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Ontario's Early Years and Child Care Annual Report 2023

Ontario's Early Years and Child Care Annual Report 2023 describes the early years and child care system, key data and measures for child care and indicators under Ontario's bilateral federal-provincial early learning and child care agreements with the federal government.

Introduction

A strong and accessible child care and early years system is a critical support for Ontario families. It plays a key role in children's learning, development and well-being while parents and caregivers go to school or work to support their families and contribute to economic growth.

This report provides an annual snapshot and detailed year-over-year trends of, Ontario's child care sector that will help to inform future plans and policy. In addition, the report supports Ontario's commitments to informing the public on progress made under the federal-provincial early learning and child care agreements. Most of the data presented in this report were collected between March 2022 and March 2023.

2022 was a milestone year for the early years and child care system in our province. Ontario and Canada signed the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) Agreement that will support Ontario to achieve average fees of $10 per day for children under the age of six. The agreement focuses on five priority areas, including lowering fees, increasing access, enhancing quality, supporting inclusion and strengthening data/reporting.

The ministry has worked with partners across the province and reached important achievements in implementing the CWELCC system:

- April 2022: The ministry released the CWELCC funding guidelines, referred to as the Addendum to Ontario Child Care and EarlyON Child and Family Centres Service Management and Funding Guideline (2022).
- May 2022: The first CWELCC payments were flowed to service system managers to support implementation.
- June/July 2022: Child care licensees began to enrol in the CWELCC system and provide parents with fee rebates up to 25% retroactive to April 1, 2022.
- July 2022: The ministry established a Minister's Advisory Group of sector partners to engage in roundtable discussions on key priorities.
- November 2022: 92% of child care sites shared their intention to opt in to the CWELCC system.
- December 2022: The ministry released to service system managers the 2023 CWELCC funding allocations and guidelines, the draft Access and Inclusion Framework and initial space creation targets under the Directed Growth Plan, supporting Ontario's commitment to create 86,000 new child care spaces, by December 31, 2026.
- December 2022: The ministry announced a $213 million start-up grant program for 2023-24 to support the creation of new, affordable child care spaces for children under age six in targeted locations and for populations most in need.
- December 2022: Parent fees for children under six in CWELCC programs were further reduced to an average of 50% from pre-agreement levels.
- Winter 2023: The ministry released the 2024 Funding Formula Discussion Paper, launched the Child Care Funding Formula mini-survey and conducted 19 virtual consultations with over 60 key stakeholder groups on workforce, access and inclusion priorities and quality initiatives.
- May 2023: Final space creation targets were released to service system managers under the Directed Growth Plan.
- June 2023: Updated CWELCC funding guidelines for 2023-24, including guidelines for the new start-up grant program and an updated Access and Inclusion Framework were released to the sector to support Directed Growth.
- June 2023: 92% of licensed child care spaces for children aged 0 to 5 were enrolled in the CWELCC system.
- November 2023: Announced a workforce strategy to support the recruitment and retention of qualified professionals working in licensed child care, including increased wages.

As of June 2023, all municipalities executed agreements with their licensees. 95.9% of not-for-profit sites and 75.6% of for-profit sites were enrolled in the CWELCC system, including a total of 301,853 licensed child care spaces in centres and homes for children aged 0 to 5 years.

The ministry released the 2024 funding guidelines to service system managers and is working to introduce a new funding formula and implement the new workforce strategy.

In addition to work on the CWELCC system, in 2022–23 the province continued to implement two existing federal-provincial early learning and child care agreements.

- The Canada-Ontario Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Agreement allocated $195.4 million in federal funding in 2022–23 to support: 1) affordable,

high-quality licensed child care; 2) no-cost, high-quality programming and services at EarlyON Child and Family Centres; and 3) training and professional learning for the early years and child care workforce.

- The Canada-Ontario Early Childhood Workforce Agreement (WFA) allocated $149.9 million in one-time federal funding to support the retention and recruitment of a high-quality child care and early years workforce through the following initiatives: 1) Professional Learning and Development Strategy; 2) Workforce Capacity and Innovation Fund; 3) RECE Qualifications Upgrade Program; and 4) Equity-based Communities of Practice. As per the terms of the agreement, Ontario was allowed to carry forward to 2023-24 up to 50% of any unspent federal funds remaining from 2022-23. Ontario spent $75 million in Early Childhood Workforce funding in 2021-22 and the remaining $75 million in 2022-23.

Ontario is committed to continuing to deliver high-quality, affordable child care and early years programs to families in every corner of the province. In 2023, the province and Canada invested $3.86 billion in early years and child care. This included:

- Provincial investments of $1.65 billion to support the ongoing delivery of early years and child care services and EarlyON supports. This includes a general allocation for core service delivery of early years and child care programs.
- Investments of $2.22 billion from the federal government to support Ontario's commitments under the CWELCC, ELCC and WFA agreements that will support the reduction of parent fees to 50% of pre-agreement levels, increase the number of child care spaces and support RECE (Registered Early Childhood Educators) staff and supervisors with up to $1 per hour increase in wages.

Ontario's licensed child care system continued to grow in 2022–23, supporting more children and families.

- The number of centres increased by 4.2% from 5,545 to 5,776.
- The number of spaces grew by 32,058 from 472,997 to 505,055, with an increase in all age groups, including 3.0% for infants, 3.9% for toddlers, 3.2% for preschool, 13.6% for kindergarten, 6.1% for school age and 9.5% for the family age group.[1]
- The number of home child care agencies increased by 2.1% from 145 to 148. There were 9,863 approved homes affiliated with these agencies, representing a 13.0% increase.

In summary, this report shows that Ontario's early years and child care sector has showed strong growth and demonstrated significant achievements over the past year. These achievements could not be reached without the collaboration and leadership of our hardworking partners: our early years and child care workers, program operators, First Nation communities, Consolidated Municipal Service Managers and District Social Services Administration Boards and the federal government.

Part 1: Overview of the early years and child care system

The Ministry of Education sets overall policy, legislation, and regulations for the child care and early years sector, under the authority of the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* (https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/14c11) , and licenses child care providers across the province. The ministry also conducts inspections and investigates complaints about licensed and unlicensed child care.

The ministry oversees and licenses two types of child care:

- child care centres
- home child care agencies that contract with home child care providers

The provincial government provides funding to 47 local service system managers, known as Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) and District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs), to support licensed child care and child and family programs in the province (see Figure 1). These service system managers have the authority to determine funding priorities within their local systems, provided they comply with provincial legislation, policies and guidelines.

As of March 31, 2023, the province was funding 96 First Nations to support child care or child and family programs on reserve, of which:

- 31 received funding for child care only
- 21 received funding for child and family programs only
- 44 received funding for child care and child and family programs

Figure 1: Consolidated Municipal Service Managers and District Social Services Administration Boards in Ontario

Map of Ontario showing the locations of Consolidated Municipal Service Managers and District Social Services Administration Boards, which are as follows:

Location name	Type
Algoma District Services Administration Board	CMSMs/DSSABs
City of Brantford	CMSMs/DSSABs
City of Cornwall	CMSMs/DSSABs
City of Greater Sudbury	CMSMs/DSSABs
City of Hamilton	CMSMs/DSSABs
City of Kawartha Lakes	CMSMs/DSSABs
City of Kingston	CMSMs/DSSABs
City of London	CMSMs/DSSABs
City of Ottawa	CMSMs/DSSABs
City of Peterborough	CMSMs/DSSABs
City of St. Thomas	CMSMs/DSSABs
City of Stratford	CMSMs/DSSABs
City of Toronto	CMSMs/DSSABs
City of Windsor	CMSMs/DSSABs
County of Bruce	CMSMs/DSSABs
County of Dufferin	CMSMs/DSSABs
County of Grey	CMSMs/DSSABs
County of Hastings	CMSMs/DSSABs
County of Huron	CMSMs/DSSABs
County of Lambton	CMSMs/DSSABs
County of Lanark	CMSMs/DSSABs

Location name	Type
County of Lennox and Addington	CMSMs/DSSABs
County of Northumberland	CMSMs/DSSABs
County of Oxford	CMSMs/DSSABs
County of Renfrew	CMSMs/DSSABs
County of Simcoe	CMSMs/DSSABs
County of Wellington	CMSMs/DSSABs
District Municipality of Muskoka	CMSMs/DSSABs
District of Cochrane Social Services Administration Board	CMSMs/DSSABs
District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board	CMSMs/DSSABs
District of Parry Sound Social Services Administration Board	CMSMs/DSSABs
District of Sault Ste Marie Social Services Administration Board	CMSMs/DSSABs
District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board	CMSMs/DSSABs
District of Timiskaming Social Services Administrations Board	CMSMs/DSSABs
Kenora District Services Board	CMSMs/DSSABs
Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board	CMSMs/DSSABs
Municipality of Chatham-Kent	CMSMs/DSSABs
Norfolk County	CMSMs/DSSABs
Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board	CMSMs/DSSABs
Regional Municipality of Durham	CMSMs/DSSABs
Regional Municipality of Halton	CMSMs/DSSABs
Regional Municipality of Niagara	CMSMs/DSSABs
Regional Municipality of Peel	CMSMs/DSSABs
Regional Municipality of Waterloo	CMSMs/DSSABs

Location name	Type
Regional Municipality of York	CMSMs/DSSABs
United Counties of Leeds and Grenville	CMSMs/DSSABs
United Counties of Prescott and Russell	CMSMs/DSSABs

Data sources: Ontario Ministry of Education and Statistics Canada.

In Ontario, various partners work together to deliver early years and child care, each taking important roles and responsibilities.

Table 1: Roles and responsibilities of early years and child care partners

Partner	Roles and Responsibilities
Province of Ontario	• Regulator (legislation/policy and licensing/compliance/enforcement) • Funder
Service System Managers (CMSMs & DSSABs)	• Work with school boards and other partners to implement service plans • Allocate funding to child care licensees and before and after school programs • Directly operate child care and EarlyON programs • Responsible for managing and administering CWELCC, fee subsidies, wage enhancement, Special Needs Resourcing (to support inclusion of children with special needs in licensed child care) and before and after school programs • All service system managers are required to ensure the provision of French language child care and child and family programs and services where there is an identified need
Federal Government	• Funding partner: the Canada-Ontario Early Learning and Child Care Agreement, Early Childhood Workforce Agreement, Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement • On-reserve child care and early years programs
Licensed Home Child Care Agencies	• Licensed by the ministry and contract with individual providers who use their own homes to provide care to children • Oversee the provision of home child care in a provider's home • Agency staff visit and inspect each premise before children are enrolled and at least once every three months
Licensed Child Care Centres	• Licensed by the ministry to operate with varying capacity

Partner	Roles and Responsibilities
Unlicensed Child Care Operators	• Child care provided by persons caring for up to five children (including their own children), with no more than three children under two years of age
First Nations	• Directly operate child care and child and family programs
School Boards	• Legislatively required to ensure the provision of before and after school programming for children aged 4-12 years, where there is sufficient demand and viability • Consult with local service system managers to identify sites and space for early years capital investments in schools • Responsible for facility management of their properties, including oversight of school-based capital construction projects
College of Early Childhood Educators (CECE)	• Regulate the early childhood education profession in the public interest as set out under the *Early Childhood Educators Act* • Set education and training requirements for registration, standards of conduct for professionals, and oversee a complaints and discipline process

Part 2: Early years and child care key data and measures

Child care is foundational to supporting early childhood development and student success. It is also a key enabler of workforce participation, particularly for women, both as parents and providers. Over the years, Ontario has advanced many initiatives to strengthen its early years and child care system. This includes:

- Providing child care fee subsidies to support low-income families to access child care.
- Investing in operator subsidies to help offset costs that would otherwise result in higher child care fees. Support is provided for general operating costs, as well as wage enhancements for qualified staff.
- Establishing the College of Early Childhood Educators in 2008 as the self-regulatory body for the early childhood education profession in the province and the only regulatory college for early childhood educators in Canada.
- Rolling out universal kindergarten starting in 2010 to provide a full-day of free high-quality programming for all children aged 4 to 5 years in the publicly funded school system across the province.
- Conducting an annual data collection of child care program operations from licensed child care centres and home child care agencies since 2012 and reporting on the Early Development Instrument (EDI) indicators since 2003.
- Establishing modern legislative framework and quality standards, the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA)*, that governs child care in Ontario. The legislation requires that programming in licensed spaces is aligned with the provincial pedagogy, How does learning happen?, which sets out a vision, values, foundations and approaches to guide practice for high quality experiences in licensed child care and early years settings.
- Supporting recruitment and retention of early childhood educators in child care since 2015 through the Ontario wage enhancement grants.
- Introducing the Ontario Childcare Access and Relief from Expenses (CARE) tax credit in 2019. The tax credit helps an estimated 300,000 families each year with up to 75% of their eligible child care expenses.
- Funding EarlyON Child and Family Centres to provide a variety of supports to caregivers and children from birth to six years old across Ontario.

These initiatives continue to shape Ontario's early years and child care system and benefit children and families in the province. A stable and accessible child care system will be crucial in supporting the province moving forward with the work on the CWELCC system.

Licensed child care

In Ontario, licensed child care is provided in centres and homes, and is delivered by a mix of not-for-profit and for-profit organizations, municipalities, school boards and First Nations. As of March 31, 2023, there were 5,776 licensed child care centres in Ontario.

The total number of spaces in licensed centres for children aged 0 to 12 was 505,055, which included:

- 37,972 spaces that provide services in French
- 7,648 spaces that provide bilingual services
- 3,397 spaces in First Nations communities

As of March 31, 2023, a total of 148 licensed home child care agencies were in operation in the province. These agencies were permitted to contract with a maximum of 9,863 approved homes.[2] This includes two home child care agencies operated by First Nations, with a maximum of 31 approved homes. As of December 31, 2022, the most recent year for which there are data available, a total of 3,524[3] homes were deemed to be "active homes".[4]

Overall trends in licensed child care

Overall, Ontario's licensed child care sector continued to grow. Since 2013–14:

- The number of licensed child care centres has increased by 13.9%, from 5,069 to 5,776. Licensed spaces in child care centres have increased by 58.9%, from 317,868 to 505,055.
- The number of spaces in centres for children aged 0 to 12 years has grown across all age groups, including kindergarten (135.8%), school age (58.3%), toddler (55.0%), infant (53.3%) and preschool (21.1%).
- The number of licensed home child care agencies has increased by 17.5%, from 126 to 148. The number of approved homes has increased by 71.1% from 5,765 to 9,863.

For more detailed data and changes over time, see Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2a: Number of licensed child care centres, 2013–14 to 2022–23

Year	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23
Number of Centres	5,069	5,144	5,276	5,351	5,437	5,523	5,565	5,506	5,545	5,776

Table 2b: Number of spaces in centres by age group, 2013–14 to 2022–23

Year	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23
Infant	10,250	11,025	11,759	12,231	12,755	13,626	14,151	14,602	15,260	15,715
Toddler	34,772	37,833	41,211	42,900	44,529	46,865	48,858	49,883	51,888	53,894
Preschool	102,133	102,380	104,802	105,955	108,375	112,042	115,001	115,431	119,846	123,731
Kindergarten	52,168	64,340	85,014	92,035	98,310	103,308	107,260	107,453	108,247	123,014
Schoolage	118,545	135,223	146,500	153,274	162,901	170,337	176,840	176,327	176,832	187,689
Family	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	162	418	692	842	924	1,012

Year	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23
age[5]										
Number of Spaces 0-12	317,868	350,801	389,286	406,395	427,032	446,596	462,802	464,538	472,997	505,055

Data source: Child Care Licensing System, Ontario Ministry of Education (as of March 31 each year).

Table 3: Number of licensed home child care agencies and approved homes, 2013–14 to 2022–23

Year	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23
Number of agencies	126	124	122	124	122	124	131	139	145	148

Year	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23
Number of approved homes	5,765	6,962	7,504	7,579	7,783	7,923	8,296	8,561	8,731	9,863

Data source: Child Care Licensing System, Ontario Ministry of Education (as of March 31 each year).

Child care by type of auspice

As of March 31, 2023, 74.9% of licensed child care centres were not-for-profit (operated by not-for-profit organizations, municipalities and First Nations) and 25.1% were for-profit.[6] 78.9% of spaces for children aged 0 to 12 years were in not-for-profit centres and 21.1% in for-profit centres. For children aged 0 to 5 years, 70.2% of spaces were in not-for-profit centres and 29.8% in for-profit centres.

Since 2013–14, the number of not-for-profit centres increased by 12.5% and for-profit increased by 18.5%. The number of spaces for children aged 0 to 12 years in not-for-profit centres increased by 65.4% and those in for-profit increased by 38.6%. The number of spaces for children aged 0 to 5 years in not-for-profit centres increased by 64.2% and those in for-profit centre increased by 48.6%.

For more detailed data and a look at changes over time, see Table 4.

Table 4a: Number of licensed child care centres by auspice, 2013–14 to 2022–23

Year	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23
Not-for-	3,847	3,942	4,007	4,053	4,128	4,186	4,187	4,138	4,133	4,328

Year	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23
profit										
For-profit	1,222	1,202	1,269	1,298	1,309	1,337	1,378	1,368	1,412	1,448
Number of centres	**5,069**	**5,144**	**5,276**	**5,351**	**5,437**	**5,523**	**5,565**	**5,506**	**5,545**	**5,776**

Table 4b: Number of licensed child care spaces 0-12 by auspice, 2013–14 to 2022–23

Year	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23
Not-for-profit	240,881	272,899	305,317	319,608	337,318	352,949	365,653	366,609	370,222	398,314

Year	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23
For-profit	76,987	77,902	83,969	86,787	89,714	93,647	97,149	97,929	102,775	106,741
Number of spaces 0-12	**317,868**	**350,801**	**389,286**	**406,395**	**427,032**	**446,596**	**462,802**	**464,538**	**472,997**	**505,055**

Table 4c: Number of licensed child care spaces 0-5 by auspice, 2013–14 to 2022–23

Year	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23
Not-for-profit	135,650	150,208	171,371	178,643	186,652	194,815	200,971	202,510	205,673	222,765
For-	63,673	65,370	71,415	74,478	77,479	81,444	84,991	85,701	90,492	94,601

Year	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23
profit										
Number of spaces 0-5	199,323	215,578	242,786	253,121	264,131	276,259	285,962	288,211	296,165	317,366

Data source: Child Care Licensing System, Ontario Ministry of Education (as of March 31 each year).

Licensed child care centres — openings and closures

Licensed child care centres open and close on a regular basis with more centres opening than closing in most years. Child care centres open for reasons such as the expansion of an existing program, a desire to provide a child care service in a community or local planning efforts by CMSMs and DSSABs to address an increase in the need for child care. Centres that close typically do so due to low enrolment.

As of 2022–23, there were 707 more child care centres in operation than in 2013–14, with an annual net increase of 73 centres per year (see Table 5). In 2022–23, 369 child care centres opened and 138 closed, a net increase of 231 centres, the highest annual increase seen since 2013–14.

Table 5: Number of licensed child care centre openings and closures, 2013–14 to 2022–23

Year	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23
Number of	305	350	318	246	280	272	213	184	211	369

Year	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23
centres opened										
Number of centres closed	-286	-275	-186	-171	-194	-186	-171	-243	-172	-138

Data source: Child Care Licensing System, Ontario Ministry of Education (as of March 31 each year).

Licensed child care in publicly funded schools and in communities

As of March 31, 2023, 55.2% of child care centres and 65.0% of child care spaces were in publicly funded schools. The remaining 44.8% of child care centres and 35.0% of child care spaces were located elsewhere in the community. The number of licensed child care centres located in publicly funded schools increased by 6.5% in 2022–23 compared to the previous year and spaces increased by 9.3% in the same period.

Since 2013–14, the number of child care centres located in publicly funded schools has increased by 26.2%, and spaces have increased by 98.2% (see Table 6).

Table 6a: Number of licensed child care centres in publicly funded schools and in communities, 2013–14 to 2022–23

Ye										

ar	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23
In publicly funded schools	2,528	2,699	2,782	2,842	2,944	2,990	3,004	2,987	2,996	3,190
In communities	2,541	2,445	2,494	2,509	2,493	2,533	2,561	2,519	2,549	2,586
Centres	**5,069**	**5,144**	**5,276**	**5,351**	**5,437**	**5,523**	**5,565**	**5,506**	**5,545**	**5,776**

Table 6b: Number of licensed child care spaces in publicly funded schools and in communities, 2013–14 to 2022–23

Year	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23
Inpu	165,578	203,133	236,850	250,344	268,469	282,048	294,979	296,567	300,286	328,124

Year	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23
licly funded schools										
Incommunities	152,290	147,668	152,436	156,051	158,563	164,548	167,823	167,971	172,711	176,931
Spaces	317,868	350,801	389,286	406,395	427,032	446,596	462,802	464,538	472,997	505,055

Data source: Child Care Licensing System, Ontario Ministry of Education (as of March 31 for each year).

First Nations licensed child care

As of March 31, 2023, 75 licensed child care centres were operated by 58 First Nations or on First Nation reserves in Ontario. The number of First Nations licensed child care spaces has increased by 6.5% since 2013–14 (see Table 7).

Table 7a: First Nations licensed child care centres, 2013–14 to 2022–23

Year	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23

Year	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23
Number of centres	74	75	76	76	76	75	75	74	73	75

Table 7b: First Nations licensed child care spaces by age group, 2013–14 to 2022–23

Year	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23
Infant	254	270	296	290	290	290	309	309	303	313
Toddler	702	727	727	727	731	717	747	747	742	767
Preschool	1,620	1,568	1,541	1,553	1,551	1,529	1,584	1,568	1,550	1,622
Kind	172	177	192	192	227	225	228	208	188	188

Year	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23
ergarten										
School age	443	398	413	413	416	413	459	459	492	492
Family age	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	15	15	15	15	15
Number of spaces	**3,191**	**3,140**	**3,169**	**3,175**	**3,215**	**3,189**	**3,342**	**3,306**	**3,290**	**3,397**

Data source: Child Care Licensing System, Ontario Ministry of Education (as of March 31 each year).

French-language and bilingual licensed child care

Some licensed child care centres offer services in French or in both English and French (bilingual). In 2022–23, of the 5,776 licensed child care centres, 316 (5.5%) offered programs in French and 102 (1.8%) offered bilingual programs. Of the 505,055 licensed child care spaces, 37,972 (7.5%) were for programs in French and 7,648 (1.5%) were for bilingual programs. For further details about how these spaces are distributed by age, see Table 8.

Table 8: Number of licensed child care spaces in French-language and bilingual child care by age group, 2022–23

Language	French	Bilingual
Infant	707	350
Toddler	3,098	1,392
Preschool	6,579	2,815
Kindergarten	10,761	1,350
School age	16,692	1,728
Family age	135	13
Number of spaces	**37,972**	**7,648**

Data source: Child Care Licensing System, Ontario Ministry of Education (as of March 31, 2023).

Parent fees by age group

It is estimated that mean full-day parent fees for licensed child care centres ranged from $39.46 per day for infants to $25.10 per day for kindergarten children as of January 2023. Mean full-day parent fees for licensed home child care agencies ranged from $24.92 per day for children under two years of age to $23.21 per day for children aged 4 to 5 years.

Full-day child care continues to be more expensive for younger children than it is for older children. In general, full day parent fees for children aged 0 to 5 years were higher among licensed child care centres than home child care agencies. Fees for before and after school care for kindergarten and school age children were lower in licensed child care centres compared to home child care agencies (see Table 9).[7]

Table 9a: Mean daily fees by age group among licensed child care centres

Age group	2023 ($)
Infant (Full Day)	39.46
Toddler (Full Day)	36.09
Preschool (Full Day)	33.34
Kindergarten (Full Day)	25.10
Kindergarten (Before and After School)	13.75

Age group	2023 ($)
School age (Before and After School)	23.43

Table 9b: Mean daily fees by age group among licensed home child care Agencies

Age group	2023 ($)
Younger than 2 years (Full Day)	24.92
2 to 3 years (Full Day)	23.91
4 to 5 years (Full Day)	23.21
4 to 5 years (Before and After School)	14.60
6 to 12 (Before and After School)	25.75

Data source: Licensed Child Care Operations Surveys, Ontario Ministry of Education. The 2023 survey collected data as of December 31, 2022. Since the "as of" date fell on a weekend, some licensees did not report the fee reduction accurately. Mean daily fees presented here are estimates, adjusted to reflect factors including year-over-year price changes, the $12 price floor and fee reduction trends. The data presented in Table 9 represent all licensed child care programs regardless of whether they are enrolled in the CWELCC system or not.

Staff wages by category

Program staff fall into one of three categories: Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs), staff approved by a ministry director[8] or staff who are not RECE and have not been director approved. Among full-time RECE program staff employed by licensed child care centres, 22.3% earned between $15.50 and $19.99 per hour and 47.8% earned between $20.00 and $25.00 per hour; 33.0% of full-time director approved program staff earned between $15.50 and $19.99 per hour and 48.8% earned between $20.00 and $25.00 per hour; and, 67.2% of non-RECE, not director approved program staff earned between $15.50 and $19.99 and 28.8% earned between $20.00 and $25.00 per hour (see Table 10).

Table 10: Hourly wages of full-time program staff in licensed child care centres, 2022

Hourly wage range	RECE (%)	Director approved (%)	Non-RECE/not director approved (%)
$15.50–$19.99	22.3	33.0	67.2
$20.00–$25.00	47.8	48.8	28.8
$25.01–$28.59	18.8	10.5	2.6
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Hourly wage range	RECE (%)	Director approved (%)	Non-RECE/not director approved (%)
$28.60–$29.99	3.8	0.6	0.3
$30.00–$32.49	2.6	2.2	0.3
$32.50–$34.99	2.5	1.1	0.2
$35.00–$37.49	1.0	0.8	0.1
$37.50–$39.99	0.8	0.5	0.0
$40.01+	0.5	2.4	0.4
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Data source: 2023 Licensed Child Care Operations Survey, Ontario Ministry of Education (data as of December 31, 2022).

EarlyON Child and Family Centres

EarlyON Child and Family Centres offer free drop-in and registered programs for caregivers and children from birth to six years old. The centres are open to all families in Ontario and offer a range of services including:

- activities such as reading, storytelling, games and sing-alongs
- advice from professionals trained in early childhood development
- information about other family services in the community
- opportunities to connect with other families with young children

EarlyON Child and Family Centre programs and services are offered through a variety of service delivery methods to meet the unique needs of families in their communities, including mobile, virtual and outdoor programs.

The ministry's EarlyON Child and Family Centre web page (https://www.ontario.ca/earlyon) allows parents and caregivers to find child and family programs in their communities.

As of June 2023, there were 671 main EarlyON Child and Family Centre locations and 442 mobile/satellite EarlyON Child and Family Centre locations. In addition, there were approximately 181 EarlyON Child and Family Centres offering virtual service supports to meet the needs of families across the province.

Of the total number of EarlyON Child and Family Centre locations,139 offer non-standard hours,101 offer French-language programming, and 109 offer Indigenous programming.[9]

Indigenous-led programs and child and family programs on reserve

As part of Ontario's commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, the ministry established or enhanced programs in First Nation communities and in urban and rural communities.

In 2023, the ministry supported 65 child and family programs in First Nation communities and 60 Indigenous-led programs in urban and rural communities (including 10 child care programs, 13 joint child care and child and family programs, and 37 child and family programs).

Early years developmental health and well-being

Information on children's developmental health and well-being prior to Grade 1 is collected throughout the province using the Early Development Instrument (EDI). The EDI is a questionnaire that teachers complete about the skills and abilities of each of their Year 2 (senior) kindergarten students. It measures developmental health and well-being across five domains:

- physical health and well-being
- social competence
- emotional maturity
- language and cognitive development
- communication skills and general knowledge

The EDI is used as a population measure (such as, a measure of whole populations based on geographical or administrative boundaries) by the ministry, municipalities, school boards, and community organizations to inform decision-making and plan early years programs and services. The ministry uses the EDI as a key indicator to monitor the state of young children in Ontario.

Since 2004, the EDI has been collected across the province in three-year cycles:

- over a three-year period for Cycle 1 (2004–06), Cycle 2 (2007–09) and Cycle 3 (2010–12)
- in a single year, every three years, for Cycle 4 (2015) and Cycle 5 (2018)[10]

EDI results can be compared over time to get a sense of how young children's developmental health and well-being is changing in Ontario. Examining the percentage of vulnerable children[11] by domain is a way of monitoring areas where children's level of difficulty in meeting age appropriate developmental expectations may change over time (see Figure 2). The results can also be combined to look at all those who are vulnerable in one or more of the five domains (see Figure 3). Combining domains in this way provides a fuller picture and captures those children who may be vulnerable in single domains or in multiple domains.

Overall, results remained stable between Cycle 4 and Cycle 5. In 2018, 70.4% of children were considered developmentally ready when they entered Grade 1, compared to 70.6% in 2015.

Cycle 6 of the EDI collection would have started in 2021 but was delayed for two years by the pandemic. Collection of data began in the spring of 2023 and data analysis and reporting will take place in 2023–24.

Additional information about the EDI is available from the Offord Centre for Child Studies (https://edi.offordcentre.com/) at McMaster University.

Figure 2: Percentage of vulnerable children by EDI domain, 2004–18

Percentage of vulnerable children by EDI domain, 2004–18

Cycle	2004–06 (Cycle 1) %	2007–09 (Cycle 2) %	2010–12 (Cycle 3) %	2015 (Cycle 4) %	2018 (Cycle 5) %
Physical health and well-being	13	14	14	16	16
Social competence	9	9	9	11	10
Emotional maturity	10	10	10	12	11
Language and cognitive development	10	9	8	7	8
Communication skills and general knowledge	12	12	12	10	10

Data source: Offord Centre for Child Studies, McMaster University.

Figure 3: Percentage of children who are vulnerable in one or more EDI domains, 2004–18

Percentage of children who are vulnerable in one or more EDI domains, 2004–18

Cycle	Percentage of children vulnerable in one or more domains %
2004–06 (Cycle 1)	28.0
2007–09 (Cycle 2)	28.5
2010–12 (Cycle 3)	27.6
2015 (Cycle 4)	29.4
2018 (Cycle 5)	29.6

Data source: Offord Centre for Child Studies, McMaster University.

Part 3: The Federal-Provincial Early Learning and Child Care Agreements

a) Canada-Ontario Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement CWELCC

In March 2022, Ontario signed a historic agreement with the federal government that will lower licensed child care fees for providers enrolled in CWELCC, to an average of $10 per day by the end of fiscal year 2025-2026. As a first step, families saw an immediate 25% reduction in their fees retroactive to April 1, 2022. Fees were further reduced to 50% of pre-agreement levels, on average.

Priorities

Ontario's Action Plan under the CWELCC Agreement outlines the key principles and priorities for this funding as well as the actions to be taken in the fiscal years 2022–23 and 2023–24 to work towards the goal of implementing CWELCC. The Action Plan sets objectives and targets that align with five priority areas:

- Affordability: average parent fees for children under six will be reduced to $10 per day inclusive of fee subsidies by the end of fiscal year 2025-26 for licensed child care spaces
- Increasing access: 86,000 new licensed child care spaces (above 2019 levels) for children under six will be created by the end of 2026, and expansion will be supported in geographic areas and diverse communities where it is needed the most
- Enhancing quality: the number of Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) will be increased to make up 60% of the workforce in licensed child care by 2025–26
- Supporting inclusion: more children from diverse communities and populations (such as, Indigenous, Francophone, Black and other racialized groups, newcomers, low-income families and children with special needs), can access high-quality, inclusive child care by 2025–26
- Strengthening data/reporting: Ontario's data and reporting systems will be modernized and upgraded to effectively support implementation and measure success by 2025–26

Reporting on progress

Ontario's CWELCC Action Plan outlines the indicators (https://www.canada.ca/en/early-learning-child-care-agreement/agreements-provinces-territories/ontario-canada-wide-2021.html#h2.18-h3.04) that will be used to measure progress and commits to reporting on the results achieved according to the indicators and targets starting in the fiscal year 2023–24.

The sections below outline expenditures on the CWELCC initiatives for 2022–23, followed by the progress achieved, according to the indicators and targets under the five priority areas.

Table 11: Expenditures under the CWELCC Agreement

CWELCC	Actual Expenditures 2022–23[12] ($ million)
Allocations to Service System Managers: Fee Reduction and Workforce Compensation	1,276.7
Allocations to Service System Managers: Municipal Administration	24.8
Implementation: Strengthening Data/Reporting	0.2
Provincial Administration	3.6

Priority Area 1 - Affordability

Under Ontario's Action Plan, the province is committed to providing funding to licensed child care operators enrolled in the CWELCC system to support:

- a fee reduction of up to 25% for children aged 0 to 5 years retroactive to April 1, 2022
- approximately 50% fee reduction on average for children aged 0 to 5 years by the end of 2022 from pre-agreement levels
- $10 per day average child care fees for children aged 0 to 5 years by the end of fiscal year 2025–26

As a first step, all Ontario families with children under age six in a licensed child care program participating in CWELCC saw their fees reduced, up to 25%, to a minimum of $12 per day, retroactive to April 1, 2022.

Effective December 31, 2022, average child care fees were further reduced by an average of about 50% from pre-agreement levels. Families may be eligible for reduced fees if they pay more than $12 a day for child care and their child is:

- under the age of six, or
- turns six years old between January 1 and June 30 and is enrolled in a participating licensed preschool, kindergarten or family age group, or in licensed home child care.

For families to receive reduced fees, individual child care licensees must enrol in the CWELCC system through their local service system manager.

As of December 31, 2022, 5,221 licensed child care sites were enrolled in the CWELCC system, providing reduced-fee care for children and families in the province. By the end of December 2022, all 47 service system managers had implemented an up-to-50% fee reduction for CWELCC spaces in their region, to a minimum of $12 per day.

Among CWELCC-enrolled programs, the average parent fee reduction is estimated to range from 48% to 55% across all age groups, when compared to the average parent fees as of March 31, 2022 (see Table 12). The relatively lower fee reduction rate in the Kindergarten (Before and After School) and 4 to 5 years (Before and After School) age groups are due to the $12 floor rate constraining fee reductions.

Table 12: Mean daily fees for children aged 0 to 5 years by age group for licensed child care programs

Table 12a: Mean daily fees for children aged 0 to 5 years by age group for licensed child care centres

Age group	2022 ($)	2023 ($)[13] (CWELCC only)	% Reduction Compared to 2022 (%)

Age group	2022 ($)	2023 ($)[13] (CWELCC only)	% Reduction Compared to 2022 (%)
Infant (Full Day)	75.01	36.74	-51.02%
Toddler (Full Day)	62.76	30.75	-51.01%
Preschool (Full Day)	55.46	26.57	-52.09%
Kindergarten (Full Day)	49.29	22.36	-54.64%
Kindergarten (Before and After School)	26.07	13.50	-48.20%

Table 12b: Mean daily fees for children aged 0 to 5 years by age group for licensed child care homes

Age group	2022 ($)	2023 ($)[13] (CWELCC only)	% Reduction Compared to 2022 (%)
Younger than 2 years (Full Day)	48.69	24.68	-49.31%
2 to 3 years (Full Day)	47.30	23.68	-49.94%
4 to 5 years (Full Day)	43.57	22.63	-48.05%
4 to 5 years (Before and After School)	27.17	14.18	-47.82%

Data source: 2022 and 2023 Licensed Child Care Operations Surveys, Ontario Ministry of Education. The estimates of 2023 mean daily child care fees in Table 12 are based on data from only CWELCC-enrolled licensed child care programs. The mean daily fees presented here are estimated using adjusted data that aligns with the fee reduction requirement of at least 50% by December 2022.

Priority Area 2 - Access

To increase access, Ontario is committed to creating 86,000 new licensed child care spaces for children aged 0 to 5 years (above 2019 levels) by December 31, 2026. The province is working with service system managers to ensure affordable child care is available in the communities that need it most.

In December 2022, Ontario announced a $213 million start-up grant program to support the creation of new child care spaces in targeted regions, and for underserviced communities and populations. Service system managers have identified their priority neighbourhoods and populations in their Directed Growth Plans.

Start-up grant funding allocations have been provided to service system managers to support growth for all programs but will be prioritized for regions with high-need populations including vulnerable children, children from diverse populations, children with special needs and Indigenous and Francophone communities. Licensees can apply for start-up grants through their service system managers. More information was provided to service system managers in the CWELCC Guidelines released in June 2023, including a notional allocation of $54.8 million to support child care space creation in 2023.

Table 13 below shows the number of licensed child care spaces for children aged 0 to 5 years old in 2019 and 2023. Since 2019, there has been an increase of more than 41,900 licensed spaces for children aged 0 to 5 years in Ontario.

Table 13a: Number of spaces in licensed child care centres and enrollment in licensed home child care agencies for children aged 0 to 5 years by type of setting, auspice and age group (Centres)

Year	2019	2023
Auspice (Not-for-profit)	194,815	222,765
Auspice (For-profit)	81,444	94,601
Age Group (Infant)	13,626	15,715
Age Group (Toddler)	46,865	53,894
Age Group (Preschool)	112,042	123,731
Age Group (Kindergarten)	103,308	123,014
Age Group (Family age)	418	1,012
Total	**276,259**	**317,366**

Table 13b: Number of spaces in licensed child care centres and enrollment in licensed home child care agencies for children aged 0 to 5 years by type of setting, auspice and age group (Homes)[14]

Year	2019	2023
Age Group (Younger than 2 years)	3,554	4,067
Age Group (2 to 3 years)	5,350	7,080
Age Group (4 to 5 years)	3,948	2,488
Total	**14,022**	**13,635**

Table 13c: Number of spaces in licensed child care centres and enrollment in licensed home child care agencies for children aged 0 to 5 years by type of setting, auspice and age group (Auspice)

Year	2019	2023
Not-for-profit Total	207,667	236,400
For-profit Total	81,444	94,601
Total	**289,111**	**331,001**

Data source: Child Care Licensing System and Licensed Child Care Operations Survey, Ontario Ministry of Education. Data as of March 31, for spaces in centres each year, as of March 31, 2018 and December 31, 2022, respectively for 2019 and 2023. The data represent all licensed child care programs regardless of whether they are enrolled in the CWELCC system or not.

Priority Area 3 - Inclusion

Ontario is committed to a child care system for all children by developing an inclusion plan that supports child care access to low-income children, vulnerable children, children from diverse communities, Francophones and Indigenous children.

The ministry has released the finalized Access and Inclusion Framework. The framework is designed to support service system managers with developing and implementing their local service plans with an increased focus on access as it relates to inclusion.

The new Framework was informed by the consultations conducted in early 2023 with service system managers, Indigenous partners, Francophone stakeholders, other provincial government ministries and a range of other external partners. It is also now more closely linked with the Directed Growth strategy — the allocation of 86,000 new child care spaces to service system managers — and the ministry's CWELCC commitments under Ontario's Action Plan.

The ministry will continue to consider the sector's feedback on longer-term policy, workforce and data collection initiatives as part of ongoing CWELCC policy and program development.

The ministry is in the early planning stages of establishing an Indigenous-led child care approach for ongoing engagement and collaboration with Indigenous partners. The goal is to identify and leverage best practices and remove barriers to the creation of Indigenous-led child care. Currently, the ministry is undertaking tri-lateral conversations with Indigenous partners and the Government of Canada.

Special needs resourcing

The province provides Special Needs Resourcing funding to service system managers and First Nations to support the inclusion of children with special needs in licensed child care settings, including home child care, camps and authorized recreation programs, at no additional cost to parents and caregivers. Under Ontario Regulation 138/15, a "child with special needs" means a child whose cognitive, physical, social, emotional, or communicative needs, or whose needs relating to overall development, are of such a nature that additional supports are required for the child. Funding for Special Needs Resourcing may only be used to hire services to support the inclusion of children with special needs, provide professional development opportunities to staff working with children with special needs, or purchase or lease specialized equipment and supplies to support children with special needs.

In 2022, a total of $127.4 million (7.6% of provincial funding) was spent on Special Needs Resourcing. A total of 35,990 children were funded through Special Needs Resourcing in 2022, the most recent year for which there are data available.[15]

French-language and bilingual programs

Ontario plans to maintain or increase the level of licensed child care spaces offering French-language programs and bilingual programs for children aged 0 to 5 years by 2025–26. The province also plans to continue to meet or exceed the number of French spaces for children aged 0 to 5 years proportional to the population of French-speaking people in Ontario.

In 2021, there were 19,900 licensed child care spaces offering French-language programs and 5,600 licensed spaces offering bilingual programs for children aged 0 to 5. Since then, an increase has been seen in both categories. As of March 31, 2023, there were 21,300 spaces offering French-language programs and 5,900 spaces offering bilingual programs for children aged 0 to 5 in the province. Approximately, 7.5% of licensed child care spaces were in French-language programs, exceeding French-speaking population in Ontario.

Priority Area 4 - Workforce and Quality

Under the CWELCC system, Ontario is supporting the recruitment and retention of RECEs through improved compensation for low-wage earners, including wage minimums and the development of strategies to improve recruitment and retention.

In 2022, a wage floor of $18 per hour for RECE program staff, and $20 per hour for RECE supervisors and RECE home visitors was established.

In 2023, the CWELCC system provided a wage floor of $19 per hour for RECE program staff, and $21 per hour for RECE supervisors and RECE home visitors and provides $1 per hour wage increases annually for RECEs, up to a maximum of $25 per hour.

To be eligible for the wage floor and annual $1 per hour increase, staff must be employed in a licensed child care centre or home child care agency that is participating in the CWELCC system and be in a position categorized as:

- RECE Program Staff
- RECE Child Care Supervisor
- RECE Home Child Care Visitor

In addition, minimum wage offset funding will be provided to participating licensees to offset wage increases for non-RECE staff associated with minimum wage increases.

A comprehensive workforce strategy was announced to support the recruitment and retention of RECEs through further improvements to compensation and professional development opportunities, to be implemented in 2024.

The provincially funded Wage Enhancement Grant (WEG) also supports a wage enhancement for eligible child care professionals working in licensed child care settings. Licensees are required to apply for WEG to be eligible for the wage floor or annual wage increase under the CWELCC system. The wage floor and annual wage increase are calculated after the Wage Enhancement Grant has been accessed.

According to the data reported back from service system managers, 3,783 RECE program staff, 542 RECE supervisors and 15 RECE home child care visitors were supported by the wage floor in 2022.

The table below outlines the wage ranges for full-time program staff working in licensed child care centres by staff categories.

Table 14: Hourly wages of full-time RECE program staff, supervisors and home child care visitors in licensed child care, 2022

Hourly Wage Range [16]	RECE Program Staff March 31, 2022 (%)	RECE Program Staff December 31, 2022 (%)	RECE Supervisors March 31, 2022 (%)	RECE Supervisors December 31, 2022 (%)	RECE Home Child Care Visitors March 31, 2022 (%)	RECE Home Child Care Visitors December 31, 2022 (%)
$15.00–$19.99	32.4	22.3	7.8	3.7	6.5	3.0
$20.00–$25.00	43.8	47.8	26.3	22.9	17.4	16.5
$25.01–$28.59	14.7	18.8	24.2	24.2	27.0	28.4
$28.60–$29.99	2.5	3.8	7.4	6.5	10.0	13.6
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Hourly Wage Range [16]	RECE Program Staff March 31, 2022 (%)	RECE Program Staff December 31, 2022 (%)	RECE Supervisors March 31, 2022 (%)	RECE Supervisors December 31, 2022 (%)	RECE Home Child Care Visitors March 31, 2022 (%)	RECE Home Child Care Visitors December 31, 2022 (%)
$30.00–$32.49	2.2	2.6	8.9	10.3	8.3	8.5
$32.50–$34.99	2.4	2.5	7.5	9.4	7.0	5.1
$35.00–$37.49	1.0	1.0	4.7	6.3	7.4	7.2
$37.50–$39.99	0.6	0.8	3.6	6.1	3.9	8.5
$40.01+	0.4	0.5	9.5	10.7	12.6	9.3
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Data source: Licensed Child Care Operations Survey, Ontario Ministry of Education. The 2022 survey refers to data as of March 31, 2022, and the 2023 survey refers to data as of December 31, 2022.

Percentage of RECEs

Ontario aims to increase the percentage of staff who are RECEs in the licensed child care workforce to 60% by 2025–26. As of December 31, 2022, there were 35,967 full-time program staff employed by licensed child care centres of which 20,947 (58.2%) were RECEs (see Table 15).

Table 15: Number and percentage of full-time RECE program staff

Staff Type	March 31, 2022	December 31, 2022
Number of full-time RECE program staff	19,112	20,947
Total number of full-time RECE and non-RECE program staff	32,445	35,967
% of full-time RECE program staff	58.9%	58.2%

Data source: Licensed Child Care Operations Survey, Ontario Ministry of Education.

Professional Development

Ontario is committed to investing in professional development, including sustaining workforce initiatives funded under the 2021–22 Early Childhood Workforce Agreement. The ministry has been consulting broadly with sector partners to discuss the current shortage of RECEs and interventions to support increased recruitment and retention, including professional development (e.g., opportunities for growth, targeted training on cultural awareness, mental health, trauma, special needs and anti-racism). The workforce strategy is being implemented. Ontario will report back to the federal government on targets and indicators by the end of fiscal year 2023–24.

Priority Area 5 – Implementation and Ongoing Supports

Ontario is committed to ensuring the implementation of the CWELCC agreement is done in a manner that reflects our principles of accountability and transparency.

To achieve this, Ontario is exploring the development of an IT solution to support greater provincial consistency, reduce administrative burden across the sector (especially for families), and support data collection and analysis, including reporting to the federal government on key indicators associated with the CWELCC system.

In 2022–23, 2.2% of the CWELCC expenditures was used for administration of CWELCC initiatives at the provincial and municipal level including associated IT costs and the implementation of the digital transformation initiative mentioned above.[17]

b) Canada-Ontario Early Learning and Child Care Agreement

The federal government committed $400 million in their 2016 budget and an additional $7 billion over 10 years in their 2017 budget, to establish a Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework (https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/early-learning-child-care/reports/2017-multilateral-framework.html) with provinces and territories. Under the framework, the federal government and these provinces and territories agreed to work together over time to achieve broad long-term goals for early learning and child care systems that are high-quality, accessible, affordable, flexible and inclusive. These provinces and territories also agreed to report annually on progress made in relation to the framework and on the impact of federal funding, while reflecting the priorities of each jurisdiction in early learning and child care.

On June 12, 2017, Ontario was the first province to sign an agreement under the framework, known as the three-year Canada-Ontario Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (https://www.canada.ca/en/early-learning-child-care-agreement/agreements-provinces-territories/ontario-2017.html) . Under the agreement, the federal government agreed to allocate $439 million to Ontario over three years (2017–18, 2018–19 and 2019–20).[18] In July 2020, the federal and provincial governments agreed on a one-year extension of the Canada-Ontario Early Learning and Child Care Agreement, which allocated nearly $147 million in 2020–21 for early learning and child care investments. In August 2021, the federal and provincial governments agreed on a four-year renewal of the Canada-Ontario Early Learning and Child Care Agreement. Under the renewal, Ontario received nearly $147 million in federal funding in 2021–22 to continue early learning and child care investments in the province, and the annual funding gradually increases to $211 million in 2024–25.

This section highlights Ontario's progress in working towards increasing quality, accessibility, affordability, flexibility and inclusion in early learning and child care under the Canada-Ontario Early Learning and Child Care Agreement. Please see the indicators (https://www.canada.ca/en/early-learning-child-care-agreement/agreements-provinces-territories/ontario-2017.html) that are being used to measure Ontario's progress.

b1) Expenditures and actions

Under the agreement, Ontario received $198.4 million in federal funding in the 2022–23 fiscal year, which included $2.9 million carried forward from the 2021–22 fiscal year. Ontario's actual expenditures in the 2022–23 fiscal year were $195.4 million.[19]

The 2022–23 funding supported the following three action areas:

- increasing access to affordable, high-quality licensed child care
- increasing access to EarlyON Child and Family Centres
- innovative approaches to providing access to high-quality training and professional learning opportunities for the early years and child care workforce

Table 16: Canada-Ontario early learning and child care agreement expenditures and actions for 2022–23

Areas	Federal allocations	Actions	Actual expenditures [20] ($ million)
High Quality Child Care	Ontario allocated $136.7 million of the federal funding for increased subsidies and access to licensed child care in Ontario.	The federal funding was provided to service system managers through provincial-municipal service agreements. In December 2021, service system managers received consolidated 2022 service agreement and funding guidelines for licensed child care and EarlyON Child and Family Centres, including funding under the Canada-Ontario Early Learning and Child Care Agreement.	$136.7

Areas	Federal allocations	Actions	Actual expenditures [20] ($ million)
EarlyON Child and Family Centres	Ontario allocated $55.1 million of the federal funding to support EarlyON Child and Family Programs.	The federal funding was provided to service system managers to support 671 main EarlyON Child and Family Centre locations, 442 mobile/ satellite EarlyON Child and Family Centre locations and 181 EarlyON Child and Family Centres offering virtual supports across Ontario.	$55.1
Professional Development	Ontario allocated $2 million of the federal funding to increase the number of students supported through the Early Childhood Educators Qualifications Upgrade Program.	The federal funding was provided through grants that were made available for 2022–23 to support individuals working in eligible early years and child care settings to obtain an early childhood education diploma or leadership certification.	$2.0
Professional Development	Ontario allocated $4.5 million of the federal funding to support professional learning for the early years and child care workforce.	The federal funding was provided to support culturally relevant professional learning strategies for Francophone and First Nation, Métis, Inuit and Indigenous staff working in the child care and early years sector.	$1.5

Data source: Ontario Ministry of Education.

b2) Licensed child care indicators

The indicators reported in this section are reflective of the areas of investment under the agreement for increasing quality, accessibility, affordability, flexibility and inclusion in licensed child care.

Quality

Staff qualifications

Ontario Regulation 137/15 under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* (https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/14c11) sets out the minimum requirements for staff qualifications in licensed child care centres and home child care agencies, including requirements for the ratio of employees to children, the maximum number of children in a group, and the proportions of employees that must be qualified employees in licensed child care centres, which varies for different age groups (see Table 17). The minimum requirements are as follows:

A **supervisor** shall be a person who:

- is a member in good standing of the College of Early Childhood Educators, has at least two years of experience providing licensed child care and is approved by a ministry director
- in the opinion of a director, is capable of planning and directing the program of a child care centre, being in charge of children and overseeing staff

A **qualified employee** for any licensed age group shall be a person who is:

- an employee who is a member in good standing of the College of Early Childhood Educators
- an employee who is otherwise approved by a director

With respect to a licensed junior school age group or a licensed primary/junior school age group that includes only children who are junior school age, the following are also qualified employees:

- an employee who has a diploma or degree in child and youth care
- an employee who has a diploma or degree in recreation and leisure services

- an employee who is a member in good standing with the Ontario College of Teachers

A **home child care visitor** is an employee of a home child care agency who monitors and provides support at licensed home child care locations. A home child care visitor shall be a person who:

- is a member in good standing of the College of Early Childhood Educators, has at least two years of experience working with children under 13 years old, and is approved by a director
- is, in the opinion of a director, capable of providing support and supervision at a home child care premises

Table 17: Staff/child ratios, group sizes and proportion of employees that must be qualified employees for different age categories in licensed child centre-based care

Age categories	Age range	Ratio of employees to children	Maximum number of children in group	Proportion of employees that must be qualified employees
Infant	Younger than 18 months	3 to 10	10	1/3
Toddler	18 months or older but younger than 30 months	1 to 5	15	1/3
Preschool	30 months or older but younger than 6 years	1 to 8	24	2/3
Kindergarten	44 months or older but younger than 7 years	1 to 13	26	1/2
Primary/ junior school age	68 months or older but younger than 13 years	1 to 15	30	1/2
Junior school age	9 years or older but younger than 13 years	1 to 20	20	1/1

Data source: Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, Ontario Ministry of Education.

For further information about child care rules in Ontario see Child Care Rules in Ontario (https://www.ontario.ca/page/child-care-rules-ontario) .

The ministry monitors and enforces staff qualification requirements in all licensed child care centres and home child care agencies. Centres and agencies meet the requirements by employing supervisors, staff and home child care visitors who are RECEs, or through director approvals as described above. It is estimated that:[21]

- 82% of licensed child care centres employed at least one RECE for supervisor positions
- 98% of licensed home child care agencies employed at least one RECE for all home child care visitor positions

Pedagogical framework

How does learning happen: Ontario's pedagogy for the early years, 2014 (https://www.ontario.ca/page/how-does-learning-happen-ontarios-pedagogy-early-years) is a professional learning resource for those working in child care and child and family programs. It supports pedagogy and program development in early years settings that is shaped by views about children, educators, and families and the relationships among them. Additional regulations under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* (https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/14c11) are also in place to help child care licensees embed How does learning happen? into practice.

As of March 31, 2023, all licensed child care centres and home child care agencies had achieved compliance with the requirements regarding the development and implementation of a program statement that is consistent with *How does learning happen?* either before their licence was first issued or before it was renewed. The ministry continues to support the implementation of the *How does learning happen?* pedagogy in licensed child care programs

in the province.

In 2020, the ministry released *Building on how does learning happen?: pedagogical approaches to re-opening early years and child care programs in Ontario* (https://www.ontario.ca/page/how-does-learning-happen-ontarios-pedagogy-early-years) to support providers and staff in engaging with children and families while adhering to health and safety measures.

Access

As of March 31, 2023, there were 505,055 licensed child care spaces for children aged 0 to 12 years in centres across the province, with 32,058 spaces added to the system over the previous year (see Table 18). It is estimated that there are enough spaces in licensed child care centres for 25.5% of children aged 0 to 12 years in the province.[22]

Table 18: Ontario child population, licensed spaces and percentage of children with access to licensed child care, 2013–14 to 2022–23

Year	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022-23
Child population aged 0–12	1,908,491	1,915,795	1,934,191	1,939,255	1,950,021	1,959,118	1,962,048	1,947,621	1,961,159	1,978,119
Spaces in Licensed Child Care Centres	317,868	350,801	389,286	406,395	427,032	446,596	462,802	464,538	472,997	505,055
Percentage of children aged 0–12 for whom there are licensed child care spaces %	16.7	18.3	20.1	21.0	21.9	22.8	23.6	23.9	24.2	25.5

Data source: Child population data from Summer 2023 population projections, Ontario Ministry of Finance, and space data from the Child Care Licensing System (CCLS), Ontario Ministry of Education (as of March 31 each year).

Affordability

The funding under the Canada-Ontario Early Learning and Child Care Agreement supports new full or partial fee subsidies and increased access through the following priorities:

- Supporting children aged 0–6 years through additional fee subsidies, increased access, broadly reducing licensed child care fees and by increasing affordability or not-for-profit community-based capital projects (excluding capital projects for child care programs that run during school hours for kindergarten and school age children).
- Supporting children aged 0–12 years through additional fee subsides, increased access or broadly reducing licensed child care fees and by increasing affordability.

In 2022, the most recent year for which there are data available, 113,052 children in Ontario received fee subsidies.[23] Of those, 4,899 children were supported through funding provided by the Canada-Ontario Early Learning and Child Care Agreement.[24]

It is estimated that 64% of children who receive fee subsidies live in families with incomes of $40,000 and below (see Table 19).

Table 19: Percentage of children receiving fee subsidies by family income, 2022 [21]

Family income	Percentage (%)
$20,000 and below	28
$20,001–$40,000	36
$40,001–$60,000	23
$60,001–$80,000	9
$80,001–$100,000	3
$100,000 and above	1
Total	**100**

Data source: Education Finance Information System (estimated percentages), Ontario Ministry of Education.

Flexibility and inclusion

Non-standard hours

Flexibility in child care service delivery is important for meeting the needs of parents and caregivers who work non-standard schedules. In Ontario, a small proportion of licensed child care centres and home child care providers offer care during non-standard hours:[25]

- 8.2% of child care centres reported the availability of weekend care and less than 1% reported the availability of care during the evening or overnight
- 7.0% of home child care providers reported the availability of weekend care, 6.8% reported the availability of evening care and 4.5% reported the availability of overnight care

Special needs resourcing

The province provides Special Needs Resourcing funding to service system managers and First Nations to support the inclusion of children with special needs in licensed child care settings, including home child care, camps and authorized recreation programs, at no additional cost to parents and caregivers.

A total of 35,990 children were funded through Special Needs Resourcing in 2022, the most recent year for which there are data available.[26]

Indigenous-led child care centres

A total of 37 licensed child care centres reported that they were Indigenous-led organizations operating in urban and rural communities.[27]

French-language and bilingual child care

As of March 31, 2023, a total of 316 centres offered French-language programs and 102 centres offered bilingual programs.

Children in licensed child care by income

The ministry does not collect income data from families that enroll their children in licensed child care. This indicator is estimated using the number of

licensed child care spaces in the province and data on the distribution of families across income levels from Statistics Canada.

As of March 31, 2023, there were 505,055 licensed child care spaces for children aged 0–12 years in Ontario. Approximately 21.6% of families with children in the province earned a family income below $40,000, 39.7% earned between $40,000 and $100,000 and 38.7% earned above $100,000.[28]

It is estimated, based on the income distribution, that:

- more than 109,000 spaces are used by children from families with income below $40,000
- about 201,000 spaces are used by children from families with income between $40,000 and $100,000
- about 195,000 are used by children from families with income above $100,000

b3) EarlyON Child and Family Centres indicators

The indicators reported in this section are reflective of the areas of investment under the Canada-Ontario Early Learning and Child Care Agreement for increasing quality, accessibility, affordability, flexibility and inclusion in child and family centres.

Quality

Staff qualifications

Experiences in EarlyON Child and Family Centres are designed to foster positive outcomes and support nurturing relationships for children and their parents/guardians and caregivers based on the latest evidence and research. Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) play a key role in delivering high-quality early years programs because they have specialized knowledge and expertise in child development and in play and inquiry-based learning.

Every EarlyON Child and Family Centre should employ at least one RECE who oversees all mandatory core services related to supporting early learning and development. If an EarlyON Child and Family Centre is unable to recruit at least one RECE to deliver these core services, the service system manager may grant an exemption from the requirement but must report the number of exemptions to the ministry.

EarlyON Child and Family Centres must ensure that they had at least one RECE on staff by January 1, 2023. However, EarlyON staff who are not RECE but have more than 10 years of experience in relevant programs can be employed to meet this staffing requirement through a legacy provision.

Pedagogical framework

EarlyON Child and Family Centres are expected to provide programs that reflect the view of children, parents and caregivers and educators as competent, capable, curious, and rich in potential and experience. Guided by How does learning happen? Ontario's pedagogy for the early years, EarlyON Child and Family Centres offer an environment that engages parents and caregivers as co-learners and leaders in influencing positive experiences and outcomes for children, families and the community.

Access, affordability, flexibility and inclusion

As of June 2023, there were 671 main EarlyON Child and Family Centre locations and 442 Mobile/satellite EarlyON Child and Family Centre locations. In addition, there were approximately 181 EarlyON Child and Family Centres offering virtual services supports to meet the needs of families across the province.

Of the total number of locations,139 locations offered non-standard hours, 101 offered French-language programming and 109 offered Indigenous programming.

In 2022, the most recent year for which there are data available, 216,491 children were served by child and family programs at EarlyON centres,[29] or approximately 21.3% of children in the province aged 0–6 years.[30] In the same year, there were 1,389,398 visits made by children to EarlyON centres, and 1,156,141 visits made by parents and caregivers.[31]

Table 20: Number of children served and visits to child and family programs, 2021 to 2022

Item	2021	2022	Percentage Change (%)
Number of children served	84,924	216,491	154.9

Item	2021	2022	Percentage Change (%)
Number of visits by children	513,835	1,389,398	170.4
Number of visits by parents or caregivers	436,149	1,156,141	165.1

Data source: Education Finance Information System, Ontario Ministry of Education.

b4) Professional learning indicators

The indicators reported in this section are reflective of the area of investment under the agreement for innovative approaches to providing access to high-quality training and professional learning opportunities for the early years and child care workforce.

Early childhood educators' qualifications upgrade program

This program enables individuals working in eligible child care and early years settings to apply for grants to support them in obtaining an early childhood education diploma and becoming eligible to apply for membership with the College of Early Childhood Educators. The program also provides opportunities for leadership development, targeted to those who are working in supervisory roles or who aspire to do so, and who are already RECEs. In addition, the program prioritizes Francophone and First Nations, Métis and Inuit applicants, as well as individuals working under director approvals or Letters of Permission.

Financial support is available to eligible applicants in the form of education grants, travel grants and training allowances. In 2022–23, the ministry allocated $3.5 million in provincial funding and $2 million in federal funding under the ELCC Agreement, and $1.5 million in federal funding under the Early Childhood Workforce Agreement. In 2022–23, a total of 2,153 applications were approved under the Early Childhood Educators Qualifications Upgrade Program. Over the years, there has been an increase in the number of applications demonstrating an overall growth rate of 83%.

Professional learning strategy for Francophone and Indigenous professionals

Given that professional learning needs are often heightened in Francophone and Indigenous communities and fewer supports are available, focused professional learning opportunities have been provided to better meet needs through more targeted, differentiated cultural and regional approaches.

In 2022–23, the ministry allocated $1.5 million in federal funding under the ELCC Agreement and $750,000 in federal funding under the Early Childhood Workforce Agreement to three organizations to support professional learning for Francophone and Indigenous professionals in the early years and child care sector. This funding was allocated to the following organizations:

- Association francophone à l'éducation des services à l'enfance de l'Ontario (AFÉSEO) for early years and child care professionals working in francophone settings
- FIREFLY for early years and child care professionals in First Nations communities on-reserve
- Ontario Aboriginal Head Start Association (OAHSA) for early years and child care professionals working with First Nation, Métis, Inuit, or Indigenous off-reserve

Funds provided to these organizations aim to enhance culturally relevant experiences through the delivery of high-quality child care and early years programs, in alignment with How does learning happen?. The organizations also create linkages or develop professional learning resources that are responsive to the needs of the sector.

In 2022-23, approximately 3,000 child care and early years professionals were supported through the professional learning initiative.

c) Canada-Ontario Early Childhood Workforce Agreement

In August 2021, Canada and Ontario also signed the Early Childhood Workforce Agreement for $149.9 million in one-time funding to support the retention and recruitment of a high-quality child care and early years workforce. This funding aimed to support the following objectives:

- sustain the existing child care and early years workforce to ensure a more stable and high-quality early years and child care system
- enhance access to opportunities for the workforce that promote retention and recruitment, including professional development, training and qualification upgrade programs
- grow the number of qualified staff in the early years and child care workforce to increase access to licensed child care for families
- attract and support the development of an increasingly diverse workforce to reflect the children and families accessing early years and child care programs more effectively

The Early Childhood Workforce Agreement expired on March 31, 2023. Ontario utilized the investment to build on the success of existing programs that support the child care and early years workforce, funded by the provincial and federal government, and implemented by service system managers, First Nation, Francophone and other child care and early years partners. The ministry had the flexibility to carry forward 50% of the $149.9 million in 2022–23.

Implementation activities

This funding helped support and retain the current child care and early years workforce, and attract new individuals into the profession. The Ministry of Education invested in the following initiatives to achieve this objective:

Table 21: Initiatives under the Early Childhood Workforce Agreement and Ontario's Action Plan

Program Initiative	Description	Actual Expenditures (2021–22 and 2022–23)
Professional Learning and Development Strategy	Ontario provided funding to support two professional learning days for up to 60,000 program staff and supervisors working in licensed child care (centre and home based) and EarlyON Child and Family Centres. The professional learning days offered learning to program staff and supervisors in areas aligned with provincial and local areas such as early years pedagogy, mentorship, mental health, health and safety and anti-racism and inclusive practices.	$74.0 million
Workforce Capacity and Innovation Fund	Ontario provided funding to communities to deliver targeted regional recruitment and retention strategies that reflect regional labour market differences (e.g., greater need for qualified staff in northern/rural/remote communities) and leverage local initiatives already underway (e.g., partnerships with local employment and training programs). Service system managers and First Nations built on or developed new, innovative strategies focused on strengthening Ontario's high-quality child care and early years workforce.	$71.5 million
ECE Qualification Upgrade Program (QUP)	Ontario enhanced funding to the existing ECE QUP to build on progress to date. This program offers grants (education, travel, training) for individuals working in the child care and early years sector who would like to obtain their ECE diploma and become registered with the CECE. The ECE QUP also provides financial assistance to Supervisors, RECEs in designated leadership positions or responsibilities, and RECEs aspiring to work in leadership roles for post-secondary courses that will build their leadership capacity	$3.0 million
Equity-based Communities of Practice	Ontario enhanced funding to existing professional learning strategies for Francophone and First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities to meet the growing professional learning needs related to mental health, cultural diversity, mentorship and networking.	$1.5 million

Ontario's CWELCC Action Plan includes the indicators (https://www.canada.ca/en/early-learning-child-care-agreement/agreements-provinces-territories/ontario-canada-wide-2021.html#h2.18-h3.04) for the initiatives under the Early Childhood Workforce Agreement that will be used to measure progress.

Table 22: Results achieved according to the indicators and targets outlined in the Early Childhood Workforce Agreement and Ontario's Action Plan

Actions	Indicators	Targets	Results
Professiona	Number of program staff and	75% of program staff and	In 2022, 25,510 program staff and supervisors (RECE

Actions	Indicators	Targets	Results
l Learning and Developme nt Strategy	supervisors (RECE and non-RECE) supported through Professional Learning and Development Strategy	supervisors enrolled in two professional learning days	and non-RECE) supported through Professional Learning and Development Strategy, representing approximately 70% full-time program staff and supervisors in the licensed chid care sector.
Professiona l Learning and Developme nt Strategy	Number of child care programs (centre-based and home child care agencies) and EarlyON Centres supported	50% of child care programs and EarlyON Centres supported through the Professional Learning and Development Strategy	In 2022, 2,268 (about 36%) child care programs and EarlyON Centres supported through Professional Learning and Development Strategy.
Professiona l Learning and Developme nt Strategy	Number of program staff participating in mentorship programs	25% of new program staff and supervisors participating in mentorship programs	In 2022, 3,162 program staff participating in mentorship programs.
Professiona l Learning and Developme nt Strategy	Percentage of program staff who are RECE	Grow the qualified workforce in child care and early years programs by 3%	At the end of 2022, 58% full-time program staff are RECE, with an increase of about 3,500 (20%) more full-time RECE program staff from 2021.
Ontario Workforce Capacity and Innovation Fund	Number of individuals supported through recruitment and retention initiatives	Support individuals through recruitment and retention initiatives	In 2022, 26,353 individuals supported through recruitment and retention initiatives.
Ontario Workforce Capacity and Innovation Fund	Number of members of the CECE who work in licensed child care	Increase in the number of members of the CECE who work in licensed child care by 3%	As of June 2023, an estimated of 34,000 members of CECE work in licensed child care, about 3% increase from 2022.
Ontario Workforce Capacity and Innovation Fund	Number of Francophone and Indigenous individuals registered with CECE	Increase in the number of Francophone and Indigenous individuals registered with the CECE by 3%	As of June 2023, about 4,300 Francophone and 1,100 Indigenous individuals registered with the CECE, about 120% and 47% increase from 2022, respectively.
Ontario Workforce Capacity and Innovation Fund	Percentage of program staff who are full-time equivalent (FTE)	Increase the number of FTE Program Staff by 3%	At the end of 2022, there were 35,967 full-time program staff, a 27% increase from 2021.

Actions	Indicators	Targets	Results
Ontario Workforce Capacity and Innovation Fund	Percentage of program staff who are part-time equivalent (PTE)	Increase the number of FTE Program Staff by 3%	At the end of 2022, there were 12,416 part-time program staff, with a 12% increase from 2021.
ECE Qualifications Upgrade Program (QUP)	Increase in the number of applications approved (including Francophone and Indigenous applications approved)	Increase the number of applications for grants under the ECE QUP by 40%	Over the years, there has been an increase in the number of applications demonstrating an overall growth rate of 83%.
ECE Qualifications Upgrade Program (QUP)	Number of ECE graduates supported with one-time CECE registration fees	Support approximately 400 graduates with one-time ECE registration fees	In 2021–22 and 2022–23, respectively 123 and 280 ECE graduates were supported with one-time ECE registration fees (total of 403 ECE graduates).
ECE Qualifications Upgrade Program (QUP)	Percentage of program staff who are RECEs	Grow the qualified workforce in child care and early years programs by 3%	At the end of 2022, 58% full-time program staff are RECEs, with an increase of about 3,500 (20%) more full-time RECE program staff from last year.
Equity-based Communities of Practice	Number of professionals supported through Professional Learning Strategies	Support approximately 1,800 professionals	In 2022–23, it supported approximately 3,110 participants.

The Ministry of Education acknowledges the Government of Canada's support in connection with the Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework (https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/early-learning-child-care/reports/2017-multilateral-framework.html) and the Canada-Ontario Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (https://www.canada.ca/en/early-learning-child-care-agreement/agreements-provinces-territories/ontario-2017.html) , Canada-Ontario Early Childhood Workforce Agreement, Canada-Ontario Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (https://www.canada.ca/en/early-learning-child-care-agreement/agreements-provinces-territories/ontario-canada-wide-2021.html) . Part 3 of this document outlines Ontario's progress towards meeting early learning and child care goals under these agreements.

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Footnotes

- [1] ^ The "family age group" designation allows children of different ages in the same family to be placed in the same group in a play activity room, as long as they are between the ages of 0–12 years. This designation is used by licensed child care centres and came into effect on September 1, 2017.
- [2] ^ "Approved homes" refers to the maximum number of homes that an agency is permitted to contract with.
- [3] ^ Data source: 2023 Licensed Child Care Operations Survey, Ontario Ministry of Education. All licensed child care centres and home child care agencies that were operating as of December 31, 2022, were asked to complete the 2023 survey, and 99% did so.

- [4] ^ "Active homes" refers to the number of home child care providers that have a contract/agreement with an agency.
- [5] ^ The "family age group" designation allows children of different ages in the same family to be placed in the same group in a play activity room, as long as they are between the ages of 0–12 years. This designation is used by licensed child care centres and came into effect on September 1, 2017.
- [6] ^ "Auspice" refers to the ownership and operation of a service. In this report, licensed child care centres are categorized into two types of auspices: not-for-profit and for-profit. The "family age group" designation allows children of different ages in the same family to be placed in the same group in a play activity room, as long as they are between the ages of 0–12 years. This designation is used by licensed child care centres and came into effect on September 1, 2017.
- [7] ^ Different sets of age categories were used to collect data for licensed child care centres and licensed home child care agencies. Age categories used for licensed child care centres are in accordance with the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014. These age categories do not apply to licensed home child care.
- [8] ^ Ontario Regulation 137/15 sets out rules under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 governing staff in licensed child care centres. For each group of children in licensed child care centres, the licensee is required to employ at least one program staff member who is listed on the College of Early Childhood Educators' Public Register as a member in good standing or who has been otherwise approved by a director. For more information, see "Staff Qualifications" under "Licensed Child Care Indicators".
- [9] ^ Data source: EarlyON web page on Ontario.ca, Ontario Ministry of Education.
- [10] ^ 113,323 EDI questionnaires were analysed for Cycle 1; 110,916 for Cycle 2; 119,494 for Cycle 3; 125,858 for Cycle 4; and 123,912 for Cycle 5.
- [11] ^ "Vulnerable" describes children who score below the 10^{th} percentile of the Ontario EDI baseline population scores. This indicates that they are struggling in comparison to the baseline population.
- [12] ^ Expenditure amounts include both federal and provincial contributions. Final figures are subject to change pending the 2022–23 audit.
- [13] ^ Mean daily fees for 2023 are estimated to reflect fees as of January 2023 among licensed child care programs enrolled in the CWELCC system.
- [14] ^ For the purposes of this CWELCC Agreement, all home child care agency licensees (as defined under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014) are deemed to be not-for-profit licensed child care, regardless of auspice.
- [15] ^ Data source: Education Finance Information System, Ontario Ministry of Education. The total number includes federal, provincial and municipal funding sources.
- [16] ^ The wage ranges are approximately aligned between time points (e.g., minimum hourly wage was $15.00, as of March 31, 2022, and $15.50 as of December 31, 2022).
- [17] ^ Expenditure amounts include both federal and provincial contributions.
- [18] ^ Actual allocations may vary according to the latest population estimates.
- [19] ^ Final expenditures per 2022–23 audited financial statements.
- [20] ^ Final expenditures per 2022–23 audited financial statements.
- [21] ^ Data source: Child Care Licensing System, Ontario Ministry of Education, as of March 31, 2022.
- [22] ^ The estimation does not account for children cared for in homes contracted with licensed home child care agencies. All the "Percentage of children aged 0–12 for whom there are licensed child care spaces" are updated with the 2023 Summer child population projection data, Ontario Ministry of Finance.
- [23] ^ Data source: Education Finance Information System, Ontario Ministry of Education. The total number includes federal, provincial and municipal funding sources.
- [24] ^ Data source: Education Finance Information System, Ontario Ministry of Education.
- [25] ^ Data source: 2023 Licensed Child Care Operations Survey, Ontario Ministry of Education (as of December 31, 2022).
- [26] ^ Data source: Education Finance Information System, Ontario Ministry of Education. The total

number includes federal, provincial and municipal funding sources.

- [27] ^ Data source: 2023 Licensed Child Care Operations Survey, Ontario Ministry of Education (as of December 31, 2022).
- [28] ^ Data source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016104.
- [29] ^ Data source: Education Finance Information System, Ontario Ministry of Education.
- [30] ^ Percentage is an estimate based on the number of children served and the total population of children in the province aged 0–6 years.
- [31] ^ Data source: Education Finance Information System, Ontario Ministry of Education.