months, hours of operations will increase to 7:30 am to 5:30 pm, and the overall capacity will be reduced to 64 children per day.

City of Toronto

Toronto Children's Services, a department of the City of Toronto currently operates and delivers child care at more than 50 municipal centres throughout the City. Toronto also directly operates a family child care agency which works with several hundred regulated family child care homes across Toronto.

Toronto's municipally operated services are located mostly in areas deemed to be "high need" and are likely to include child care for infants and toddlers and children with special needs. Centres are generally open from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

The City has a commitment to investing public money in public social services. Although the City holds the license to operate and deliver services at the more than 50 centres, the centres are not always in municipally owned spaces.

Ontario school boards: Region of Waterloo, City of Ottawa and City of Toronto

The Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) currently operates and delivers before and after school programs for children in Junior Kindergarten to Grade 2. The Extended Day program is an optional, fee-based program led by early childhood educators using fully equipped kindergarten classrooms. The program is operated and delivered by Waterloo Region District School Board and not a third party provider.

The Ottawa-Carlton District School Board (OCDSB) operates Extended Day Programs before and after school at 65 schools in the district. Additional Extended Day Programs in this school board are run by licensed third party providers.

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) directly operates Extended Day Programs at 16 schools in TDSB for children in kindergarten through Grade 6 before and after school. These programs are delivered by TDSB staff, including a Designated Early Childhood Educator, and operate in accordance with the Education Act.

RESOURCES - *Publicly delivered child care*

- Video: [*Value of public services: A day in the life of your taxes*](#)
 - [*Affordable for all: Making licensed child care affordable in Ontario.*](#)
[Chapter 2: Child care services, governance and funding \(p. 27\)](#)
 - [City of Toronto Service Plan 2015-2019 \(pg .34\)](#)
 - [Wellington County directly operated programs](#)
 - [Region of Waterloo Children's Centres](#)
-

Building capacity in the non-profit child care sector

What's the issue?

Not-for-profit child care, which has a long history in Canada, is today the main ownership form of child care centres and family child care agencies. Although there are some notable exceptions, child care provided by non-profit organizations tend to be relatively small scale despite growing prevalence of multi-site child care operations (both non-profit and for-profit). The most recent available data about their characteristics, which are from 2013, show 58% of non-profit centres were operated by an organization that ran only one centre; median centre size was 50 spaces, with the largest centre included licensed for 180 spaces (Flanagan, Beach, & Varmuza, 2013).

Volunteer boards of directors assume legal, financial and sometimes administrative responsibility for the non-profit child care services so many families and children rely on. These volunteer-led services — especially smaller operations — have limited resources and capacity for dealing with the range of tasks and responsibilities required, sometimes in the face of shifts in government funding or crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, the non-profit child care sector's capacity to maintain or expand services has limitations that create barriers to sufficient child care availability. Notwithstanding the reality that without a publicly funded, more publicly managed child care system, even well-resourced voluntary non-profit services will struggle. With this in mind, this section explores one component of building the non-profit sector's capacity to continue to play in maintaining and expanding the availability of child care services: scaling up critical mass to maximize capacity and ensure sustainability.

What is non-profit child care?

The non-profit sector is composed of non-profit corporations, co-operative organizations and charitable organizations. A non-profit corporation is generally established to provide services or products that will benefit or improve the community. It must then strive to bring in sufficient

resources to support the service (FedDev Ontario Small Business Services, 2020). Resources may include human resources (paid staff and/or volunteers) and funding, which may include grants from governments, contributions from individuals or organizations and/or fees-for-service such as parent fees.

In local communities across Canada, parents have often come together to form a non-profit group to start a child care centre. Non-profit parent-lead child care programs—in common with community-lead and larger, voluntary child care organizations—all share a number of characteristics, roles and responsibilities. With respect to child care, a non-profit corporation is led by a volunteer board of directors who undertake the wide variety of tasks required to obtain a license to operate child care. These include: hiring staff, finding appropriate space, outreach to parents and fundraising including finding and applying for any public funding that may be available. As the non-profit child care board is responsible for balancing the centre's books, it charges fees to parents to enable the organization—as the employer of the child care staff—to pay the expenses of the child care operation (staff salaries, as well as rent/mortgage, utilities, food, program supplies etc). Legally, any surplus funds that exceed the cost of operation must be held by the non-profit organization to be used to further its stated purposes.

With regard to key decision-making, the non-profit child care volunteer board is legally accountable to its members (which may or may not include parents), to funders, to regulations and, in some cases, to other community organizations. The board of directors holds the license to operate the centre and is legally liable for decisions about service, policy and administration. Usually the board assigns responsibility to the centre director for daily operations. Centre directors exercise leadership daily through these decisions consistent with board approval. To the degree that the board reflects the parent-users and the community, it is a concrete mechanism by which centres are accountable to their constituents.

Non-profit child care, like for-profit child care, is private, not public. The non-profit board of directors is responsible for making decisions about who uses the child care, what the program is, or to close it down

if they so choose, as the collective owners. In addition, they are responsible financially and legally. Non-profit organizations are formal, legal entities that must conform to identified rules and/or regulations (e.g., name search, articles of incorporation, by-laws) that are set out in legislation. The technical term is often “incorporation without share capital.” Non-profit child care can be set up as federal or provincial non-profit corporations. Non-profit child care organizations tend to operate in one province and often choose to incorporate in that province.

Child care cooperatives

A child care program can be established as a cooperative or “co-op” which has the purpose of meeting the collective needs of its members in contrast to the maximization of profit, although co-ops can be non-profit or for-profit. Most child care programs incorporated as co-ops are non-profit cooperatives (Ontario Cooperatives Association, 2010).

Non-profit child care as a registered charity

Non-profit organizations have the option to try to register as a charity. To do this, the organization must apply to the Canada Revenue Agency and demonstrate that its purpose(s) meets specified criteria such as the advancement of education and poverty relief. Among differences from other non-profit (non charitable) organizations, charitable organizations may issue tax receipts, receive donations from other charities and donors and be exempt from charging HST for many services. Some non-profit child care organizations are registered as charities and must comply with CRA regulations and file additional reports to CRA on an annual basis.

What’s the context?

In Canada, the community-based voluntary sector is the dominant player in Canada’s mixed child care economy today but this is a fairly recent development. Charitable and religious organizations were the first to develop child care-like services in Canada in the mid-19th century. After World War II and through the 1950s and 60s, full time child care and part time nursery schools—especially for-profits— grew; according to federal government data, in the late 1960s, more than 75 of the

regulated spaces in Canada were operated on a for-profit basis (Human Resources Development Canada, 1975). In 1966 the introduction of Canada's national welfare program, the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) and its federal-provincial cost-sharing provisions strengthened development of non-profit child care. Under CAP's provisions required funds to be targeted to families "in need" or "likely to become in need"; most provinces accessed CAP funds under the requirement that cost-shared funds be used only for regulated public or non-profit child care (Friendly, 1994). CAP and another federal program of the 1960s and 1970, Local Initiatives Projects, which enabled creation of many parent- and community-initiated non-profit child care programs, laid the groundwork for today's large non-profit child care sector.

Susan Prentice (2006) argues that the non-profit "third sector", has taken up the void created by the lack of publicly operated child care in Canada. Under Canada's implementation of "co-production" of child care, traditionally, the main roles of governments have been to license programs, provide public funding for fee subsidies for eligible families and contribute varying levels of operating funds for programs. In this child care model, the gender dimension of the sector is significant: women disproportionately volunteer time and/or expertise in managing child care at the board level in addition to carrying the load at home (Prentice, 2006).

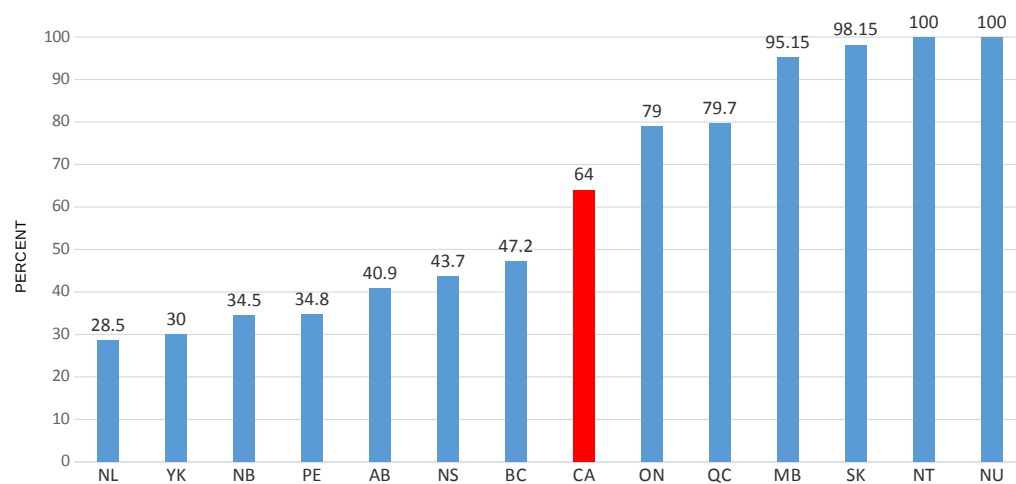
The dominance of the private non-profit sector in Canada is in clear contrast to the family-supportive policies of the Nordic countries where non-profit child care and some for-profit child care have been encouraged or permitted primarily as a supplement to widespread provision of publicly operated child care. In Sweden, for example, municipally operated child care forms the majority of provision, with 15% reported as "non-public". Of the non-public child care, most is non-profit, with parent cooperatives reported as providing 45% and churches another 20% (Nordfeldt, Larsson & Skondal, 2013). But the tasks of parents or volunteers in a cooperative or any other non-profit forms of child care would be quite different in a country with a publicly funded child care system than in Canada. Child care in Sweden, for example, including private operations, are publicly funded and much more publicly managed than

in Canada (for example, fees are set by government and staff wages are all set by collective agreements), so many roles and responsibilities assigned to volunteers in Canadian non-profit child care are not part of volunteers' tasks. This would be the case in other countries with well developed, publicly funded and managed child care systems, such Norway where non-public (non-municipal) child care including cooperatives, churches, women's organizations and entrepreneurs have come to play a larger role over time as the demand for child care has grown. In some countries with substantial public child care provision, non-public services may be operated by religious organizations or to provide particular pedagogical approaches. (See section on child care in Norway).

What's the current state?

Today non-profit child care is the main mode of delivery in Canada as a whole by far: 64% of centre-based spaces although for-profit provision has been increasing. (Friendly et al., 2018). The proportion of child care services that are non-profit varies widely by provinces/ territories from 100% in Nunavut and 98% in Saskatchewan to 28.5% in Newfoundland and Labrador.

FIGURE 6 Percent of centre spaces that are for not-for-profit by province/territory (2019)



The most current data on characteristics of the non-profit child care sector come from a 2012 survey of 1,100 licensed, full day child care programs serving children 0 – 6 years across Canada (Flanagan, Beach & Varmuza, 2013). Some key insights of this research include:

- Median non-profit centre size was 50 spaces; the largest centre in the sample was licensed for 180 spaces;
- 58% of non-profit centres were run by an organization operating only one child care centre;
- 42% of centres were run by an organization operating more than one centre;
- 54.5% operated at least one program in addition to full-day child care for children 0-6;
- The median length of time a centre had been in operation was 20 years. 10% had been in operation for 37 years or more, and 10% had been in operation for less than three years;
- 27% of employers had increased the number of spaces they operate in the past three years, with a median increase of 19 spaces; 20.2% plan to increase the number of spaces within the next 3 years –from 3 to more than 75 spaces;
- 6.4% decreased their capacity by a median of six spaces;
- Within the next three years, 15.5% of the non-profits surveyed planned to open one or more additional centres and 18.5% plan to change the age groups they serve;

As the data show, non-profit child care operations were most often small to medium-sized organizations, and more than half operated only one centre. While these small organizations can engage easily with the parent-users and can quickly respond to their needs, they may have limited supervisory or administrative capacity to deal with financial, human resource, governance, physical plant and program-related issues. The supervisor in a small to medium centre of 50 children – even with the support of the volunteer board of directors – often has limited resources to carry out her multiple, complex tasks that resemble those of an elementary school principal, albeit on a smaller scale.

In contrast, 42% of centres in the survey were part of organizations operating more than one centre – often described as “multi-site” child

care programs— and more than half 54.5% of centres were also part of organizations operating at least one program (which could be another type of child care or another type of service) in addition to full-day child care for children 0-6. Both these organizational models are likely to have more human, physical and/or financial resources to draw upon than the single, stand-alone centre.

Multi-site child care organizations may be as modest as 2 – 4 centres in one local community under the aegis of one non-profit board or as large as the YMCA, which operates child care centres in many of its 44 member associations across Canada in 1,700 locations. In the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) alone, the [YMCA](#) operates 300 child care programs with 33,000 licensed spaces serving infants through school-age children. In a case study developed for a section of this paper on non-standard hours child care), the ability of the Greater Toronto YMCA to provide non-standard hours child care during the pandemic was attributed to the critical mass and substantial resources in the organization (as well as the generous public funding available to deliver the emergency child care services). Family Day Care Services is another multi-site, multi service agency located in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). It operates 57 centres for children 0-6 years in three of the municipal regions in the GTA, many school-age programs and regulated family child care, family support programs and child care at non-standard hours. Across a wide range of neighbourhoods, many of these programs are located in schools. It too has attributed its ability to offer hard-to-deliver night time care in part to the agency's size. Similarly, Ottawa's Andrew Fleck Children's Services, with 12 centre-based programs, a family child care agency, an Ontario EarlyON centre, short-term child care and other family services and Discovery Children's Centre in Winnipeg, a 140 space single site child care centre, identify the advantages of critical mass in having the capacity to deliver their services (Lero, Prentice, Friendly, Richardson & Fraser, 2019).

These somewhat larger organizations are more likely to have the critical mass that enables them to respond nimbly and efficiently to ongoing

challenges of staffing, funding, etc. and to deal handily with crises while continuing the day-to-day responsibilities of operating high quality programs. These organizations may also have more capacity to provide professional development and career laddering for staff. The capacity to maintain and expand child care services through small scale non-profit organizations is limited; a range of resources, especially financial and human, would need to be put in place to scale up the level of capacity needed to ensure sustainability.

Sustained, substantial and predictable public funding is necessary to enable programs to plan and implement high quality services on an on-going basis while keeping parent fees at reasonable or low rates. Public funds should cover the bulk of operational costs, as they do in Quebec's non-profit centres de la petite enfance (CPE) sector, with affordable parent fees supplementing these operating funds. (See the recommendations of the [Quality Early Learning Network \(QELN\)](#), a group of 18 large non-profit child care agencies). Unfortunately, in many non-profit child care programs, public funding is either insufficient, unpredictable or both. These situations mean boards of directors must continually balance potential fee increases – which may drive parents away from the centre if they are too high – against staff wages and against labour-intensive, time-consuming and often not sufficiently lucrative fundraising.

The extent of “critical mass” is an important consideration in determining organizational capacity to deliver and expand high quality child care. Smaller non-profit child care organizations are particularly precarious because their size and scale makes it difficult to generate surplus funds that may be available to support the centre in cyclical or unexpected situations, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Another important consideration is a small non-profit organization's capacity for governance. In a non-profit child care program, particularly in the areas of human resources and financial management, roles and functions often require special skills. Some communities, especially low income, newcomer or other vulnerable communities, may not have parents with the necessary time or skills to complete the tasks. If there are not enough volunteers with the skills, ability and/or time to carry out the task, then the organization may not be sustainable (Friendly, Doherty & Beach, 2006).

In scaling up child care capacity in Canada, it is expected that the non-profit sector will continue to play a significant role in delivering child care. There may be, for example, situations that preclude the operation of child care by a public body, legislated, for example. Thus, in PEI, le commission scolaire de la langue française, the province-wide French school board, worked closely with the community to develop child care services in its French schools because provincial legislation did not permit the school board to hold the child care license. In Ontario, where a high proportion of licensed child care centre spaces (63%) are located in publicly funded school buildings, the majority of centre-based spaces (79%) are operated by non-profit organizations (Government of Ontario, 2019). Until 2015 with the proclamation of *Ontario Child Care and Early Years Act* in 2014, school boards were not legally able to operate child care. Since a change in legislation, public operation of child care programs in schools has increased in Ontario, with the school board operated Extended Day Program (EDP) under the jurisdiction of the Education Act for children in kindergarten through Grade 6 in a number of elementary schools.

Can for-profit sector centres be converted to non-profit child care programs?

In exploring options to expand the capacity of the non-profit sector, at times it has been suggested to develop initiatives to “convert” existing for-profit centres to non-profit organizations. This was shown to be more complex than many expected when Ontario took that direction as one way to implement its 1987 announcement to develop child care as a “basic public service” over the long term with support for growth in the non-profit sector (Kapelos-Edwards Group, 1989). The Kapelos-Edwards study identified the key differences between non-profit and for-profit child care organizations and highlighted how each used different processes for budgeting, policy development and decision-making. The findings from their focus group sessions with for-profit child care owners and key informants in the child care sector concluded that, in general, the for-profit providers preferred not to convert to non-profit and were, in particular, not in favour of working for a non-profit board of directors, which would legally become the owner of their centre. They viewed conversion as bringing loss of control, opportunity, income, career and

ownership. Those who would consider conversion identified that they would expect compensation for owned or leased property, equipment, reputation and profitability.

The report noted that key expert informants from the community were concerned about too-broad legal definitions of non-profit status that would allow previous commercial owners to dominate the new board of directors without a counter-balance of parents. The view was that it was too easy to liquidate the commercial child care centre and orchestrate the establishment of a non-profit organization that “masqueraded” as a community-based non-profit child care centre without the necessary accountability to the parent-users and/or community (Kapelos-Edwards Group, 1989). For these and other reasons, such conversions have been discussed but not actively pursued in recent years as a policy measure.

Spotlights from across Canada

The following examples illustrate how achieving a “critical mass” in terms of size and human resources in a non-profit child care organization has made it possible to establish quality child care services where none had previously existed, to create good jobs in small communities and to sustain operational elements such as development of quality pedagogy, in-service training and professional development, which contribute to quality improvement. (See also the description of the YMCA of Greater Toronto’s provision of non-standard hours child care in the following section).

Compass Early Learning and Care: Meeting the needs of towns and rural communities

As a pedagogical leader in the province, Compass Early Learning and Care (CELC) in south/central Ontario has grown to serve more than 2,500 children, 0 – 12 years throughout Peterborough and the county of Peterborough, Durham Region and the City of Kawartha Lakes, three large

suburban/rural regions east and north of the City of Toronto and south of Ottawa. Since its beginning in 1981 as a home child care agency, CELC has expanded to 35 programs that include a regulated family child care agency, full day and part day centre-based child care, and before- and after-school care. Most recently, five new programs have joined CELC: two small centres in Minden (population 6,000) serving infants, toddlers and preschool children, two school-age programs in schools in two different school boards, and a new centre in a new community. CELC serves a wide range of families, some of whom pay full fees and others who receive a child care fee subsidy.

CELC explicitly identifies key factors that have helped shape its development: the government of Ontario's implementation of full day kindergarten for four and five year olds completed by 2014-2015; the new *Child Care and Early Years Act* (2014); new pedagogical approaches set out in *How Learning Happens* (Ontario's pedagogical framework); growth and demographic changes in their local communities; and technology advancements to support administration (CELC, 2016).

With a high value on flexibility and team work and on the uniqueness of each child and family, each CELC program aims to meet the varying needs of parents. Hours of operations range from 6:30 am to 6:30 pm. Many of the organization's family child caregivers offer flexible hours of care. CELC credits their capable staff team of 400 as the secret to their success. Staff are provided with an extensive, six-month orientation to pedagogical principles that underpin the work in the classroom including a commitment to democratic participation, social justice and the view that children are valued as citizens of today. A business orientation to the Strategic Plan, business practices and the Workplace Health and Safety Manual provides staff with an understanding of the overall operations.

A board of nine members operates as a policy board, offering expertise in parenting, business management, real estate and property management, volunteer management and community development

through three standing committees. As a registered charity, CELC reports regularly to CRA and can provide tax receipts to donors.

Its 2016 Strategic Plan includes the goal of developing community capacity, with the specific objective of seeking new funding opportunities to build capacity in local communities and to creatively expand home child care and centre-based programs in response to community need. CELC also intends to continue its recently established consulting practice in which they help other organizations to develop emergent curriculum.

CELC also participates actively in the broader child care sector through organizations including the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, Association for Early Childhood Education Ontario and the Home Child Care Association of Ontario.

L'association des centres de la petite enfance francophones de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard (ACPEFÎPE) and le commission scolaire de la langue française

In Prince Edward Island, the francophone community, along with the provincial child care officials, worked with the province-wide francophone school board to establish a new non-profit organization that currently holds the license, oversees and operates five of the six francophone Early Years Centres (EYCs) located in the francophone schools across the province.²⁸

Established in 2015, the Association for Francophone Early Years Centres of Prince Edward Island, (ACPEFÎPE) was created to meet the needs of the francophone community. The board of directors includes two representatives of the francophone school board and regional parent representation. The association provides infrastructure and administrative support to the five centres including holding the licenses and employing staff.

Like other child care programs, the francophone centres face significant challenges in attracting and retaining trained early childhood educators.

²⁸ Early Years Centres in PEI are provincially designated centres that are operationally funded and follow a number of required processes such as a fee cap, a provincial salary scale and other requirements.

To meet their needs for bilingual early childhood educators, ACPEFÎPE has taken a creative, proactive approach to recruitment. In 2017, 2018, and 2019 they travelled to Paris and Brussels to participate in outreach efforts to attract skilled early childhood educators to PEI. ACPEFÎPE was pleased to add more than 20 new educators from Europe to its staff and plans to continue this recruitment strategy. They also partnered with the local francophone college and provincial government to provide post-secondary education programs for free in return for service contracts in the francophone centres. This initiative will add 9 new educators to the sector.

In recognition of its leadership in welcoming and fostering the involvement of newcomers, ACPEFÎPE was named a Champion of Diversity in 2018 as part of National Francophone Immigration Week.

Vancouver Society of Children's Centres: Integrating planning, development and operation of child care in the Downtown Peninsula of Vancouver

The City of Vancouver's long-standing commitment to improving access to high quality non-profit child care for its residents underpins its robust policies and programs that include facilitating building child care centres through the land use process and financial support for the operation of child care programs. In 1994, following City Council's recommendation, a new non-profit society, Vancouver Society of Children's Centres, or VSOCC, was established with the sole purpose of operating the emerging city-owned and/or facilitated child care facilities in the Downtown Peninsula. Council established a long-standing relationship with VSOCC and has provided an annual grant toward the cost of administration. In the following year, VSOCC opened its first centre in Library Square, the new central Vancouver library (Beach, Bertrand, Michal & Tougas, 2004).

Over the past twenty-five years VSOCC has grown to be the largest single-purpose organization providing non-profit child care and related family programs in the City of Vancouver and one of the largest

providers of infant and toddler care in western Canada. It operates 772 spaces for children 0 – 12 years in 33 programs in 16 locations.

VSOCC attributes its success to their 250+ staff including educators and centre support teams who “... are professionally educated, tremendously devoted, committed to lifelong learning and determined to create unique and wonderful learning experiences for children” (Vancouver Society of Children’s Centres, 2019). VSOCC works diligently to create an enviable workplace where educators earn better than average wages, professional development is provided, and well-being and safety are highly valued. The non-profit society’s revenue includes 79.4% from parent fees and 18% from grants; 87.1% of expenses goes to staff salaries and benefits.

The City-VSOCC collaboration has been fruitful. As the on-going development of central Vancouver produces new child care facilities, VSOCC has acquired expertise about the stages of the municipal development process and has become a knowledgeable resource which can assist in building capacity among other non-profit organizations. VSOCC’s development of a start-up tool kit and its consultations with other organizations about issues such as design, policy development and lease negotiations have strengthened the implementation phase of the City’s initiatives to increase access to child care services. In VSOCC’s Strategic Plan for 2020 – 2023, priorities include growth and an interest in identifying opportunities to create additional child care spaces.

Morrow Avenue Child Care Programs for Families: Serving vulnerable Winnipeg families in partnership with neighbourhood schools and community organizations

Meeting the needs of the St. Vital neighbourhood in Winnipeg has been a process of more than three decades that Morrow Avenue Child Care Programs for Families (MACCPF) has enthusiastically pursued. Once the first centre was operating successfully and supporting families in a school in the Louis Riel School Division, the school division asked MACCPF to open a second centre in another school. Although MACCPF had brought together the necessary resources and the space was available

at nominal rent, it was difficult to obtain a license from provincial officials who viewed this expansion initiative as 'risky'. Having successfully established the two centres – a first for a non-profit organization in Manitoba in the early 90s – MACCPF went on to establish eight other programs that are within walking distance of each other.

Located in a largely upper middle class area, MACCPF has worked closely with the school division and other community partners to create centres that are well resourced and offer flexible programming to meet the needs of families with children 3 months– 12 years including some that need more intensive service. MACCPF offers an inclusive, multicultural environment with services available to children of all abilities. A priority for MACCPF is continued development of community partnerships and responsible fiscal management.

MACCPF is in the process of expanding its current capacity to serve 552 children and their families at the existing eight centres in schools and the two stand-alone centres, which received capital funding from the province. One of the centres is expanding in its existing location, increasing from 40 to 100 spaces in an unusual school space using two schools connected by a gymnasium. This space is being renovated to serve as a hub model which will operate in close coordination with a training program for parents and other community services. Red River College will provide specialized training for staff and within the hub, there will be on-site programs for parents. This integrated approach to providing high quality child care services in close partnership with family support services is the result of a long-term commitment to this service model that was eventually recognized and funded at a substantial level by the province after many years of advocacy.

MACCPF credits its community partnerships, in particular a long-standing one with the Louis Riel School Division, its effective organizational structure and strong financial management as key factors in its sustained service to the St. Vital community. Bonnie Ash, the Executive Director who has led MACCPF since shortly after its inception, says that the centres share ECE staff and resources among themselves and that bulk purchases help to keep costs down. Fundraising is limited to two

events per year which involve parents. The intent is not so much about raising funds but more about involving parents in the centre.

Scaling up the critical mass of the non-profit sector can assist in meeting the child care needs of Canadian families. There are already strong role models of building the capacity to meet a wide range of child care needs in urban and rural communities across Canada. In addition to bigger organizations, adequate and sustained public funding and more public management is key to strengthening the capacity of the non-profit child care sector. The leadership and vision of policymakers, service providers and community members are needed to move from a market-based approach to a publicly-managed system of child care that serves the extensive unmet needs of Canadian families.

RESOURCES - *Building capacity in the non-profit child care sector*

Non-profits vs. Registered charities

- [Canadian revenue agency: Non-profits vs. registered charities](#)
- [Managing charitable status](#)

Information about incorporating as a federal non-profit:

- [Creating a not-for-profit](#)

General information on incorporation as a non-profit

- [Starting a non-profit organization](#)

Incorporate your corporation online

- [Ontario: Non-profit incorporation process](#)
- [Quebec: Non-profits](#)

Running a non-profit

- [Ontario Non-profit Network](#)
- [Vancouver Public Library - Non-profit guide](#)

Information on cooperatives

- [Ontario cooperatives](#)
- [Federal cooperatives](#)

[50 years of the Campus Co-operative Child Care Centre \(collection\)](#)

(Not) working nine-to-five: Non-standard hours child care to meet harder-to-serve needs²⁹

What's the issue?

Although Canadians increasingly work outside the traditional working hours of 9-5, there are few child care programs available to meet non-standard hours or schedules. Like other aspects of child care in Canada, there has been an expectation that non-standard hours child care will arise independently based on need. However, high administrative requirements and high operational costs deter many providers from opening and maintaining sustainable non-standard hour programs, as the challenges are even greater than for those operating during ordinary daytime hours. This is particularly true if child care programs aim to be “flexible” to meet parents’ needs for on-demand child care. Experience and research show that sufficient public funding and public planning are required if non-standard hour programs are to become more available as child care provision in Canada expands more generally.

What is non-standard hours child care?

Part of the challenge of discussing non-standard hours child care has been the multiple definitions of the term “non-standard hours” itself. Each province holds its own definition of a “standard work week” used for overtime calculations, with no nationally held definition of what is meant by “standard work hours”. The simplest way to define non-standard hours is by defining what it is not: work that takes place on a regular schedule Monday-Friday, generally between the hours of 8:00 am and 6:00 pm.

The definition of non-standard hours child care is related to but different from definitions of non-standard hours work. A 2019 report by Lero, Prentice, Friendly, Richardson & Fraser, defined non-standard hours child care as:

²⁹ This section draws on Lero, et al., 2019, the most recent comprehensive analysis of non-standard hours child care in Canada.

- Slightly non-standard (extended) hours (6:00 am to 8:00 pm);
- Earlier morning or later night hours (5:00 am to 12:00 am);
Very late night, overnight care (12:00 am onwards);
- Weekends (anytime on Saturday or Sunday);
- On request participation (including emergency, flexible scheduling, special arrangements, or drop-in care.)

Recognizing the differences between these categories of non-standard hour child care is essential for delving into the supply of non-standard hour care. In Canada, definitions of non-standard hours child care vary by province (See Lero et al., 2019: 89), which can make it challenging to accurately track the prevalence of non-standard hour care across the country.

Often “flexible working hours” and the related “flexible child care” are used to describe non-standard hours. “Flexible” is an imprecise term—a freelance designer who can choose her own schedule has very different child care needs than a fast-food worker with irregular hours and frequent shift changes made unilaterally by the manager. “Flexible child care” generally means that child care arrangements can be arranged “on demand” with little advance notice; this can apply to both standard hours and non-standard hours child care. Flexibility creates significant issues for service providers with regard to staffing and administration, yet many parents need child care flexibility in order to work. Flexible hours are often (but not necessarily) a characteristic of non-standard working hours.

What’s the context?

Compounding the difficulty parents who work standard hours have in finding and affording child care, finding extended hours or flexible child care – especially in the child care “deserts” in which close to half (44%) of Canadian children live – can be extraordinarily challenging for parents (Macdonald, 2018). The cost of standard hours child care is already prohibitive for many Canadian families, and the limited options and increased operational costs for non-standard hours care can increase fees

even more. Non-standard hours child care acutely highlights the failure of a market model for child care and illustrates why a more publicly-managed approach would be a more effective way of ensuring needed services are available.

The idea of what constitutes “standard hours” work is contextual and dependent on the norms and labour laws in different countries. In North America generally, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm is generally seen as standard working hours. In Canada, non-standard workers are more likely to be women, parents, young adults, racialized and recent immigrants, Indigenous persons, and to have less formal education and earn lower incomes overall. An estimated that 1.5 million parents of young children in Canada worked non-standard shifts in 2016-2017. At least one parent worked a non-standard schedule in 39% of all families with one or more children under six years of age (Lero et al, 2019).

Challenges facing families needing non-standard hours child care are—in many ways— similar to those facing all Canadian families: accessibility and affordability are main concerns. Interviews with parents suggest that parents often use a “package” of child care arrangements due to a lack of affordable regulated non-standard hours child care. Parents, especially mothers, report high levels of stress over the lack of child care options, the high fees and the struggle of managing their complex child care “packages” (Lero et al, 2019). Parents working non-standard hours noted that being able to access regulated care—even at standard hours—offered a stable base to organize the remaining non-standard hour care around.

The challenges of non-standard hours care in Canada also characterize other jurisdictions with market based child care systems. The United States faces similar scarcity of non-standard hour services as Canada. In some countries with universal child care, non-standard hours care is more prevalent but is still not easily available. For example, in Finland, families have had a statutory entitlement to 24 hour “day and night” care since 1972 (Rönkä et al., 2017). Although Finland is recognized as having considerable access to non-standard hours child care, only 60% of municipalities provide “flexible” care, and rural areas have limited access.

Similar to the Canadian context, lone-parent families and lower educated parents are over-represented in Finland's flexible and extended hours child care services (Rönkä et al., 2017). It is important to keep in mind that the norms and practice with regard to work hours are different in North America and Europe, where standard work hours are [shorter](#) and expectations about long work hours are different.

The data necessary to fully understand and document non-standard hours child care are woefully insufficient. Halfon and Friendly noted “the lack of information about demand for non-standard hours services inhibits providers from moving forward with setting them up, and makes it more difficult to identify parents that need the services once they are in place” (2015: 55).

The current state

None of Canada's province/territories has adopted policy to ensure access to child care of any kind, including non-standard hours care. There have been, in the last five years or so, a number of initiatives and developments related to non-standard hours child care. In 2015, Halfon and Friendly found few provincial/territorial policies or initiatives related to non-standard hour care (2015). Notably, by the time Lero et al. conducted their study of non-standard hours child care in 2019, “flexibility” had been identified as one of the five principles in the federal government's Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Care, most of the provinces/ territories had developed definitions of non-standard hours child care, there were a number of jurisdictions with specific regulations and several had financial and policy initiatives associated with non-standard hours child care.

As data about the supply of non-standard hours child care services across Canada were not available, Lero et al. estimated that most available non-standard hour care falls under the category of “slightly” non-standard—in other words, open a bit earlier or a bit later, and that overnight care is rare. They estimated that less than 2% of centres provide anything

other than “slightly” non-standard care such as overnight care (2019: 106). Whether non-standard care is predominantly provided through family child care or centres depends on the province; Ontario, British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba provide non-standard care mainly through home child care and Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador and PEI primarily offer non-standard hours care in centres.

Providing non-standard hours care presents service providers with a number of hurdles without adequate government support. Recent and previous research identify similar challenges that have persisted over time:

Financing

The operating costs of non-standard hour care are higher due to fluctuating use patterns (especially with flexible care), higher staffing and administrative costs and additional equipment and space costs. Enrollment may also be lower than provincially regulated ratios, due to fluctuating demand.

Staffing

The recruitment and retention challenges in ELCC generally are exacerbated when trying to find staff who want to work early morning, evening, or overnight hours, while fluctuating numbers can mean irregular schedules for staff. To incentivize staff to work inconvenient hours, services may guarantee a minimum number of hours or pay premium wages for these times, both increasing the operating costs of non-standard care.

Administration

Child care on flexible schedules generates substantial additional administrative work to communicate with families, manage families’ child care schedules and organize staffing schedules, reported by service providers to be double the administration work compared to a standard hours program.

Flexibility

Parents working non-standard hours often work unpredictable hours, so may need flexible child care, sometimes called “on demand”. The flexible element is a key challenge for providers because the unpredictability of children’s attendance and fluctuating use creates additional financial, staffing, scheduling and other administrative burdens (Lero et al., 2019; Halfon & Friendly, 2015; Gouvernement de Québec, 2002; Foster & Broad, 1998; Friendly, Cleveland & Willis, 1994).

Finally, Lero et al.’s (2019) recent analysis, consistent with other Canadian research on non-standard hours child care, concluded that additional funding and support, whether from unions, employer or public government funding is key to their creation and sustainability. Successful centres are also often part of larger organizations or agencies and have experienced leadership teams.

Two very different planned, supported non-standard child care programs are profiled here.

Seasonal child care in rural Prince Edward Island: Eastern Kings Early Childhood Academy

Prince Edward Island has taken a decisive and active role in creating non-standard child care within the province. The provincial government recognized that the demand would not be met under the current conditions faced by child care operators and took a leadership role to create more sustainable non-standard child care in the province, creating spaces in eight centres so they could provide for families’ seasonal child care needs. (The focused policy development and planning they carried out to develop this seasonal child care is described in more detail in this report’s section on Planning for child care).

Eastern Kings Early Childhood Academy in Souris, PEI offers 58 spaces, providing care for 68 families, some part time. It is open 6:45 am until

5:30 pm. Flexibility is a key consideration for this centre in their rural setting; they work to accommodate families and their schedules as much as possible.

Eastern Kings Early Childhood Academy is one of PEI's Early Years Centres, receiving operational "unit" funding, and additional funding for its extended hours and seasonal spaces. As a seasonal program, they provide eight additional spaces for seasonal demand based on agriculture and the fishery. Generally, the seasonal employment means children must transition from part time to full time care in the busy months. The additional seasonal funding enables the centre to hire special needs consultants and additional staff during these months. In many cases, one of the main challenges facing non-standard hours' child care is staffing but this has not been an issue in Eastern Kings. The regular staff were happy to gain extra hours due to the seasonal extension of regular hours, although they are not offering harder-to-staff child care late at night, overnight, or on weekends.

YMCA of Greater Toronto: Emergency child care during the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated both the precarity and necessity of child care services across Canada. In the case of non-standard hours care, COVID-19 motivated several provinces to facilitate 24/7 or increased the supply with several provinces opening 24/7 or other non-standard hour child care to meet the needs of essential personnel in March and April 2020. From this experience, it is clear that non-standard hour care can be set up quickly and provided effectively when there is political will and adequate public resources.

During COVID-19, child care centres across Ontario were mandated to close March 17th 2020. The province then announced March 22nd they would be funding an emergency child care program in which select centres were able to operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. All these were to be completely free for eligible parents—those deemed to be "essential workers". Municipalities as Local Service System Managers

(see description of this Ontario municipal role in the section on the role of municipalities) managed these programs, recruited the families and selected the service providers that would run the programs.

The YMCA of Greater Toronto Area is one of the largest providers of non-profit child care (or child care of any auspice) in Canada, with over 33,000 spaces in 300 centres across the Toronto area. During the COVID-19 pandemic, YMCA GTA opened 14 emergency child care programs across three municipalities, which offered extended hours care – in some cases, 24 hour care – until the provincial funding ended June 26th 2020.

There were several factors that enabled this non-standard hour program to operate successfully during the pandemic:

Robust funding: There was significant interest from the provincial government that these programs open quickly and safely. There was agreement to provide financial support for full staffing (regardless of attendance numbers), and have a designated supervisor and cleaning staff on site at all times. Having maximum staff there at all times allowed parents total flexibility in their hours of care and made staff scheduling easier. The funding was integral to re-hiring hesitant staff in this unprecedented time: the Y offered everyone full-time hours with benefits, provided additional sick time, compensated for travel and increased all salaries by 30%.

Strong collaboration between municipalities and provider: The YMCA GTA and the three municipalities they are located in worked together closely throughout the opening and running of the emergency child care centres. In Peel Region CSM (where 10 of the centres were located), regional staff had virtual meetings with the YMCA team several times a week before their opening, and continued to check in regularly throughout the program. The regional staff acted as a point person to assist the YMCA with all the licensing and regulatory hurdles to prepare for non-standard hours, and provide child care during a pandemic. This included expediting COVID-19 testing, liaising with the local fire department about the new 24-hour centre, and assisting with licensing changes.

Demand measuring, and tailoring hours to the local context: The municipalities sent out a survey to families to understand the demand for different care hours. The survey helped set the hours of the 14 centres. It was determined that most communities did not actually have demand for overnight care. Only two centres ended up providing full 24-hour care, while most provided extended hours until 8:00 pm or 9:00 pm, or in some cases, 1:00 am.

High capacity organization: YMCA GTA is one of the largest non-profit providers of child care across Canada, and has a developed administrative model and large human resources and health and safety departments. Moreover, the YMCA operates under a federated model, in which local branches are independent but connected to other YMCA's across Canada. The YMCA GTA was able to leverage their capacity and experienced leadership team to rapidly implement this new program, and share resources with other YMCA branches also running emergency care. Also, as a large and well known organization, they had a pre-existing relationship with municipalities and the provincial government, which supported strong communication channels.

RESOURCES - *Non-standard hours' child care*

- [Average working hours in 2020 \(International\)](#)
- [Non-standard work and child care in Canada: A challenge for parents, policy makers and child care provision](#)
- [It's about time: Parents who work nonstandard hours face child care challenges](#) (US)

Interactive tool

- [Non-traditional hours for child care](#) (Massachusetts)
-

Assessing child care needs and forecasting demand

What's the issue?

National or provincial/territorial strategies to systematically assess and map out child care demand or need, set growth targets, align resources or evaluate progress toward accessibility have not regularly been developed across Canada (Holt 2018; Spicer & Kreda, 2011). As a result, resources, protocols, data and tools used to carry out these activities are relatively undeveloped in Canada in comparison to countries with a more intentional proactive approach to measuring progress towards achieving specified goals.

This section examines in some detail the use of two tools—needs assessments and demand forecasting – that can be used to support more publicly managed creation and growth of child care. It provides an overview of approaches to needs assessment and demand forecasting in several local or regional contexts, discussing what needs assessment and demand forecasting are, why these are useful tools, what are their key components and what variables should be considered when implementing these in different communities.

What's the context?

For many years, there has been an urbanizing trend in Canada, as there has been in much of the world. Today cities in Canada are home to the majority of the population; Statistics Canada reports that the proportion of population living in census metropolitan areas in Canada July 2018 was 71.5%. One third of the country's population lives in Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal, while according to the last census, more than 6.3 million Canadians were living in rural areas (areas with population density below 400 people per square kilometers (Statistics Canada, 2016b). However, as a report on rural child care in Canada identified:

Canada has been a predominantly non-rural country for almost a century. But although the rural population is now

relatively small, there are nevertheless many young families among the several million Canadians living in rural areas who need and want high quality, affordable early childhood education and child care (Friendly, Ferns, Grady & Rothman, 2016: 1).

UNICEF suggests that both [child-friendly cities and communities](#) are better places to live when the voices, needs, priorities and rights of children are an integral part of public policies, programs and decisions, and in part where children have a good start in life, grow up healthy and are cared for, and have access to quality social services. As policymakers undertake to move child care forward in Canada, the child care needs of urban, rural and Indigenous families – which have both similarities and differences – need to be addressed. As cities are the home of more than 70% of Canada’s population, it is critical that large and small cities consider the needs of parents and children in local community development, planning and policy work. In rural areas, too, the need for child care is often considerable, while specific considerations and needs may differ from urban areas. Rural needs are often impacted by low population density, the small number of families who might need care at any one time, and by the non-standard hours and seasonal nature of much rural work (Friendly et al, 2016).

As this paper has noted previously, the apparatus of intentional, planned development of early learning and child care in relation to need or demand has not yet been established in Canadian communities regardless of their population density or population. One of the few province-wide community needs assessment initiatives followed the release of *New directions for child care* (1987), a major policy initiative of an Ontario minority Liberal government governing in a formal negotiated Accord with the NDP. *New directions for child care* emphasized the value of community-based planning and the provincial government began supporting and funding local community groups to engage in needs assessments “for expansion or development of child care services that were responsive to local community circumstances” (Ministry of Community and Social

Services, 1992: 1). The provincial government's report on the 55 such projects observed that "there is a recognition that the development of many child care services in Ontario since 1987 would not have occurred without the contribution made by these groups" (1992: 2).

It is interesting to compare this initiative ended 30 years ago with a British Columbia initiative currently underway, also motivated by a provincial government. The BC government in collaborating with the BC Union of Municipalities (2019) is set up to activate and fund local municipal governments to develop needs assessments in consultation with a variety of community stakeholders. Like the 1980s Ontario initiative, it is also aimed at creating child care in the local community. But a noteworthy difference between the Ontario initiative of 30 years ago and the current BC effort is that the first relied on voluntary groups, as the Ontario government report describes, while the current BC initiative is more publicly managed – led locally by municipal governments.

What is a needs assessment and what is demand forecasting?

"A [needs assessment](#) is a systematic process that provides information about social needs or issues in a place or population group and determines which issues should be prioritized for action. The term 'social issue' as used here is intended to be deliberately broad and essentially denotes an identified problem in a place or population" (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2019). In the simplest form, needs assessment can be defined as "a systematic process for determining and addressing needs, or "gaps" between current conditions and the desired condition". Child care needs assessments, in some form, have been developed and administered throughout Canada over the years. Their definition and use has varied widely across Canada, with some Ontario municipalities using some form of needs assessment as part of their mandated service planning and BC municipalities developing them across that province more recently.

Child care needs assessments generally measure how many children (with or without employed mothers) of a certain age live in a geographic

area and how many child care spaces exist in the area. In some cases, a secondary analysis is done by breaking down ages of children in relation to types of child care spaces. The difference or shortfall is usually defined as “need”. Needs assessments are often augmented with additional information gathered through a survey, focus groups, and other sources of information (Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 1987).

Methodologies may vary and information may not be gathered in a consistent manner across communities or regions, or over time, to allow for comparability. Nor do these types of needs assessments have a specific methodology for assessing the possible impact of new developments on future child care needs or for looking at the relationship between what families would like, and what they can afford.

Needs assessments can be used as part of, or the basis for, creating a specific child care service or a plan for child care services more generally. Based on the results of needs assessments, targets may be set by government officials, again influenced by numerous variables such as availability of land, zoning and bylaws, partnerships, funding on hand or funding possibilities available. Targets can then measure performance, leverage funding from senior governments and report out achievements or shortfalls.

Using a needs assessment or a demand forecasting calculation allows governments, usually local, to plan in partnership with community stakeholders and maximize public benefit negotiations. These provide government officials with the opportunity to prioritize budget allocations, consider built form in order to accommodate child care facilities, advocate with provincial and federal partners for funding, and report out to its citizens the benefit and impact of its decisions to improve child care supply. In some communities, information has also enabled the child care sector to leverage and advocate for increased spending on child care or lobby the government for additional funding.

Demand forecasting is related to needs assessment but is based on a somewhat different conception and method. For child care economist Gordon Cleveland (2018), parent fees are a key driver of demand. Cleveland,

Krashinsky, Colley & Avery-Nunez (2016) describe two approaches to calculating demand for child care, the first, “constrained demand” refers to the number of children who will use regulated child care under specific conditions (i.e., the parents will be constrained by the cost of child care). Second, these authors define “potential demand”, which refers to the amount of regulated child care that families would like to use if ability to pay were not constrained by high parent fees. They state that “properly measured demand is a relationship between the willingness to use licensed child care and the key factors that affect the decision about the willingness to use it” (Cleveland et al., 2016: 12). In the City of Vancouver’s demand forecasting work, demand is based on the impact of population growth resulting from new development. In this paper discusses demand calculation considering both these conceptions.

Both needs assessments and demand forecasting may fail to take into account variables that have an impact on demand, such as parents working non-standard hours, the cultural or language needs of children, or the specialized needs of children who require additional support. In addition to child care fees and parents’ ability to pay, other variables that may influence demand are location (proximity to work or home, or route to work), pedagogical approach, auspice, transit access, size of program, program type (family or group care), age of youngest child, number of children in the family, sole parent or two parent families, whether a caregiving relative lives with the family, etc. (Cleveland et al., 2016).

Using the City of Vancouver approach to demand (described later in this section), we see that calculations of demand for child care generated by new development do not take into account the impact on child care needs of those parents who live outside a specific residential area but work within that geographical area, the high demand in employer-concentrated areas such as business districts or a downtown core, university communities, medical complexes with multiple hospital/medical services, or large scale industrial/commercial employers. In fact, as planner Carley Holt observes, early care and learning is overlooked in most new and existing residential, commercial and mixed-use developments in Canada (Holt, 2018).

In Canada today, the ELCC childhood service needs of Indigenous families and children both in urban areas and in Indigenous communities is an important consideration. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission [Call to Action #12](#) explicitly calls on “the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). The Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care framework co-developed by the Government of Canada and Indigenous peoples focuses on holistic and inter-sectoral approaches to early learning and child care services and emphasizes the importance that they be specifically created by Indigenous people (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2018b). Thus, standard approaches to needs assessment and demand calculation are unlikely to be culturally or politically appropriate. As new ways emerge to assess need, the City of Toronto has developed a needs assessment methodology with Indigenous peoples: *Journey together needs assessment: Expanding Indigenous-led early years programs in Toronto* (Toronto Aboriginal Social Services Association & Toronto Children’s Services, 2017). This Toronto initiative was part of a larger provincially driven initiative, [Journey Together](#), which identified a number of gaps and barriers to be addressed, two of which were:

- Increase the number of licensed child care spaces and culturally relevant programming off-reserve;
- Expand child and family programs on-reserve and, through Indigenous and federal partners, make supports available in more communities.

The current state of needs assessment and demand forecasting across Canada

This section highlights three examples of needs assessment and demand forecasting that provide different experiences with these and tools in Canada. These are: the City of Toronto’s approach to assessing demand, which includes ability to pay/affordability in the calculation; British Columbia’s collaboration with the Union of British Columbia

Municipalities (UBCM) to develop needs assessments with the aim of creating more child care availability; and use of the City of Vancouver's demand forecasting calculation tool considering the impact of urban development on demand for child care.

City of Toronto

The City of Toronto Licensed child care demand and affordability study is a significant resource developed for the City of Toronto to assess demand in relation to affordability (Cleveland et al., 2016). The purpose of this research and tool is to project future demand for licensed child care and to analyze the evolution of affordability for Toronto families. This research developed a methodology to assess demand in relation to affordability and to understand parental decisions for using licensed child care compared to other arrangements, thereby assisting the City of Toronto in its long term service planning. It is of note that the methodology can be adapted to other locations. For example, it formed the basis of a report for the Ontario government that aimed at answering the question "What is the best way to improve the affordability of licensed child care for infants, toddlers and preschoolers in Ontario?", analyzing six different approaches to public funding (Cleveland, 2016).

To forecast demand in the City of Toronto, Cleveland et al. used economic modelling to create three policy simulations: providing fee subsidies for all eligible families³⁰, capping fees, and a flat \$20 a day cost. The modeling found that all three simulations would substantially increase demand for licensed child care.

The economic modeling then examined two scenarios:

- The first scenario looked at children below compulsory school age (0 – 5 years) and examined the influence of price of care, eligibility for a fee subsidy, potential earnings of the main care giving parent, age of the youngest child in the family, number of children in the family, immigrant status of and ethno-cultural backgrounds of families. The effect of these factors on

³⁰ In Ontario, fee subsidies are rationed, so parents determined to be eligible to be subsidized wait on long municipal waiting lists which are sometimes years long.

demand for care and employment were estimated using Canadian data sets. Estimates were incorporated into the model for calculating future demand for licensed child care;

- The second scenario looked at children of compulsory school age (6 – 9 years) and used a similar model without the link to employment decisions to calculate the demand for licensed school-age care.

A simulation model to calculate the ability of families to pay for licensed care looked at two measures of affordability: the potential earnings of the main caregiving parent and family income. Consideration was given to the effect of taxes, child benefits and child care tax deductions or credits on affordability. The data sets used for estimation were the Survey of Young Canadians and a City of Toronto dataset (Cleveland et al., 2016³¹).

Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UCBM)

The Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) is the voice of local BC governments, incorporated by a provincial statute to represent the common interests of local governments in BC . It currently includes every local government in BC as well as eight First Nations in its' membership. Since 1992, UBCM has passed numerous policy resolutions in an effort to influence the expansion of a quality, affordable child care system.

In 2019, British Columbia's [*Child Care Community Planning Program*](#) aimed to establish a province-wide approach to child care needs assessments at the local level through its \$2.85 million community planning initiative by collaborating with the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (Union of British Columbia Municipalities, 2019; 2020). The funds are administered through UBCM. Eligible local governments could apply to receive up to \$25,000 to engage in child care planning activities, which were set out by the grant requirements, to develop a community child care creation plan.

The UBCM process for child care planning is the most comprehensive framework for municipalities to conduct child care needs planning

31 A more detailed elaboration of the modelling can be found in [Technical Report: City of Toronto Licensed Child care Demand and Affordability Study](#), Cleveland, Krashinsky, Colley and Avery-Nunez, 2016.

across the province of British Columbia found in a review for this paper. Through community partnerships and engagement, funded projects collected information regarding the child care needs of the community, created an inventory of existing child care, identified space creation targets over the next 10 years; and identified actions that can be taken to meet those space creation targets (Union of British Columbia Municipalities, 2020). It is noteworthy in that it is a provincial initiative to motivate child care creation and provides provincial direction but also recognizes the key public management role played by local government.

It also includes information gathering, which can inform future targets for growth and child care expansion across the province; sets out a methodology for assessing need and utilization rates and multiple variables for augmenting data collection and includes a standard community space inventory template to document child care facilities and spaces in a geographic area. Multiple data resources are identified such as population estimates, household projections, regional health authority information for child care licensing, child care maps, that can inform future planning and creation of child care services. Community engagement activities are also included and encouraged with various stakeholders such as child care providers, parents, local school districts, First Nations, Métis Nation and other Indigenous organizations as part of the process. All information gathered from data, stakeholder meetings and policy and bylaw reviews are analyzed looking at trends and opportunities to inform the local action plan. Targets and goals for growth are set with the hope that funding will become available to implement planned growth. It is too soon to tell, and beyond the scope of this work to know, if or how this information will be rolled up and used to inform broader provincial planning and/or how it will impact growth of quality, accessible, affordable child care spaces at the local level.

This BC specific initiative does not yet provide a complete provincial overview of child care needs, since to-date (at writing of this section), only 74 local government applications had been approved out of a total of 189 local governments. However, it is noteworthy as the first time a systematic process for determining and addressing child care needs, and “gaps” has occurred province-wide in British Columbia.

City of Vancouver

The use of a specific tool for child care demand forecasting has been used in Vancouver for some time and fits in the context of the City of Vancouver's activities on child care and specific characteristics. The City of Vancouver's unique legislative framework, the [Vancouver Charter](#), provides for the continuation, structure and operation of the City of Vancouver and sets out its main powers and responsibilities, including elections, public works, real property taxation and land use planning. Many of these powers parallel those of other municipalities, while some are quite different (Government of British Columbia, 2020).

In British Columbia, municipalities are legislated through the *Local Government Act* and Community Charter. The *Vancouver Charter* provides for the continuation, structure and operation of the City of Vancouver and sets out its main powers and responsibilities, including elections, public works, real property taxation and land use planning. Many of these powers parallel those of other municipalities, while some are quite different. The key differences impacting child care are the provision of Development Cost Levies (DCLs) for child care capital, and historically the use of Community Amenity Contributions to help offset operating cost (although this is no longer used for such purposes); and the creation of the Vancouver Park Board, which provides child care spaces in community centers and Park Board facilities.

City of Vancouver set out actions for planning child care in its Civic Child Care Strategy in 1990 policy, based on principles of affordability, accessibility and quality. This made three significant contributions to setting the stage for estimating the impact of growth on child care need and linking planning strategies to address the identified need. It also included establishing and implementing a consistent formula for calculating child care needs in new developments; establishing targets for the number, type and location of child care services which the city will support or facilitate; and including child care services as a standard part of all Local Area Planning processes.

In the early 1990s, little information was available to draw from to estimate the impact of new developments on child care but a set of supply

and demand assumptions could be made. For the first time, the City of Vancouver set out a series of assumptions to estimate need which informed targets within the local area plans. Such targets could, for example, be included in the Official Development Plan (ODP). The ODP is a statement of objectives and policies to guide decisions on planning and land use management, within the area covered by the plan). For example, the ODP for the North Shore of False Creek and Coal Harbour included a commitment for 13 new child care facilities with over 700 high quality spaces. What these calculations did was to enable city staff to estimate potential demand for child care based on the new residential units, set targets for city-facilitated/supported licensed non-profit child care spaces, and work with the development community to leverage opportunities for child care facilities in new developments. As a result, child care emerged as a key public benefit and new child care facilities were built in residential towers and/or on lands in newly developed communities. The impact has been significant in that the City of Vancouver has approved approximately 5,400 licensed centre spaces. To facilitate service operation, the City also facilitated the creation of the Vancouver Society of Childcare Centres, a new non-profit child care organization to manage the new spaces created in the downtown core (see a description of VSOCC in the section in this report of non-profit child care).

The City of Vancouver estimates child care need based on select data inputs (e.g. by neighbourhood or proposed development, social indicators, age, labour force participation etc). This approach to modelling need permits fine-grained neighbourhood-based needs analysis reflecting geography and social indicators. Over time, the demand calculations have been refined and have become a key element of the community planning process, informing targets for child care spaces embedded in neighbourhood community plans. As neighbourhoods undergo change and growth, the child care calculator provides City Council, senior management, social policy, planning and finance staff with a clear direction on where new child care spaces could be built and to set targets and budgets.

Specifically, the City of Vancouver's approach to estimating child care need and percentage of need to meet in existing neighbours includes

calculations of the Census population by age, mothers' labour force participation rate (using the BC Labour Force Survey) and families' propensity to use licensed child care vs. other child care arrangements. The approach considers census data on the current child population, broken down into child care-related age groups, and makes assumptions specific to each age group (based on mother's participation in labour force, full-time vs part time demand) to estimate the number of children who would be in child care if a space were made available to them. These estimates are then measured against the City's current supply of child care spaces (broken down by age group and by neighbourhood) to determine service gaps in each of the city's neighbourhoods. Data on current supply of licensed child care is obtained from the local [Child Care Resource and Referral Centre](#).

In the case of proposed developments or community plans, future child care need estimates consider proposed housing units and types (family or non-family) or use population projections and in the case of proposed major employment-based developments or clusters child care need generated by the development is estimated based on proposed numbers of employees or revenue producing area. Targets are set at a proportion of calculated need from projected residential growth, with addition of other factors including anticipated availability of funding, competing priorities, and levels of child vulnerability. The City maintains a conservative approach to setting targets in the absence of an assured system of public child care funding.

There are however limitations with this model, such as the impact on demand in relation to an individual's ability to pay; estimates assume that all parents would choose licensed child care; need of families working non-traditional hours. Furthermore, proposed housing types do not necessarily reflect actual family configuration and commercial calculations may not take into consideration age of employees in certain industries. Despite some of these challenges, these calculations continue to provide a forward direction for City Council to approve expansion targets, largely based on the capacity of the City to create spaces when opportunities from available sites arise, when capital is available or when significant provincial funding is made available.

The lack of strategies or policies that systematically set out how to assess and map child care needs, set growth targets, align resources or ensure affordability is one factor that continues to exacerbate uneven provision of licensed child care across provinces/territories and within communities. As we have explored, there is an opportunity to learn from existing practices and create more consistent, comparable, accurate and regularly used methodologies for assessing child care needs and forecasting demand for the purpose of developing child care services.

RESOURCES - *Assessing child care needs and forecasting demand*

- [Expanding Indigenous early childhood development in Canada](#)
- [Expanding Indigenous-led early years' programs in Toronto](#)
- [Child care needs in small and remote communities](#)
- [Affordable for all: Making licensed care affordable in Ontario](#)
- [The City of Toronto licensed child care demand and affordability study](#)
- [Union of British Columbia Municipalities: Community child care planning](#)
- [University of British Columbia child care expansion service plan \(2016-2020\)](#)
- [City of Surrey: Surrey child care gap assessment](#)
- [City of Richmond: Child care needs and assessment strategy](#)
- [BC community child care planning program](#)
- [Municipal support for child care expansion in Vancouver](#)
- [Municipal survey of child care spaces and policies in Metro Vancouver](#)

5 Conclusions and recommendations

This exploratory project examines the way early learning and child care services are created in Canada, identifying and explaining the benefits of moving to a more publicly managed approach to better ensure the availability and accessibility of child care. It describes the disadvantageous consequences of “relying on the good will of people deciding to open up child care services” – a market model that relies on the private initiatives of voluntary organizations, parents or entrepreneurs to develop child care services. This, together with the persistent lack of supply, funding and support of needed child care services and inequitable accessibility for specific groups of families, children and communities, has been identified again and again as a barrier to women’s equality, social justice and family functioning in Canada.

What is new in 2020, however, is that Canada, with the rest of the world, has been enveloped by the most severe and widespread public health crisis experienced since 1918, the COVID-19 pandemic. This seismic global event has brought to new prominence the central role that child care plays in the economy. It has highlighted how and why child care is fundamental for all parents, particularly those who are essential workers or struggling to work from home while caring for their children. This is especially true with respect to mothers, who are not only in danger of losing many years of hard-won equality gains but upon whose labour the Canadian economy now relies.

For the Canadian economy, child care is now recognized as a necessity, not a luxury. Going forward over the next few years as Canada moves from the acute phase of the pandemic to recovery and to reconstructing the economy, reliable child care services to support women’s equality, parents’ employment and children’s well-being will be critical.

Paradoxically, the precariousness of relying on a child care supply funded by parent fees and located and maintained by individual, private initiative has also been exposed by the pandemic. Some child care supply has already been, and will continue to be lost to the pandemic through closures and reduced capacity, while pre-pandemic unmet needs for child care still need to be addressed. Consequently, there has emerged in Canada, and elsewhere, a greater imperative than ever before for finding more effective ways of creating and maintaining child care services than has been the case in Canada to date.

As the paper has described, the alternative to the status quo of privatized child care development is a more proactive, publicly managed, planned, intentional and integrated approach based on greater public responsibility for the availability, characteristics and distribution of regulated child care. This paper's chapter detailing how Norway built its child care system is but one illustration that supports the presumption that a more publicly managed approach will build more available and accessible, more equitable and more effective distribution of child care services.

This paper describes in detail six public management resources and policy tools used in various jurisdictions to develop child care in a planned, intentional way as part of a more proactive, publicly managed, integrated process. These tools, including but not limited to, land use and service planning, public service delivery, strengthened not-for-profit delivery and locally initiated municipal roles can contribute to creating child care services in contrast with the "popcorn" situations in which private interests create child care according to their own needs or wishes and the vagaries of the market.

For example, the proactive legislation in Ontario and Manitoba requiring the inclusion of child care centres in new schools and major renovations illustrates how a proactive policy can substantially contribute to the predictable expansion of community based child care services in a regularized way. In another illustration, the City of Vancouver has successfully embedded the creation of child care services within its social infrastructure using the land use planning process, funding and the development of strategic partnerships as key tools. In another example, the recent

collaboration beginning with needs assessments initiated by the province of British Columbia through the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) is evolving into an important planning, data collection and space-creation role that BC municipalities are enthusiastically adopting.

We have noted that the public management tools discussed in detail in the paper do not comprise an exhaustive list of possibilities. Other possibilities to explore further include a model that locates responsibility for developing and maintaining child care services within a quasi-public local body, as described by a 2016 Manitoba Commission on Early Learning and Child Care (Manitoba Commission on Early Learning and Child Care, 2016). A new kind of infrastructure, called “Children’s Councils” was proposed by the Commission to provide a mandate to regional child care bodies with diverse membership including parents, newcomers, Indigenous groups and others. This type of quasi-public organization has the advantage of being grounded in local communities but part of province-wide system-building linked to pan-Canadian initiatives.

Another important tool yet to be fully explored for expanding early learning and child care is the greater use of public buildings, and public land, for locating child care facilities. Currently, across Canada—in addition to public schools, which are probably the public buildings most used for locating early learning and child care—child care centres are located in many public buildings such as office buildings occupied or owned by various levels of government, post-secondary institutions, hospitals and other buildings used by public or quasi-public entities. However, more extensive, systematic consideration of public buildings/spaces could very much aid in child care expansion, as the lack of suitable space in available, convenient and affordable locations is a perpetual barrier to child care expansion. As the Child Care Advocates of British Columbia (CCABC) have advised, when child care programs are located in publicly owned facilities such as schools or community centres, there is a much greater likelihood that new public funding will enable these organizations to keep parent fees down and to raise educators’ wages rather than to pay for leasing or mortgage costs in commercial buildings. While there is no overview of the types of public facilities in which

child care centres are located, it is fair to assume that most are not the result of public policy but are more likely to be the result of a public or quasi-public entity seeking to have child care on their premises, often to serve employees, or the result of community initiated pressure.

This overview, analysis and discussion of how to move forward towards more public management of child care development in Canada comes at a time that extensive changes to Canadian child care are expected. As the exceptional situation of the COVID-19 pandemic has persisted through 2020, the realization that child care is an essential service has become firmly accepted by a broad range of society's leaders and institutions in the public, private and voluntary sectors. More than ever before, it is accepted that accessible child care is required if mothers of young children are to participate in the workforce and that mothers' inability to fully participate in the workforce is not only a problem for their family finances and career aspirations but also for the recovery of the economy from COVID-19. In the September 23 Speech from the Throne, the Government of Canada has clearly acknowledged this reality, stating

... Canadians need more accessible, affordable, inclusive, and high quality child care B. Recognizing the urgency of this challenge, the Government will make a significant, long-term, sustained investment to create a Canada-wide early learning and childcare system. The Government will build on previous investments, learn from the model that already exists in Quebec, and work with all provinces and territories to ensure that high-quality care is accessible to all" (Government of Canada, 2020).

Thus, the most appropriate recommendation to arise from this examination of early learning and child care service creation is that each province and territory develop a multi-year early learning and child care plan for expansion of public and not-for-profit child care using a variety of public management tools. Additionally, to further its Throne Speech commitments and in the context of the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care, a key role for the federal government would

be to induce and assist with these plans by building them into federal/provincial/territorial agreements. With their key responsibilities for program design, licensing, regulation and funding, provinces/territories—collaborating with the ELCC community, local governments and others—are the appropriate entities to develop this path toward a more publicly managed ELCC system for all across Canada. Provinces/territories can utilize various tools and resources to create expansion plans to meet the needs of their communities, children and families and align with the overall direction for Canada. For some provinces/territories, the plan may build on existing processes, while others may be starting at an earlier stage. Expansion plans with explicit targets and timetables, strategies for implementation, and methods to evaluate successes or failures are important components of this public policy-making.

The pandemic has brought home is that reliable, affordable, quality child care for all must be a pillar of the Canadian economy. Post-COVID 19, there are tremendous opportunities for Canada to build its early learning and child care in a more efficacious way that supports this realization. If this is to happen, the need for collaboration, evidence-based policy making and intentional planning and implementation has never been greater than it is now.

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