

Getting It Right

Recommendations for improving
Alberta's child care licensing legislation

February 2020

Getting It Right

Recommendations for improving Alberta's child care licensing legislation

© 2020 Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta

This position paper reflects the work of the AECEA/ALC Joint Policy Committee, which comprises members of the **Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta (AECEA)** and the **Alberta Early Learning and Care Leaders Caucus (ALC)**, which is funded and supported by the **Canadian Child Care Federation (CCCCF)**. Funding for the paper was provided by the CCCC and AECEA. Research and writing services were provided by Marie Lesoway, **Pentacle Productions** (www.pentacleproductions.ca).

For additional information, please contact:

Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta
#54, 9912 – 106 Street, Edmonton, AB T6K 1C5
(780) 421-7544 info@aecea.ca



The member-based **Association for Early Childhood Educators of Alberta** is the voice of Alberta's early learning and child care workforce. Together with its members and partners, AECEA advocates for higher educational standards, better wages and working conditions, and comprehensive system supports for Alberta's early childhood educators. AECEA believes that early childhood educators must be recognized as professionals that command the respect, support, compensation and influence that their important work deserves.



The **Alberta Early Learning and Care Leaders Caucus** works with federal and provincial partners to develop policies that support an affordable, accessible, high-quality early learning and child care system for Alberta's children. The ALC recognizes that a well-educated and well-supported early learning and child care workforce is the foundation for high-quality child care that fosters children's learning experiences and meets families' needs.

Contents

Executive Summary.....	1
Evolving Legislation, Changing Times.....	5
About This Paper.....	10
The Importance of the Early Years	13
The Importance of Getting the Legislation Right	15
Solid Legislation Supports Quality	23
Early Learning and Child Care in Alberta	31
Facts and Figures	31
Early Childhood Educators: A Profile	33
AECEA’s Position on Early Learning and Child Care.....	35
The Case for Workforce-Related Legislative Change.....	36
Words Matter	36
Early Learning and Child Care Matters	45
Children Have Rights.....	48
All Children Matter	52
Early Childhood Educators Matter	62
A Curriculum Framework Provides a Foundation.....	90
A Summary of Recommendations for Legislative Change	98
Policy Support for Legislative Change	103
Accessible, Affordable Child Care	103
Public Investment	104
Ongoing Research and Evaluation	106
Public Awareness and Understanding	107
Community-based Partnerships	107
Parental Engagement	108
Strategy Support for Legislative Change	109
Education	110
Fair Pay and Benefits	116
Working Conditions	119

Closing Thoughts.....	121
Appendix 1: System Models for Early Learning and Child Care 123	
Appendix 2: AECEA’s Recommended Changes to the Preamble of the Child Care Licensing Act.....	127
Appendix 3: An At-a-Glance View of AECEA’s Recommended Changes to the Legislation.....	129
Appendix 4: Canada’s Multilateral Framework and Bilateral Agreements	131
Appendix 5: The AECEA/ALC Joint Policy Committee	133
Bibliography.....	135

Executive Summary

October 2020 will mark the expiry of Alberta’s 2007 Child Care Licensing Act and regulations. Much has changed since this legislation came into force. A large and growing body of research has accumulated on the importance of high-quality early learning and child care care—not just for children and families, but for the enormous benefit it has for economies, communities and societies.

There is growing recognition that child care and education are inextricably linked. And there is clear evidence that children’s experiences in their early years have a powerful, lasting effect on their future success. High-quality early learning and child care is the foundation for health and well-being throughout life. It provides children with rich, varied and nurturing learning experiences that help them develop and grow into healthy, well-adjusted, self-reliant adults who have the skills they need to succeed at school, at work and in life.

Across Canada and around the globe, governments are moving away from the historically rooted model of child care as custodial care toward a model that acknowledges the importance of children’s early years and respects the rights of children as citizens. This new model places the child at the heart of an integrated system that includes research, policy, quality delivery, sustainable funding, governance, partnerships, evidence-based curricula and supportive workplaces.

Well-qualified, caring early childhood educators are the prime determinant of a quality child care system, and education is the prime determinant of qualified early childhood educators. Sadly, the educational preparation of Alberta’s early learning and child care workforce is well below international standards.

In many countries, early childhood educators must have at least a bachelor's or master's degree in the field. A two-year diploma in early learning and child care is widely accepted as a bare minimum requirement.

In Alberta, only 43% of early childhood educators have a two-year diploma, and for a significant portion of this group, the diploma does not relate to early learning and child care. Forty per cent of early childhood educators have only a 54-hour child care orientation course. Most of Alberta's early childhood educators have few opportunities for ongoing professional development. All work for low wages in challenging environments—often without health or disability benefits, paid vacations or pension plans, and often with little respect for the important work they do.

This is not good enough. And it's not right.

The upcoming review of Alberta's child care licensing legislation provides an opportunity for positive change. Legislating higher qualification standards and supports for early childhood educators can help to build an effective, high-quality early learning and child care system that gives Alberta's children the best possible start in life.

The Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta has three priorities for much-needed legislative changes that will support the province's early childhood educators:

1. raising education and education-related standards
2. legislating mandatory ongoing professional learning
3. adopting Alberta's early learning curriculum framework, Flight, within all licensed and approved early learning and child care programs in the province

This paper makes the case for quality and the case for change.

Quality early learning and child care generates exceptional returns on investment. Economic studies have calculated the cost–benefit ratio of such investment at between \$1.50 and \$17 gained for every \$1 spent. Investing in high-quality early learning and child care creates jobs, stimulates economic development and lays the foundation for a skilled, productive, innovative and globally competitive workforce. It is an important tool for eliminating poverty and for getting parents back to work.

Quality early learning and child care increases female labour market participation, which in turn promotes women’s status and equality, increases women’s income, shrinks the gender wage gap and reduces the number of women living in poverty. It reduces family stress and promotes social inclusion.

Quality early learning and child care lays the foundation for all future learning, so that children are less likely to drop out of school. Each year, Canadians pay more than \$1.3 billion for social assistance and criminal justice costs related to high school drop-outs—plus additional billions for health care and employment insurance costs (Hankvisky 2008).

Quality early learning and child care also facilitates early intervention to address any behavioural, cognitive or developmental issues children may have. This reduces the need for costly special education and remedial programs later on.

Research shows that quality early learning and child care is important for all children, from all socio-economic backgrounds. Research also shows that Alberta’s children are not doing as well as they should be. A 2014 study found that less than half of Alberta’s five-year-olds were developing appropriately in all five areas measured by the Early Development Instrument, the standard population-based tool used to monitor early childhood development across the country. The results suggest that “many children in this province are not getting the support

they need during their crucial early development years” (ECMap 2014, 30).

This is not right.

Children have a right to education—including early childhood education—that develops their “personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential” and prepares them for “responsible life in a free society” (United Nations 1979, Article 29). They have a right to a quality early learning and child care system staffed by highly qualified early childhood educators who—like all Albertans—deserve fair wages, satisfying work and supportive working conditions.

Legislation provides an important foundation for a quality early learning and child care system, but legislation alone is not enough. Legislative change must be supported by sound policy. It must work hand-in-hand with a workforce strategy that builds a well-educated, well-supported and well remunerated early learning and child care workforce. And it must be supported by public investment.

Creating an effective, well-functioning early learning and child care system for Alberta will not happen quickly and will not come cheaply. But the investment is well worth the cost.

Investing in our children is an investment in our citizens’ short- and long-term prosperity and well-being.

Legislative change is an important first step. We need to get it right.

The recommendations in this position paper are intended as a starting point for discussion. AECEA welcomes all input and suggestions about how Alberta can build a professional workforce of early childhood educators to support a quality early learning and child care system.

Evolving Legislation, Changing Times

Alberta's first Child Care Licensing Act and regulation was introduced in 2007. It came into force on November 1, 2008, after several years of stakeholder consultation and planning.* The act evolved from the 1977 Social Care Facilities Licensing Act, which covered the licensing and inspection of both adult care and child care facilities in Alberta. The Day Care Regulation that accompanied the 1977 act outlined facility-based standards for the licensing of day care centres, out-of-school care centres, nursery schools and drop-in centres.

The 2007 Child Care Licensing Act broke new ground in recognizing the “importance of ensuring the safety, *well-being* and *development* of children receiving child care.”† Nonetheless, like comparable Canadian legislation of its era, the focus of the act reflects a custodial-care-based emphasis on children's health and safety.

The 2007 Child Care Licensing Act specifies requirements for discipline, health and safety procedures, records management, nutrition, administration of medication, staff–child ratios, group sizes and physical space requirements (including standards for outdoor play space and for equipment and furnishings). It deals with program requirements in general terms—specifying that programs must be “in keeping with the physical, social, intellectual,

* Province-wide discussions about revising the Social Care Facilities Licensing Act, which preceded the Child Care Licensing Act, commenced in 2004, when Alberta Children's Services consulted with Child and Family Services Authorities across the province. Consultation about the Child Care Licensing Act included the *Building Quality Child Care Together* discussion guide and questionnaire, which were circulated for stakeholder feedback in the spring of 2007. A *What We Heard* report on the results of the stakeholder consultation was released in October 2007. In December 2007 the Alberta government circulated the *Building Quality Child Care Together* workbook and questionnaire on recommended standards. Copies of these consultation documents are available through the Legislature Library.

† Preamble to Alberta's 2007 Child Care Licensing Act.

creative and emotional needs of children in the program” without suggesting how this goal might be achieved. The act also sets out standards for the early learning and child care workforce, including requirements for first aid training, criminal records checks and minimum qualifications.

In the decade-plus since the Child Care Licensing Act came into force, researchers, legislators and policy-makers across Canada and around the world have increasingly recognized that children need much more than custodial care. They need rich, varied and nurturing learning experiences that help them develop and grow. As discussed later in this paper (see p. 13), the quality of these learning experiences is particularly important for young children. But high-quality out-of-school care for older children is also important. It provides children with opportunities for learning and skills development and contributes to their “growing maturity and independence” (ChildCare 2020 2014, 8).

Children start learning at birth and continue to develop and learn at a significant pace throughout their early years. Learning in the early years lays a foundation for all future learning and affects children’s health, development and well-being throughout their lives.

All children—regardless of their family circumstances, cultural background or socio-economic situation—need high-quality learning experiences in their early years.

There is a growing body of research that links healthy child development with high-quality early-learning-and-development-focused care. And there is a growing body of research that places well-educated, well-qualified, well-supported early childhood educators at the heart of any high-quality early learning and child care system.

The Evidence is Clear

The importance of high-quality early learning and child care delivered by competent early childhood educators is outlined in a host of publications and research studies by numerous national and international organizations, including the following:

- Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development
- Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
- Canadian Child Care Federation
- Child Care Human Resources Sector Council
- Child Care Now (Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada)
- Childcare Resource and Research Unit
- Council of Ministers of Education
- Employment and Social Development Canada
- End Poverty Edmonton
- The Muttart Foundation
- National Research Council (U.S.)
- Nutbrown Review (U.K.)
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
- Statistics Canada
- UNESCO
- UNICEF

The importance of high-quality early learning and child care is also addressed in the Alberta government's own policy documents, including the following:

- the 2013 *Together We Raise Tomorrow* policy papers on early childhood development and poverty reduction
- the 2019 *Well-Being and Resiliency: Evaluation Framework*

High-quality early learning and child care is much more than custodial supervision that keeps children safe and fed.

It is engaging, creative, age-appropriate, learning-through-play-based, developmentally focused programming. High-quality early learning and child care is delivered through an integrated child care system that includes early childhood educators, parents, families and communities. It supports children's physical health and well-being. It develops their social competence, language and thinking skills, communication skills and general knowledge, and emotional maturity.* It helps children grow into healthy, well-adjusted, self-reliant adults who have the skills they need to succeed at school, at work and in life.

All children have a *right* to high-quality early learning and child care.

High-quality early learning and child care depends on high-quality early childhood educators.

It is well-known that early childhood educators play a significant role in shaping and nurturing children's early learning. Research shows that they require a host of basic competencies to do this work well (Muttart 2014; National Research Council 2015).

Early childhood educators must be critical thinkers who are capable of exercising professional judgment, working cooperatively with other professionals and communicating effectively. They must have in-depth knowledge of how children develop and learn, and they must be able to apply this knowledge through effective early years pedagogy that links research to practice. They must be capable of working with technology and curricular resources. They must know how to work with children from diverse backgrounds and with children who have specialized

* These five areas of development are the focus of Canada's EDI (Early Development Instrument) questionnaire, which is the standard population-based tool for measuring and monitoring early childhood development across the country. Alberta's results are discussed on p. 12 of this document.

developmental and learning needs. And they must know how to work with parents and families in a way that engages them in their children's learning.

The Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta believes that well-educated, well-supported and well-remunerated early childhood educators are the foundation of a high-quality early learning and child care system. **Legislative change is needed to raise minimum education standards for early childhood educators and to support early childhood educators in completing the education they need.**

For early childhood educators to be effective in their role, they need specialized education in early childhood development and early learning pedagogy. They need access and support for ongoing professional learning that keeps them current with the latest research and best practices in their field. They need a comprehensive early learning curriculum framework that informs and guides their work. They need workplace supports, including paid prep time for developing individualized programming for each child. And they need paid non-contact hours for engaging with families and with other professionals.

Alberta's educational standards for early childhood educators are among the lowest in Canada, and well behind many other countries' standards. Alberta has no professional development requirements for early childhood educators and no requirement for early childhood educators or early learning and child care programs to follow the province's recently developed early learning curriculum framework, *Flight** (Makovichuk et al.).

The upcoming review of the 2007 Child Care Licensing Act provides an opportunity to make much-needed changes that will help Alberta get its standards right. Legislating higher qualification standards and support for early childhood educators provides an important foundation for an

* See p. 95 for a brief description of *Flight*.

effective, high-quality early learning and child care system that can provide Alberta's children with the best possible start in life. As discussed later in this paper, it's also good for Alberta's bottom line. (See p. 17.)

About This Paper

This paper outlines the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta's recommendations for the legislative change required to support early childhood educators in delivering high-quality early learning and child care. AECEA has three priorities, each of which applies to all licensed and approved child care in the province:

1. raising education and education-related standards for early childhood educators across Alberta's early learning and child care system. This includes
 - legislating new certification classifications and new minimum education requirements
 - restricting the delivery of post-secondary programs in early learning and child care education to public institutions
 - eliminating the acceptance of educational equivalencies as a substitute for specialized early learning and child care education
2. legislating mandatory ongoing professional learning for early childhood educators. This includes
 - requiring early childhood educators to develop annual professional learning plans
 - introducing a credential maintenance requirement
3. adopting Alberta's early learning curriculum framework, *Flight*, within all licensed and approved early learning and child care programs in the province

This paper also outlines AECEA’s recommendations for legislating a number of related matters, including the following:

- recognizing the importance of high-quality early learning and child care as the foundation for children’s lifelong learning, well-being and success
- recognizing children’s right to high-quality early learning and child care
- updating outdated child-care-related terminology
- introducing minimum standards for unlicensed child care providers

AECEA’s recommendations for legislative change are supported by the most current research and best practices. They also have the support of AECEA’s members* and partner organizations.

The recommendations in this paper follow from the 2018 document *Quality Educators: Quality Care* (“[AECEA’s mandate document](#)”), which sets out AECEA’s mission, goals and mandate. The mandate document also details the system supports needed to make AECEA’s proposed legislative changes workable and effective. These system supports include wage enhancements, funding support, support for the post-secondary education sector and support for early childhood educators to improve their education and skills.

The recommendations in this paper are cross-referenced to two companion documents, which can be downloaded from AECEA’s website:

- *AECEA’s Redlined Changes to the Child Care Licensing Act*
- *AECEA’s Redlined Changes to the Child Care Licensing Regulation*

* AECEA regularly consults with its members and stakeholders and considers their ideas and opinions.

In 2018–2019, AECEA conducted a province-wide survey of more than 1,200 early childhood educators. In the spring of 2019, AECEA engaged close to 2,700 early childhood educators in face-to-face and online sessions during which the association shared its plans for professionalizing Alberta’s early learning and childcare workforce. AECEA also shared its recommendations for changes to the Child Care Licensing Act and regulations during these consultations.

The redlined companion documents use “tracked changes” to show AECEA’s proposed additions and deletions to the official versions of Alberta’s 2007 Child Care Licensing Act and regulation. In addition to noting the specific recommendations AECEA makes in the paper you are reading, the companion documents propose a number of suggestions related to program and staffing requirements, children’s well-being, nutrition, toys, child guidance practices and physical space (including vaping and marijuana use on program premises).

A detailed summary of AECEA’s recommendations for legislative change can be found on p. 98 of the paper you are reading. An at-a-glance summary is included in Appendix 3.

AECEA’s views on the policy changes needed to support its proposed legislative changes are outlined in the section that begins on p. 103. AECEA’s recommendations for a workforce strategy to support its proposed legislative and policy changes are outlined on p. 109.

A Note on Terminology

In the literature, “the early years” or “early childhood” is often defined as the period from birth to the age of five, when many children begin their formal education in school. Canada’s Council of Ministers of Education (2014) applies the term “early learning” to programs for children from birth to the age of eight.*

Research shows that the “prenatal months to age three are a critical period for laying the foundation for healthy development” (ECMap 2014, 30). However, older children also need stimulating, age-appropriate, developmentally focused out-of-school care programs delivered by qualified staff. The Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (2010, 2012) notes that early childhood educators develop, deliver and evaluate programs and services for children aged 0 to 12.

* Canada’s 2017 *Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework* also defines the early years as birth to age eight.

For convenience, this paper applies the term “early learning and child care” to children from birth to age 12 and to older children (13- and 14-year-olds) with special needs. This is consistent with the definition of a “child” in Clause 1(a) of Alberta’s 2007 Child Care Licensing Act.

The Importance of the Early Years

“The early years are increasingly viewed as the first step in lifelong learning and a key component of a successful educational, social, and family policy agenda.”

—Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2001), as cited in Friendly and Lero (2002), *Social Inclusion through Early Childhood Education*, p. 5

“Children’s early experiences have a powerful, lasting effect on their future success as individuals and on their ability to contribute to society.”

—Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta (2018), *Quality Educators, Quality Care*, p. 7

Research shows that children are actively learning from the moment they are born—if not before. Throughout their lives, children’s capacity for learning is determined by a “continuous, dynamic interaction” between their biology and their environment—between “nature” and “nurture” (National Research Council 2015b, 4 and 205).

Children’s capacity for learning is “grounded in the development of the brain and brain circuitry” (National Research Council 2015b, 4 and 205). Children’s early experiences—both adverse and nurturing—affect how their genes are expressed and how their brains develop. Experiences in early childhood “determine whether a child’s developing brain architecture provides a strong or weak foundation for all future learning or health” (Harvard 2007, 3).

“Stress and adversity experienced by children can undermine learning and impair socioemotional and physical well-being” (National Research Council 2015b, 4).

Children’s early years—from birth to age 5—“are a critical period for developing the foundations for thinking, behaving, and emotional well-being” (Carlberg and Budney 2019, 10). Children’s learning experiences during their early years are a critical component of their education as a whole. Early learning experiences help children grow up to be lifelong learners and responsible citizens who can make a positive contribution to their families and communities.

Research shows that “a substantial amount of brain circuitry is constructed very early in life” (Harvard 2007, 3).

Between birth and the age of three, children’s social, emotional, cognitive, linguistic and motor development proceeds at an explosive rate. Children dramatically expand their vocabulary and learn to identify and regulate their emotions. “Language-rich, nurturing, and responsive caregiving fosters healthy development during this period, but not all children have such experiences” (7).

Between the ages of three and five, children develop complex social behaviours and pre-literacy skills. They learn to solve problems, to understand other people’s points of view and to negotiate with others to achieve common goals. These skills “build on earlier developmental achievements and are essential building blocks for a successful life” (7).

The science of child development and early learning is important for understanding children. It also has implications for early childhood educators who contribute to children’s early learning and development. The science has implications for “the knowledge and competencies that these professionals need, the infrastructure and systems in which they work, their systems for professional learning, and other supports that contribute to improving the quality of professional practice and developing an excellent, robust, and stable [early learning and child care] workforce” (National Research Council 2015b, 206).

“Secure and responsive relationships with adults (and with other children), coupled with high-quality, positive learning interactions and environments, are foundational for the healthy development of young children. Conversely, adults who are underinformed, underprepared, or subject to chronic stress themselves may contribute to children’s experiences of adversity and stress and undermine their development and learning” (4).

The learning foundations built in early childhood influence children’s development and learning as they age, and throughout their lives. The early years are a time when children develop language, literacy, numeracy, problem-solving, resiliency, self-confidence and host of other crucial skills. These foundations support children’s health, well-being and success in school. They set children on “a pathway for success that impacts their entire lives” (Early Years Study 4).

The research is clear. Children’s early years determine their success in life. And the success of our children determines the prosperity and success of our society.

“When children thrive, they are likely to become adults who thrive and this contributes to the collective well-being of the province, now and into the future.”

—Government of Alberta (2013a), *Together We Raise Tomorrow*, p. 3.

The Importance of Getting the Legislation Right

Alberta’s early learning and child care system has made important strides since the proclamation of the Child Care Licensing Act. The province has invested in child care spaces; in wage enhancements, scholarships and professional development funding to support the workforce; in staff recruitment incentives to help program operators; in subsidies to help families access early learning and child care programs; and in funding to facilitate the inclusion of children with special needs. It has supported the

development of a new curriculum framework and introduced accreditation standards to foster program and process excellence.

In spite of these positive measures, Alberta's children are falling behind. Alberta Education's five-year Early Child Development Mapping Project (ECMAP 2014) analyzed early childhood development-related data for more than 70,000 kindergarten children in 100 Alberta communities.

The study used the standard EDI (Early Development Instrument)* to look at five areas of child development:

- physical health and well-being
- social competence
- emotional maturity
- language and thinking skills
- communications skills and general knowledge

The study found that 30% of Alberta five-year-olds entering kindergarten suffered "great difficulty" in at least one of these developmental areas. In other words, they scored between the tenth and twenty-fifth percentile of the Canadian norm. An additional 15% of children had great difficulty in two or more areas of development. **Less than half of Alberta's kindergarten-aged children (46.4%) were developing appropriately in all five areas.**

Research on early childhood development suggests that many of the developmental delays in five-year-olds are already evident by age three: "it would appear that many children in this province are not getting the

* Developed in Canada, the EDI has been used to measure and monitor early childhood development across the country since 2000. The EDI questionnaire is administered at the kindergarten level. It provides an overall sense of children's development before they start school and allows provinces to compare their results with a Canadian norm.

support they need during their crucial early development years” (ECMap 2014, 30).

The Early Child Development Mapping Project found that more favourable socio-economic status was generally linked to more positive early childhood development. But it also found that the *largest number* of children experiencing developmental difficulties were from middle-class households.* Clearly, there is much room for improvement: “Alberta children could and should be doing much better” (p. 30).

Decades’ worth of research clearly shows that high-quality learning environments and secure, responsive relationships with caregivers are the key to healthy child development. **“The goal of supporting children’s active learning and development...demands a well-educated and supported, professional early learning and care workforce. At present, the early learning and care workforces in Alberta and other Canadian provinces fall short of this requirement”** (Muttart 2019, 26).

Quality Early Learning and Child Care Is Good for Everyone ...and for Alberta’s bottom line

“The impact of high-quality child care cuts across numerous social policy domains, including workforce development, social development and infrastructure, health and family. High-quality child care is an important component of communities’ capacity to meet their citizens’ needs. It promotes social inclusion, combats poverty, stimulates the economy and promotes women’s equality.”

—Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta (2018), *Quality Educators, Quality Care*, p. 18

* This is because the majority of Alberta households are middle class, so the largest overall number of children falls into this category. “Targeting supports only to communities with low SES [socio-economic status] will miss the majority of communities where the largest number of children are having difficulty” (ECMap 2014, 31).

“What happens to children affects us all. If our children do not thrive, our societies will not thrive.”

—Katherine Scott (2006), *Growing Up in North America*, p. 1

A growing body of research recognizes that investment in accessible, affordable, high-quality early learning and child care brings a wide range of benefits (Harvard 2007; Friendly 2008; OECD 2012; ChildCare 2020; Vandenberg 2015; Marope and Kaga 2015; Flanagan and Beach 2016; Alexander et al., 2017; Early Years Study 4; Alberta Federation of Labour 2018b).

High-quality early learning and child care generates exceptional returns on investment. Canadian economic studies calculate the cost–benefit ratio of such investment at between \$1.50 and \$2.78 returned for every \$1 spent (TD Economics 2012). International studies have found a return of \$10 to \$17 for every \$1 spent (Harvard 2007; Marope and Kaga 2015; Akbari and McCuaig 2017; Alexander et al., 2017). While some studies found larger returns on investment for disadvantaged children, many found consistent positive effects for *all* children.

Economists acknowledge that the benefits of early learning and child care investment are much higher than what can be shown in measurable economic analyses (Marope and Kaga 2015). Benefits that are difficult to quantify in dollar terms include lower child mortality, lower crime rates, reductions in substance abuse and mental illness, reductions in public spending associated with poor health and school failure, reduced social inequality (including gender inequality) and increased tax revenues.

“High-quality programs are costly. That said, there are countless studies that suggest that the benefits of early childhood education far outweigh the costs” (TD Economics 2012, 5).

Investing in high-quality early learning and child care creates jobs and stimulates economic development and growth (Scott 2006; Findlay and

Lord 2015; Vandebroek 2015). The Alberta Federation of Labour (2018b) reports that investments in child care generate 44% more direct and indirect jobs than the closest industry. The federation (2018c) also notes that, in Quebec, the economic activity generated by the child care system generated GDP growth of 1.7% and \$2.2 billion in tax revenue.

A 2012 report by TD Economics confirms that investment in early learning and child care provides a larger economic return than investment in other industries. The report notes that both the GDP multiplier and the employment multiplier for the child care sector are among the highest of all industries.

The GDP multiplier measures the change in overall output in Canada from a change in output of a given industry. The GDP multiplier for child care outside the home is 0.90,^{*} behind only financial services, education, retail trade and non-profit institutions.

The employment multiplier measures the number of jobs created per million dollars of increased output in a given sector. The employment multiplier for the child care sector, 36.92, “is by far the highest across all industries, suggesting that early childhood education does not only provide significant benefits to children, families and the economy, but it provides a better return on investment than many other sectors” (TD Economics 2012, 5).

High-quality early learning and child care develops crucial skills that can improve productivity and innovation and help to address future labour shortages (Friendly and Lero 2002; TD Economics 2012). Future prosperity depends on a skilled workforce.

^{*} Findlay and Lord (2012) note that a 2011 economic study for Nova Scotia found an even higher GDP multiplier for early learning and child care outputs in that province. Nova Scotia’s GDP multiplier was 2.23—67% higher than construction and 112% higher than manufacturing.

Learning and skills development in the early years prepares children for the 21st century workplace. It creates “knowledge economies” that are critical for future growth and competitiveness in a global marketplace. In addition, children who develop essential skills have better employment prospects and shorter durations of unemployment (Alexander and Ignjatovic 2019, 2).

High-quality early learning and child care is an important tool for eliminating poverty and getting parents back to work. The City of Edmonton has identified affordable, high-quality child care as one of six game-changers in its *End Poverty in a Generation* strategy.

High-quality early learning and child care increases female labour market participation. “The ability of women to participate in the work force is directly affected by the availability of affordable child care” (Alberta Children’s Services 2018a, 14).

The *quality* of available child care is also a factor. A 2013 Alberta study found that “some mothers would change their employment or drop out of the workforce rather than have their children in child care that did not meet their quality standards” (Breitkreuz et al. 2013, 2). Finding high-quality child care spaces was particularly difficult for parents who lived in cities and for parents who only needed part-time child care.

The 2013 study also found that the cost of high-quality care was sometimes prohibitive. “Some mothers left paid employment because they would be paid little more at their paid job than the cost of high quality child care. For them, it didn’t seem worthwhile to engage in paid work for such little net financial gain” (13).

The lack of accessible, affordable, high-quality child care has a direct and negative impact on women’s ability to contribute to the economy. In 2015 (Moyser 2017), labour force participation for women in Alberta was

77%, compared to 88.3% for men.* In Canada as a whole, labour force participation for women was 77.5%, compared to 85.3% for men.

An International Monetary Fund working paper (Petersson 2017) reports that Canada’s gender participation gap averaged 6.8 percentage points between 2010 and 2015. The paper demonstrates that a 1% increase in the labour force participation of educated women would increase Canada’s productivity growth by 0.2–0.3 percentage points per year. Eliminating the 7% gap between male and female labour force participation would increase Canada’s GDP by about 4%.

Increasing women’s participation in the labour market promotes women’s equality (Carlberg and Budney 2019) and improves the status of women. The Alberta Federation of Labour (2018c) reports that affordable child care for single mothers increased these women’s labour force participation by 22%, decreased their relative poverty rate by 14% and increased their median after-tax income by 81%.

High-quality early learning and child care helps to close the gender wage gap. The Canadian Labour Congress’s (2019a; 2019b) labour market snapshot for the third quarter of 2019 reports that men earn \$4 per hour more than women—even though women have higher levels of education. In 2018, 75% of part-time workers were women. Part-time workers earn approximately \$9 per hour less than full-time workers and often have low-wage jobs with no benefits. One-third of women who work part time cited child care and family responsibilities as the reason, compared to just 10% of their male counterparts. “Closing the gender wage gap will require broad-based policies that increase part-time wages” and ensure that women have access to affordable child care (Canadian Labour Congress 2019a, 1).

* The labour force participation rate for Alberta women with young children is lower than the provincial average. In 2016, 63% of mothers whose youngest child was under three and 73% of mothers whose youngest child was under six were employed outside the home (Friendly et al. 2018).

High-quality early learning and child care reduces stress and helps to build strong families. It links parents and families to community resources and helps them find a fulfilling work–life balance. The 2013 Breitreuz study found that parents who were not confident about the quality of their children’s care were more likely to be stressed. Their well-being and work–life balance suffered as a result.

High-quality early learning and child care promotes social inclusion and improves social integration. It helps newcomers integrate into their new neighbourhoods, fosters respect for diversity and helps to build strong communities. It supports and nurtures children’s cultural connections, resiliency and well-being* (Marope and Kaga 2015).

High-quality early learning and child care increases the likelihood that children will graduate and go on to post-secondary education. This has significant social and economic benefits. Research shows that “dropping out of high school is a major problem that can often have devastating effects” (Hankivsky 2008, 5).

The non-profit research and training organization Mitacs reports that 40,000 Canadian students drop out of high school each year.

A 2008 study (Hankivsky) funded by the Canadian Council on Learning estimates that a single child who does not complete high school costs Canada’s social assistance and criminal justice programs approximately \$4,500 per year, or about \$156,000 over a 35-year lifetime. On a national scale, this is the equivalent of just over \$1.3 billion a year. If the number of Canadians who completed high school increased by just 1%, this would save more than \$2.1 billion per year in social assistance and criminal justice costs. It would also save billions of dollars in health care costs, employment insurance costs and lost tax revenues.

* The Children’s Services business plan for 2019–2023 lists the enhancement of children’s, youths’ and families’ well-being, resiliency and cultural connections as one of three expected outcomes.

High-quality early learning and child care reduces the need for special education and remedial programs later in children’s lives. “Timely provision of appropriate intervention and support reduces the level, or prevents the incidences of, learning difficulties and disabilities” (Marope and Kaga 2015, 24).

Research shows that approximately 15% of Canadian schoolchildren need special education supports. Two years of quality early learning and child care lowers special education placement by 40–60% for children with cognitive risk and 10–30% for children with social or behavioural risk (Philpott et al. 2019, 4).

High-quality early learning and child care creates caring, capable, healthy, well-adjusted, responsible citizens who make positive contributions to their communities and to the world.

Investing in early learning and child care is “an indispensable investment in ‘building the wealth of nations.’” (Marope and Kaga 2015, 12, citing the 2010 World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education in Moscow).

Solid Legislation Supports Quality

Why Is Quality Important?

“The importance of quality for child development, wellbeing and happiness cannot be overstated. [Quality early childhood education and care]...can have significant economic and social benefits through its effects on child development. Conversely, poor quality ECEC fails to meet the human rights test of ‘in the best interests of the child’ and, indeed, may even be harmful.”

— ChildCare2020, *Child Care in Canada by 2020: A Vision and a Way Forward*, pp. 11–12

Decades’ worth of research has shown that early learning and child care can bring a host of benefits for children, for their families and for society as a whole (Friendly and Lero 2002; OECD 2012; Melhuish et al. 2015; OECD 2017). But the research also shows that the benefits of early learning and child care depend on the *quality* of the programs and

services that are provided (Friendly, Doherty and Beach 2006; OECD 2017; OECD 2018).

Poor-quality early learning and child care can in fact cause harm (McCain and Mustard 1999; Doherty et al. 2000; Melhuish et al. 2015). The lack of experiences that promote active learning can “limit the ways children respond to new stimuli or changing circumstances, with the result that their development may not reach its full potential” (Doherty et al. 2000, 2). Poor-quality early learning and child care can also be a risk factor for delayed language and cognitive development—particularly for children from low income families (Melhuish et al. 2015).

Alberta’s current legislation does not ensure quality.

The Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta believes that the quality standards in Alberta’s current child care licensing legislation do not go far enough. AECEA is also concerned that *nearly one-third* of Alberta’s licensed early learning and child care programs do not even comply with the minimum standards currently on the books.*

Alberta’s children and families deserve better. But legislation alone is not enough.

Legislative standards can only be enforced within the context of an integrated early learning and child care system that includes sufficient funding to support it. Underfunding and non-compliance go hand in hand.

* Alberta Children’s Services (2018, 23) business plan for 2017–2020 reports that, in 2015–2016, only 70% of licensed child care programs complied with the Child Care Licensing Act and Child Care Licensing Regulation. Compliance targets of 72%, 73% and 74% were set for the subsequent three reporting periods (2016–2017, 2017–2018 and 2019–2020). Children’s Services business plans for these periods do not include compliance as a performance measure, and annual reports do not address the ministry’s success in meeting the compliance performance targets set in the 2017–2020 business plan.

What Do We Mean by Quality?

Quality child care addresses the physical, social, intellectual, creative and emotional needs of the children it serves. It “emphasizes the development of the whole child, attending to his or her ‘care’ and ‘educational’ needs in an integrated manner,” and laying the “foundation for lifelong learning and well-being” (Marope and Kaga 2015, 30).

Quality child care is child centred and learning rich. It “views children as capable, competent learners who are full of potential” (Government of Canada 2017, 2). It responds to the individual developmental needs of each child and “nurtures children’s curiosity, exploration, problem-solving and development” (AECEA 2018, 42). It provides stimulating learning experiences, fosters resiliency and nurtures self-worth and well-being (Marope and Kaga 2015).

Quality child care “values the importance of building strong, responsive and respectful relationships in which purposeful interactions support optimal learning for children” (Government of Canada 2017, 2). It respects the social and cultural diversity of Alberta’s families and engages families in their children’s learning. It acknowledges the need for parents, families, communities and governments to work together in the best interest of children. It honours Indigenous Peoples and values their many cultures, languages and ways of knowing.

Researchers recognize that quality is a relative concept that reflects values, beliefs, social and cultural contexts, and individual needs (Friendly, Doherty and Beach, 2006). Nonetheless, there is considerable “agreement about the factors that define quality regardless of circumstances” (Marope and Kaga 2015, 26). The consensus is that quality early learning and child care involves an integrated system of interlinked components that must be addressed together, as a totality (Friendly, Doherty and Beach 2006, 16).

Appendix 1 (see p. 123) illustrates a variety of system models for quality early learning and child care. The early learning and child care workforce is at the heart of every model.

*“High-quality means providing rich early learning experiences and environments. It means viewing children as capable, competent learners who are full of potential. It means valuing relationships that support optimal learning for children, and it **recognizes the importance of proper qualifications and training for those working in the field of early childhood learning and care.**”*

—Employment and Social Development Canada (2019b), *Investing in Our Future*, p. 6

The Components of Quality

Researchers generally agree that a high-quality early learning and child care system includes elements of “process quality” and “structural quality.”

Process quality relates to children’s actual daily experiences in an early learning and child care program (Doherty et al. 2000b; OECD 2011; European Commission 2014; Schleicher 2019). It is defined in terms of practice-related characteristics such as the following:

- instructional quality
- parental involvement
- curriculum, including the exposure of children to play and other developmental and educational activities
- day-to-day pedagogic practice, including strategies for engaging children in learning and approaches for managing children’s behaviour
- relationships and interactions between children, between children and staff, and between staff and parents

Structural quality relates to the specific conditions that “most directly influence caregivers’ behaviour” (Doherty et al. 2000b, 5). These include the following (Friendly, Doherty and Beach 2006; Marope and Kaga 2015; Garon-Carrier 2019; Schleicher 2019):

- funding and material resources
- child–staff ratios and group sizes
- standards related to space and physical environments
- staff qualifications
- training and professional development
- working conditions, wages and benefits

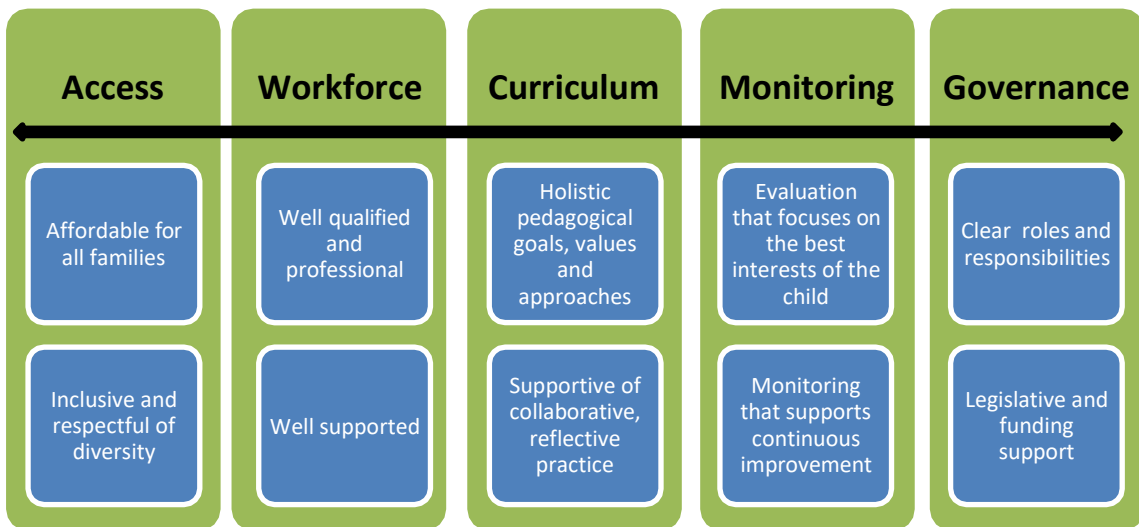


Figure 1. The 10 key principles of a high-quality early learning and child care system (European Commission Working Group on Early Childhood Education and Care, 2014)

The structural components of quality early learning and child care are largely determined by legislation* and public policy. Structural elements are easier to regulate than process-related components of quality (Doherty et al. 2000). This is why child care–related legislation—including Alberta’s—has traditionally focused on structural quality.

* Not all the components of structural quality can be legislated (European Commission 2014).

However—as shown in Figure 1 and in the system models in Appendix 1 (see p. 123)—process quality and structural quality are interrelated. Furthermore, researchers generally agree that “process quality...is the primary driver of gains in children’s development” (Garon-Carrier 2019, 3).

In order for legislation to be effective, it must recognize the interrelationship between process quality and structural quality. For example, early childhood educators cannot create nurturing, supportive relationships with parents and children (process quality) unless they have specialized education and training (structural quality).

In recent years, Canadian jurisdictions have begun to embed process quality components into legislation. For example, section 39 of Prince Edward Island’s 2017 Early Learning and Child Care Act requires licensed centres to follow a ministry-approved curriculum framework.

AECEA recommends that Alberta follow suit.

How Do We Create Quality in Our Early Learning and Child Care System?

Research over the past several decades has uncovered a range of best practices that have proven to be effective for achieving and maintaining quality. **There is widespread agreement that the quality of the workforce—including educational qualifications and ongoing professional development—is an important determinant of a quality early learning and child care system** (OECD 2006; Friendly et al. 2006; Muttart 2014; Halfon and Langford 2015).

Early childhood educators “are the most valuable asset in any early years setting. They are the single biggest contributor to the quality of provision, and they can be the driving force towards improvement. They are also often what parents and carers value most when choosing early education and child care. It is absolutely essential that we have...[well-educated] practitioners working with babies

and young children. To do that, we need to ensure we recruit the best people and give them a high standard of training and support” (Nutbrown 2012, 35).

Legislation is an important tool for creating a qualified professional workforce.

Ontario and British Columbia both have legislation that makes ongoing professional learning mandatory for early childhood educators. And most Canadian jurisdictions—including Alberta—have legislated minimum education standards. In Alberta’s case, these standards are far lower than what current research shows is needed.

Five Policy Levers for Creating Quality

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2012) recommends using the following five “policy levers” to create a high-quality system:

1. *Setting out quality goals and regulations* helps to align resources with priorities. It also supports coordinated, child-centred services and help parents make informed choices.
2. *Designing and implementing curriculum and standards* ensures even-quality early learning and child care across different settings. It also helps parents understand child development.
3. *Improving qualifications, training and working conditions* supports good pedagogy and fosters the positive child–staff interactions required for healthy child development and learning. Specialized education and ongoing professional development are important components of improving staff qualifications.
4. *Engaging families and communities* ensures that early childhood educators, parents and communities work as partners toward the common goal of providing accessible, affordable, high-quality early learning and child care that serves the best interests of children.

5. Advancing data collection, research and monitoring improves children’s outcomes and drives continuous improvement in the delivery of early learning and child care services.

AECEA’s recommendations for legislative change focus on policy levers 2 and 3.

How Does Alberta Measure Up?

In 2008, UNICEF’s Innocenti Research Centre prepared a report card on 10 benchmarks (minimum standards) for early childhood care and education. Of the 25 countries that participated, Canada and Ireland shared last place—having met only one of the 10 standards. Sweden achieved all 10 benchmarks, and Iceland achieved nine (Adamson 2008).

Since 2011, the Atkinson Centre for Society and Development* has produced a triennial report (Akbari and McCuaig 2017) on early childhood education in Canada’s provinces and territories. The report covers 19 benchmarks in five categories: governance, funding, access, learning environment (including the existence of a curriculum framework) and accountability. In the 2017 version of the Atkinson Centre’s Early Childhood Education report, Alberta scored 6.5 out of a possible 15 points. Prince Edward Island and Quebec scored the highest, with 11 and 10 points respectively.

Clearly, Alberta has much room for improvement.

*The Atkinson Centre is part of the University of Toronto’s Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE). The centre’s Early Childhood Education Report was established in 2011 as part of the McCain, Mustard and McCuaig *Early Years Study 3*.

Early Learning and Child Care in Alberta

Facts and Figures

- Child care is an essential service for most Alberta families with young children. In 2016 (Friendly et al. 2018, 94 and 164–165)
 - 59% of Alberta children under 13 had working mothers (This represents approximately 405,000 children.)
 - 57% of children under six had working mothers (This represents approximately 181,000 children.)
 - 55% of children under three had working mothers (This represents approximately 86,500 children.)

- In early 2019, more than 54% of Alberta children under the age of six spent time in some sort of formal or informal non-parental child care (Findlay 2019). This represents more than 178,000 children of an estimated total of 330,000 children under six.

- In March 2019, there were 131,624 spaces in Alberta’s regulated early learning and child care system (Alberta Children’s Services 2019c).
 - Approximately 12,000 spaces (11% of the total) were available in approved family day homes.
 - 105,800 Alberta children under the age of 13 were enrolled in licensed or approved early learning and child care.

- In March 2018, there were 2,710 licensed and approved early learning and child care programs in Alberta (Alberta Children’s Services 2018a, 21). As shown in Figure 2, the majority were centre-based programs (33%), preschools (26%) and out-of-school care programs (38%). Approved family child care programs constituted 3% of the total. Other programs (innovative child care programs and group family child care programs) constituted an additional 1%.

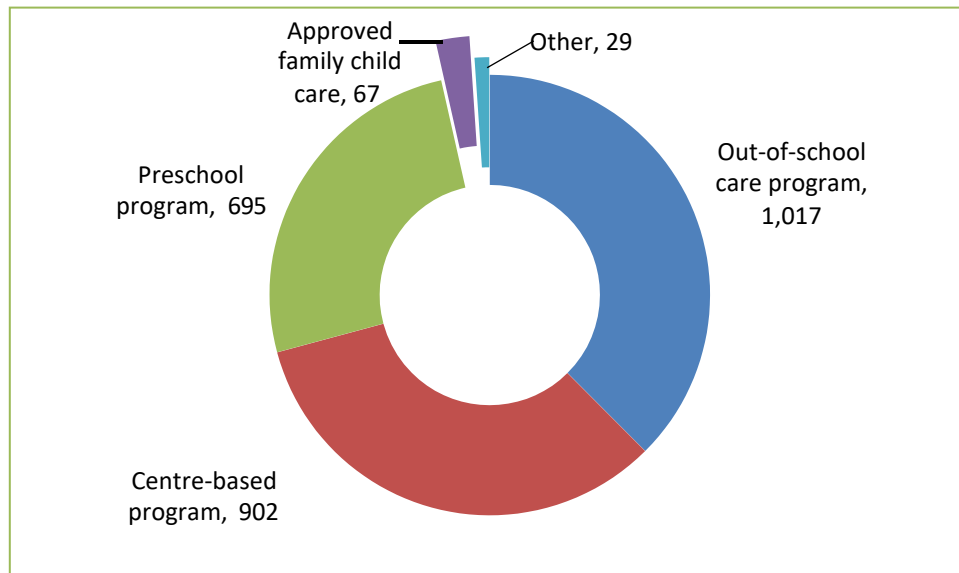


Figure 2. The distribution of licensed and approved child care programs in Alberta, March 2018

- In 2016, a survey conducted by Public Interest Alberta found that 49% of the child care centres, day homes and out-of-school care programs that responded had wait lists, with an average of 59 children per list.
- In 2018, 49% of child care centres in Edmonton and 74% of centres in Calgary had wait lists (Macdonald and Friendly 2019).^{*} In both cities, more than 40% of centres charged a fee for putting parents on a wait list. In Edmonton, wait list fees reached as high as \$200 or even the full first month's payment.

Wait Lists and the Workforce

Alberta Children's Services (2019c) reports an 80% utilization rate for licensed child care spaces. At the same time, wait lists continue to grow.

One reason for the underutilization of available spaces may be a shortage of qualified early childhood educators to staff them. Another reason may be that spaces are not available where parents want or need them (Alberta Children's Services 2019c). Further research is required.

^{*} In Edmonton, 49% of centres reported waiting lists in 2016 and 66% reported wait lists in 2017. In Calgary, 60% of centres reported wait lists in 2016 and 63% reported wait lists in 2017 (Macdonald and Friendly 2016; 2017).

Early Childhood Educators: A Profile

There is a serious lack of current, detailed statistical data about Alberta's (and Canada's) early learning and child care workforce.

The *2012 You Bet We Still Care!* survey* of early childhood educators working in centre-based early learning and child care programs in Canada found the following (Flanagan et al., 2013):

- More than 98% of early childhood educators were female.
- About 82% were born in Canada. About 13% were Canadian citizens who were born in other countries. Less than 5% were permanent residents on work visas or other types of arrangements.
- The median age was 38, but close to 30% were over 45.
- Nearly 25% of early childhood educators worked at a second job, primarily because they needed the extra money.
- About 11% of early childhood educators had a university degree. About 59% had a two-year diploma, 10% had a one-year certificate and 10% had no post-secondary education.
 - The reported post-secondary credentials were not necessarily in the early learning and child care field.
- In 2012, the average wage for program staff in Canada was \$16.50, compared to \$15.33 in Alberta. The average wage for program directors in Canada was \$22, compared to \$20 in Alberta.
 - The reported wages for Alberta include government-funded wage enhancements.

* The survey was conducted online and is not a representative sample even though it included 3,480 early childhood educators and 1,145 employers.

AECEA'S WORKFORCE SURVEY

AECEA conducted an online survey of Alberta's early childhood educators in late 2018 and early 2019 (Buschmann and Partridge 2019). The 1,228 survey respondents were not selected randomly, so the results are not necessarily representative of the approximately 16,600 early childhood educators in Alberta's regulated child care system.* Nonetheless, the data represents an important start toward understanding the composition and needs of early childhood educators in the province.†

AECEA's survey found the following:

- About 97% of survey respondents were female.
- About 60% were born in Canada; of these, 10% identified as Indigenous. More than 96% of respondents were Canadian citizens or permanent residents.
- Survey respondents spoke 57 different languages. English (67%) and Tagalog (8%) were the two most common languages spoken at home.
- Survey respondents were between 16 and 76 years old. The median age was 40.
- About 10% of survey respondents worked at a second job because they needed the extra money.

* The Alberta Children's Services (2019c) annual report for 2018–2019 lists more than 16,000 early childhood educators in Alberta's regulated child care system. The Children's Services annual report for 2017–2018 records 16,568 early childhood educators in the system.

† The results of AECEA's survey are comparable to the national *You Bet We Still Care!* results (Flanagan et al., 2013) on a number of measures.

AECEA's Position on Early Learning and Child Care*

All children and their families deserve and have a right to accessible, affordable, high-quality early learning and care.

High-quality early learning and child care is the cornerstone of a caring, thriving society. It is a public good that must be supported by public investment.

High-quality early learning and child care depends on highly qualified early childhood educators who—like all Albertans—deserve fair wages, satisfying work and supportive working conditions.

The work of early childhood educators requires specialized knowledge and pedagogical practices that can only be acquired through formal education and ongoing professional learning.

Early childhood educators need different types of professional learning and support at different stages of their careers.

All Albertans have a stake in high-quality child care. Parents, families, communities, businesses, service agencies, governments and the public share responsibility for giving the children of our province the best possible early learning and child care experiences.

AECEA supports the vision of Canada's Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework.

"All children can experience the enriching environment of quality early learning and child care that supports children's development to reach their full potential."

AECEA also supports the framework's five principles: quality, accessibility, affordability, flexibility and inclusivity (Government of Canada 2017).

* These are AECEA's guiding principles as cited in the association's 2018 mandate document *Quality Educators, Quality Care*, p. 42.

AECEA supports the vision of Canada’s Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework.

The framework “envisions First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and families as happy and safe, imbued with a strong cultural identity. It sees children and families supported by a comprehensive and coordinated system of...[early learning and child care] policies, programs and services that are led by Indigenous peoples, rooted in Indigenous knowledges, cultures and languages, and supported by strong partnerships of holistic, accessible and flexible programming that is inclusive of the needs aspirations of Indigenous children and families” (Government of Canada 2018).

The Case for Workforce-Related Legislative Change

AECEA’s position is that Alberta’s current Child Care Licensing Act and regulations do not adequately support early childhood educators, who are the heart of a high-quality early learning and child care system. The consequence is that we are failing our children. Legislative change is needed.

Words Matter

Research over the past decade has shown that quality child care and quality early childhood development programs play a key role in helping children grow into healthy, well-adjusted, self-reliant adults who have the skills they need to succeed at school, at work and in life.

Quality child care is not babysitting. It is not custodial caretaking. And it is not simple supervision that keeps children safe, fed and protected from danger or physical harm. Quality child care uses research-based early childhood education approaches that support children’s well-being and address children’s physical, social, emotional, cognitive and developmental needs.

There is a growing consensus that quality “child care” and “education” are inseparable concepts (Doherty, Friendly and Beach 2001, 14). They require a holistic, multisectoral approach that places strong emphasis on developing “the whole child” through the various ages and stages of that child’s life (Marope and Kaga 2015, 17).

Child Care and Education Are a Package Deal

“ ‘Care’ includes health, nutrition and hygiene in a warm, secure and nurturing environment; and ‘education’ includes stimulation, socialization, guidance, participation, learning and developmental activities.” (Marope and Kaga 2015, 17).

The interconnection between children’s “education” and “care” needs is reflected in current terminology. The University of Toronto–based Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development notes that “more than a dozen terms are used to describe programs designed for children before they begin formal schooling” (Akbari and McCuaig 2017, 2). The majority of these terms link the concepts of “child care” with “early learning” or “education.”

Table 1. Variant names for “early learning and child care.” The terms listed in the table are sometimes used interchangeably—both in the research literature and in this paper.

Term	Organization or Jurisdiction
early childhood education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development – College of Early Childhood Educators (Ontario)
early childhood education and care (ECEC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – European Commission Working Group – New Zealand Ministry of Education – Nutbrown Review (U.K.) – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
early childhood education and child care (ECEC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ChildCare 2020 national policy conference – Childcare Resource and Research Unit
early childhood care and education (ECCE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – UNESCO Publishing
early learning and child care (ELCC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta – Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives – Employment and Social Development Canada – federal/provincial <i>Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework</i> – Statistics Canada
early learning and care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Muttart Foundation

UPDATE THE OUTDATED CHILD-CARE-RELATED TERMINOLOGY IN ALBERTA'S LEGISLATION

AECEA's Recommendation

1. **Change the name of the Child Care Licensing Act to the *Early Learning and Child Care Licensing Act*. Throughout the act and regulation, replace all references to “child care” with “early learning and child care.”**

Children's early learning and care needs are interdependent and intertwined. Alberta should follow the lead of other jurisdictions in using terminology that reflects this interconnection. The term “early learning and child care” is widely used in Canada.

In 2018, Nova Scotia changed the name of its Day Care Act to the Early Learning and Child Care Act in order to remove and revise outdated language (Atkinson 2019b).

AECEA's Recommendation

2. **Change the term “day care program” to “centre-based early learning and child care program.”**

The term “day care” dates to the era of day nurseries that provided custodial daytime child care for children of poor families whose mothers had to work (Varga 1997). The care offered in day nurseries was limited to providing a safe, healthy physical environment. Today Alberta's licensed centres provide early learning and child care programs that also focus on children's social, intellectual and developmental needs. In addition, families today need flexible child care services that suit a variety of work schedules beyond the traditional Monday to Friday, 9 to 5 (Doherty et al. 2003). The term “day care” no longer reflects today's realities.

AECEA’s recommendation related to the term “day care program,” reflects the structure of the current Child Care Licensing Regulation, which has different requirements and different schedules for different types of licensed programs. If legislative requirements were standardized across programs, the term “early learning and child care program”^{*} could apply across program types. There would be no need to differentiate centre-based from non-centre-based programs.

Early Childhood Educators Are Not Babysitters

“It takes much greater professional education and preparation to develop an ability to be self-reflective and able to mobilize children’s curiosity, exploration, questioning and problem solving than to provide good custodial care” (Muttart 2012, 32).

Research shows that well-educated early childhood educators are the foundation of a high-quality early learning and child care system. They are not babysitters. Like teachers in the K-to-12 school system, early childhood educators bring a wealth of specialized knowledge and experience to their profession. They deserve to be acknowledged as educators—not just child care “workers” or “assistants.”

In AECEA’s 2018–2019 survey of the early learning and child care workforce (Buschmann and Partridge 2019), 91% of respondents felt they were valued and respected by parents, yet only 58% felt they were valued and respected by the public. Interestingly, respondents were less likely to feel respected by the public if they had more early learning and child care experience or more education, if they were born in Canada, if they were a program director, or if they worked in a centre-based or out-of-school care program.

The authors of the survey report suggest that early childhood educators with more experience might have “accumulated more experiences of

^{*} The Child Care Licensing Act defines a child as being under the age of 13 or as being 13 or 14 and having special needs. AECEA’s proposed definition of “early childhood” refers to children as defined under the act, and hence encompasses children in out-of-school care programs.

being demeaned by members of the public (for example, being called a ‘babysitter’)” (p. 11). Whatever the reason, respondents’ reports of feeling disrespected “may be some indication that there is still a long way to go in promoting the importance of the ELCC [early learning and child care] profession in Alberta” (p. 12).

The lack of respect and recognition for the value of child care work is directly linked to the low wages and poor working conditions that characterize much of the early learning and child care sector. The “devaluation” of child care work reflects the “underlying ideas and values that we ascribe to women and children in society...[T]his devaluation is perpetuated by the idea that childcare work is women’s ‘natural’ work.... Gendered assumptions de-skill the work and implicitly justify the lack of compensation, particularly when this work is replacing the unpaid (and unappreciated) caring labour of women in their private homes” (Halfon 2014).

Lack of respect and low wages both contribute to the ongoing recruitment and retention challenges in the early learning and child care sector.

GIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS THE RESPECT THEY DESERVE

AECEA’s Recommendation

- 3. Adopt the term “early childhood educators” to replace the current classifications of “child development supervisor,” “child development worker” and “child development assistant.”***

The term “early childhood educators” acknowledges the specialized education, skills and important role this workforce plays in nurturing healthy children and building a healthy society.

* The term “early childhood educator” should also be used for family day home providers, who are not regulated through legislation. Alberta’s *Family Day Home Standards Manual* should be updated accordingly.

New Brunswick's 2018 Licensing regulation under the Early Childhood Services Act uses the term "educator."

Ontario has a College of Early Childhood Educators.

ACKNOWLEDGE THAT WELL-QUALIFIED EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS ARE THE FOUNDATION OF A HIGH-QUALITY EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE SYSTEM

AECEA's Recommendations

4. Recognize the importance of well-qualified early childhood educators in the preamble to the act.

Current Child Care Licensing Act

[There is no recognition of the critical importance of early childhood educators.]

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta recognizes the importance of ensuring the safety, well-being and development of children receiving [early learning and] child care;

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta is committed to facilitating choice for families who require [early learning and] child care; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta recognizes and values the role of parents in the provision of quality [early learning and] child care;

Recommended Additions to Preamble*

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta recognizes and values early childhood educators for their role in providing high-quality early learning and child care;

* This is one of several recommendations for additions to the preamble of the Child Care Licensing Act. For an at-a-glance view of all of AECEA's preamble-related recommendations, please see Appendix 2 on p. 127.

LEGISLATE NEW CERTIFICATION CLASSIFICATIONS

AECEA's Recommendation

5. **Replace the current three-level certification system (child development assistants, child development workers, child development supervisors) with the following classifications.***
 - early childhood educator I (ECE I)
 - This is a temporary classification that requires a one-year certificate in early childhood education. It is intended to help workforce members transition to the proposed new minimum standard, which requires a two-year diploma in early childhood education.
 - early childhood educator II (ECE II)
 - This classification requires a two-year diploma in early childhood education. ECE II is the proposed new minimum standard for all early childhood educators in the regulated system.
 - early childhood educator III (ECE III)
 - This classification requires a two-year diploma in early childhood education plus a post-diploma certificate in management or pedagogical leadership. ECE III is the new minimum standard for early childhood educators who work as program directors and pedagogical leaders.
 - early childhood educator IV (ECE IV)
 - This classification is for educators who have an undergraduate degree in early learning and child care. An additional classification category (ECE V) may be needed for early childhood educators who have higher levels of education,

* Please see p. 69 for details and recommendations for new minimum education standards for the new certification classes.

including master's and doctoral degrees. Further research is required.

Early learning and child care is not babysitting. The new classifications recognize that early childhood educators need a minimum level of specialized education for the important work they do.

AECEA believes that all individuals who work within the early learning and child care sector should be certified early childhood educators. This includes post-secondary teaching faculty, pedagogical mentors and program consultants.

Upgrading Timelines

AECEA proposes that, by 2027, all early childhood educators in Alberta's regulated child care system will be certified at an ECE II level or higher. To facilitate the transition, early childhood educators will need to develop and complete an educational upgrading plan as a condition of certification.

- **Currently certified "child development assistants" will need to upgrade to an "early childhood educator I (transitional)" level by 2024, and to an "early childhood educator II" level by 2027.**
- **Currently certified "child development workers" will need to upgrade to an "early childhood educator II" level by 2027.**
- **Child development supervisors who were certified on the basis of equivalencies will need to upgrade to an "early childhood educator II" level by 2027.**

Early Learning and Child Care Matters

“The foundation for strong and healthy children is set in early childhood, starting even before they are born. Clear scientific evidence tells us that brain development is influenced by early childhood experiences. Brain development is optimal when children grow up with safe and healthy environments, loving and supportive relationships and opportunities to learn.”

—Government of Alberta (2013a), *Together We Raise Tomorrow: An Alberta Approach to Early Childhood Development*, p. 6

High-quality early learning and child care helps children establish the foundation they need for all future learning and for success in life.

Together We Raise Tomorrow—Alberta’s 2013 framework for early childhood development—acknowledges that “a healthy start means a healthy future.” Providing children with “a healthy start, safe and healthy environments, nurturing and supportive relationships and opportunities to learn” makes it possible for them to “fulfill their potential and benefit from our thriving social, economic, and cultural life” (Government of Alberta 2013a, 7).

RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF HIGH-QUALITY EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE

AECEA's Recommendations

6. Recognize the importance of quality early learning and child care in the preamble to the act.

Current Child Care Licensing Act

[There is no recognition of the critical importance of quality early learning and child care.]

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta recognizes the importance of ensuring the safety, well-being and development of children receiving [early learning and] child care;

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta is committed to facilitating choice for families who require [early learning and] child care; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta recognizes and values the role of parents in the provision of quality [early learning and] child care;

Recommended Additions to Preamble

WHEREAS the well-being, safety, security, education and health of children are priorities for Albertans;*

WHEREAS ensuring that every child has the opportunity to become a successful adult benefits society as a whole;*

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta recognizes that quality early learning and child care is in the best interest of the child;

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta acknowledges Indigenous families as partners in developing early learning and child care programs that are rooted in Indigenous traditions, languages and ways of knowing;

“The early years from birth to compulsory school age are the most formative in children's lives and set the foundations for children's lifelong development and patterns for their lives” (European Commission 2014, 4).

Alberta's Children First Act, which focuses on child protection and intervention, acknowledges the importance of children's education and well-being. Although early learning is such a critical component of children's education, the current Child Care Licensing Act does not acknowledge its importance.

* From Alberta's Children First Act.

New Brunswick's 2010 Early Childhood Services Act recognizes the importance of the early years and the value of high-quality early learning and child care in its preamble:

“WHEREAS the Government of New Brunswick recognizes the importance of ensuring the safety, well-being and healthy development of all young children enrolled in early childhood services;

WHEREAS the Government of New Brunswick is committed to supporting the early learning and childcare sector in its efforts to build a network of high-quality, accessible, inclusive and affordable early childhood services;

WHEREAS the Government of New Brunswick recognizes that high-quality early childhood services serve the dual roles of fostering the early development of young children so they become healthy, self-sufficient and productive adults and supporting the labour force attachment and training efforts of parents...”

7. Enshrine Alberta's goals for high-quality early learning and child care that

- **helps children reach their potential and fully develop their talents and abilities**
- **helps children develop the resilience, determination, confidence, creativity and critical thinking skills that prepare them for school, work and life**
- **helps children develop strong communication and social skills**
- **helps children develop into responsible citizens who value democratic rights and freedoms and make a positive contribution to society**
- **teaches children the importance of peace, equality, friendship among all peoples and inclusion within society of people who are different**

- **instills respect for nature, for the environment, and for social and cultural diversity***

All children have a right to high-quality early learning and child care that supports their development and well-being and prepares them for citizenship in a democratic society.

Children Have Rights

“Every young child has an undeniable right to holistic development and a strong start in life. Evidence suggests that quality...[early learning and child care]...can actualize this right.”

—Mmantsetsa Marope and Yoshie Kaga (2015), *Investing against Evidence: The Global State of Early Childhood Care and Education*, p. 30.

*“In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, **the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.**”*

—Article 3.2 of the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child[†]

Children have the right to enjoy an adequate standard of living. They have the right to health, safety and security—including the right to protection from violence, abuse and neglect. They have the right to play and to participate in cultural life and the arts. They have the right to be heard. They have the right to express their views freely and the right to have their opinions considered. They have the right to education—including early childhood education—that develops their “personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential” and

* These recommendations draw from New Zealand’s 1989 Education Act, which is internationally recognized as a model for early learning and child care legislation and policy excellence.

[†] The Convention entered into force on September 2, 1990. It was ratified by Canada in 1991.

prepares them for “responsible life in a free society” (United Nations 1979, Article 29).

Children are citizens in their own right. They are capable, creative, resourceful and active participants in their own learning. They have the right to be valued and respected for who they are and for the unique strengths, histories, cultural practices and traditions they bring to their communities. They have the right to be treated with respect and to participate in the daily decisions that affect them.

The recognition that children are citizens with social, economic, cultural, political and civil rights is enshrined in the United Nations 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the 1990 World Declaration of Education for All, which was sponsored by UNESCO, UNICEF and other international partners. The Canadian Child Care Federation, the Canadian Council on Social Development, the ChildCare 2020 national policy conference and AECEA are among the hundreds of Canadian and international organizations and jurisdictions that support these articulations of children’s rights.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes that parents and families are responsible for the upbringing and development of their children. At the same time, the convention makes it clear that communities and governments share this responsibility, and that governments must “ensure that children of working parents have the right to benefit from child-care services and facilities” (Article 18.3). The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women defines child care as an *essential* right for both women and children.

The current Child Care Licensing Act does not recognize the rights of children or the right of children and families to high-quality early learning

and child care. These rights should be formally recognized in the preamble to the act.

LEGISLATE PROTECTION FOR THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN, INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO HIGH-QUALITY EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE

AECEA's Recommendation

8. **Recognize the rights of children in the preamble to the act.**
Recognize that high-quality early learning and child care is a critical component of the education to which every child has a right.

Current Child Care Licensing Act

[There is no recognition of children's rights, and there is no recognition of early learning and child care as a critical component of children's education.]

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta recognizes the importance of ensuring the safety, well-being and development of children receiving [early learning and] child care;

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta is committed to facilitating choice for families who require [early learning and] child care; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta recognizes and values the role of parents in the provision of quality [early learning and] child care;

Recommended Additions to Preamble

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta recognizes that children are citizens in their own right;

WHEREAS children have the right to play and to experience nature and the outdoors;

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta acknowledges Indigenous families as partners in developing early learning and child care programs that are rooted in Indigenous traditions, languages and ways of knowing;

WHEREAS education is a right enjoyed by all citizens;

WHEREAS children's education and development begins at birth;

WHEREAS early learning and child care is an important part of children's early education;

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta recognizes that all children and their families deserve and have a right to accessible, affordable, high-quality early learning and child care;

Early learning and child care is a legislated right in 80 countries (Marope and Kaga 2015), and some countries go so far as to legislate

guaranteed access to child care. In Norway, for example, children have a statutory right to an early learning and child care space from the time they are one year old (Slinde 2019). Alberta and Canada must join the ranks of progressive countries that have enshrined children’s rights through legislation.

Every child has a right to education. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child requires that education support the following objectives:

- *“the full development of the child’s personality, talents and mental and physical abilities*
- *the development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms*
- *the development of respect for the child’s parents, cultural identity, language and values, as well as respect for the values of the child’s country and other civilizations*
- *the development of the child’s responsibilities in a free society, including understanding, peace, tolerance, equality and friendship among all persons and groups*
- *the development of respect for the natural environment” (UNICEF 2018, 42)*

LEGISLATE PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN’S RIGHT TO PLAY OUTDOORS AND ENJOY NATURE

AECEA’s Recommendation

- 9. Amend the Child Care Licensing Regulation to incorporate the Get Outside and Play organization’s recommendations for outdoor play. These include**

- **increasing the amount of outdoor space required for children in licensed early learning and child care programs**
- **instituting minimum daily outdoor playtime requirements**

“Children learn best through play, and the best place for play is outdoors, where children connect with nature, explore their physical abilities, spark their curiosity and develop a sense of place and belonging in the world” (Pickles 2019, 3).

Research suggests that outdoor play and play in nature are important components of children’s development. The Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta supports the outdoor play recommendations proposed by Get Outside and Play. (See Pickles 2019.)

Children’s right to play is internationally recognized and enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

“Play is integral to every aspect of development and lays the foundation for formal learning and success in school. It underlies everything from motor development to social competence, emotional self-control, confidence, creativity, scientific reasoning and abstract thinking. Child’s play is a serious business.”

—Dr. Jane Hewes discussing the power of play in the November 2011 ECEMap newsletter, *Steps*

The redlined companion documents to this paper set out the details of the Get Outside and Play organization’s recommendations. *AECEA’s Redlined Changes to the Child Care Licensing Act* and *AECEA’s Redlined Changes to the Child Care Licensing Regulation* can be downloaded from the association’s website.

All Children Matter

All Children Need Well-Qualified Early Childhood Educators

In Alberta, family-based early learning and child care services are provided through an agency model. As a result, family day home standards are set through policy rather than legislation.

In 2018, 2,156 family day home providers delivered early learning and child care services on behalf of 67 approved family day home agencies

that had contracts with the Alberta government (Alberta Children’s Services 2019c). Early childhood educators providing family day home services constituted 13% of Alberta’s early learning and child care workforce and cared for approximately 10% of the children in Alberta’s regulated child care system.

Family day homes provide Alberta parents with choices in child care. Some parents prefer a home setting to centre-based early learning and child care. Raising minimum education standards for *all* early childhood educators ensures that children receive quality care regardless of the setting.

In Alberta, legislation sets minimum education standards for early childhood educators in licensed early learning and child care programs. But there is no requirement—either in legislation or in policy—for family day home providers to have *any* formal education. Alberta’s approach is consistent with that of other Canadian provinces and territories. Many jurisdictions do not even have training requirements for family day home providers.

Across Canada, education standards for family day home providers lag far behind those for other early childhood educators. In 2016 (Friendly et al. 2018, 157), eight of 13 Canadian jurisdictions required that family day home providers be licensed. Four jurisdictions—Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario and Alberta—used an agency model. Newfoundland and Labrador used both an agency model and licensing. In 2016, most Canadian jurisdictions required 20 to 60 hours of training for family day home providers. Nunavut, Northwest Territories, Ontario and New Brunswick required no training at all.

In Alberta, current policy standards require family day home agencies to provide some training to their contracted providers, but the training plans mandated in the government’s *Family Day Home Standards Manual* only address topics such as hand washing, poison control, child development and child guidance. In spite of its minimal focus on education or training, the *Standards Manual* nonetheless expects family day home providers to deliver an age-appropriate child care program

“that meets children’s emotional, physical, intellectual, creative and social needs” (Government of Alberta 2019d, 30).

For licensed early learning and child care programs, the requirement to “provide a program that is in keeping with the physical, social, intellectual, creative and emotional needs of children in the program” is specified in schedules to the Child Care Licensing Regulation. Like their colleagues in approved family day homes, early childhood educators in licensed programs often lack the education and support they need to do their work.

The situation is not fair—either to Alberta’s early childhood educators or to the children they care for.

Alberta’s children deserve better. Our children deserve the same high quality of early learning and child care no matter where they live and no matter who cares for them.

Alberta’s early childhood educators deserve better too.

The lack of appropriate educational standards and funding support excludes much of the early learning and child care workforce from a host of workforce benefits. Early childhood educators who work in preschools, family day homes, group or innovative programs, or First Nations or Métis Settlements programs are not eligible for professional development funding support, nor do they qualify for wage enhancements.

Revised legislation is needed to make things fair.

Table 2. Minimum education requirements for regulated early learning and child care services in Alberta. The 54-hour* and 45-hour courses listed in this table comply with Section 17(1) of the Child Care Licensing Regulation, which requires “a course in child care that is approved by the director” as a condition of child development assistant certification.

Type of Program	Minimum Staff Education Requirements
Centre-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 54-hour Child Care Orientation course or 45-hour post-secondary course in child development for all staff – 1 in 3 staff require a one-year early childhood education certificate or equivalent[†] – Program directors require a two -year early childhood diploma or equivalent
Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 54-hour Child Care Orientation course or 45-hour post-secondary course in child development for all staff, including the licence holder
Innovative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – No minimum requirement
Out-of-school care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 54-hour Child Care Orientation course or 45-hour post-secondary course in child development for all staff – 1 in 4 staff require a one-year early childhood education certificate or equivalent – Requires a program supervisor (no credential specified)
Preschool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 54-hour Child Care Orientation course or 45-hour post-secondary course in child development for all staff – 1 in 4 staff require a one-year early childhood education certificate or equivalent
Family day home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – No minimum legislated requirement for providers[‡] – Agency staff who monitor family day homes must have one-year early childhood education certificate or equivalent

* The 54-hour Child Care Orientation course is a free online, non-credit offering developed by Alberta Children’s Services.

[†] Prior to a September 2012 amendment to the Child Care Licensing Regulation, 1 in 4 centre-based staff were required to have a one-year early childhood education certificate or equivalent.

[‡] As a matter of policy, the Children’s Services *Child Care Staff Certification Guide* requires family day home providers to complete the Step Ahead Family Day Home Training or Family Child Care Training Program through an approved family day home agency.

PHASE IN AND ENFORCE NEW MINIMUM EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS ACROSS THE SYSTEM

AECEA's Recommendation

10. Legislate new minimum requirements for higher educational qualifications for early childhood educators in all parts of the regulated system.

Alberta's children deserve the same high quality of early learning and child care no matter where they live and no matter who cares for them. Family day home providers and providers of group family child care programs are currently exempt from Alberta's requirements for certification.

Alberta needs to raise education standards and legislate appropriate education requirements for all early childhood educators in all licensed and approved early learning and child care programs. As discussed on p. 69, AECEA believes that the minimum standard should be a two-year diploma in early childhood education.

To avoid system stress and shortages of qualified staff, raising educational requirements for early childhood educators must go hand in hand with increased funding and support for the sector.

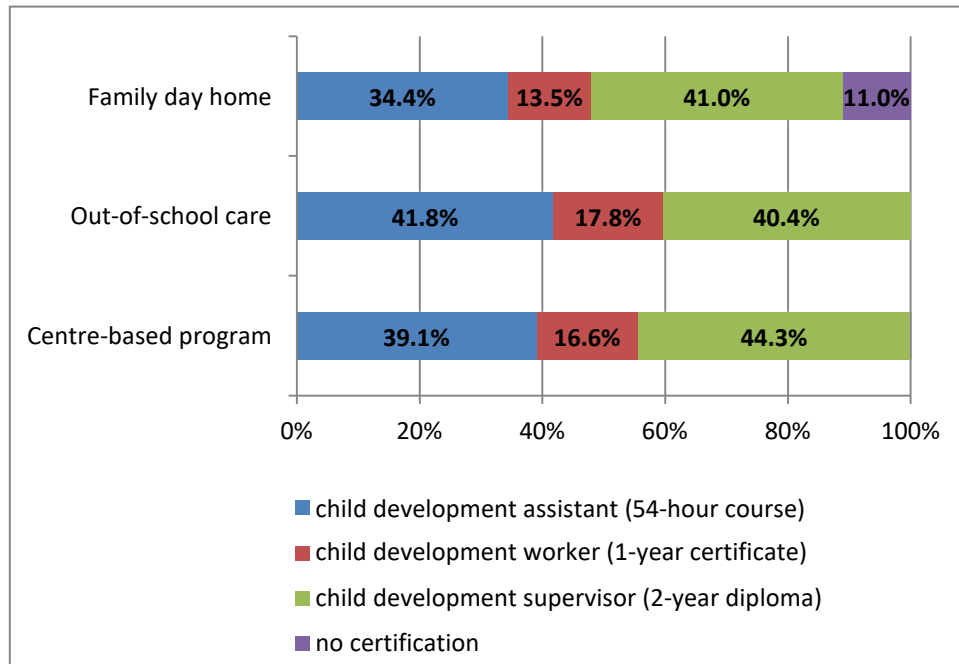


Figure 3. A comparison of education and certification levels within Alberta's regulated early learning and child care system (Alberta Children's Services 2018a). Eleven per cent of Alberta's family day home providers (237 individuals) are not certified; more than 34% (742 individuals) have only completed a 54-hour course.

Unlicensed Child Care Can Be Harmful for Children

In 2016, Alberta had regulated early learning and child care spaces for approximately 16% of children under the age of 13 (Friendly et al. 2018). This means that the majority of children whose parents work were cared for in other settings, including private babysitting arrangements.

A Children's Services web page (2019a) explains that private babysitters can care for up to six children, not including their own, at any given time. There are no health, safety, security or quality standards for the care provided by private babysitters. There is no government oversight, no government monitoring and no accountability for the quality of care that is provided. Private babysitters do not require a licence and they do not have to comply with provincial guidelines.

Research shows a strong relationship between child care quality and regulatory status. "The single best indicator of quality in family child care is the provider's regulatory status" (Ferns and Friendly 2015, citing Kontos et al. 1995).

The Child Care Licensing Act deals with private babysitters in a rather round-about way. In fact, the legislation is so ambiguous that it is difficult to determine when private babysitters require a licence and when they can operate without one.

The act stipulates that anyone who operates a “child care program” must have a licence; it defines a “child care program” as a program that provides child care to seven or more children. But providing “child care” does not necessarily entail providing a “child care program.” If private babysitters are—by their own definitions—only providing “care” and not a “program,” does this mean they can care for an unlimited number of children? On the Children’s Services web page (2019a), is the proviso that “private babysitters can care for up to six children, not including their own” meant to be interpreted literally? If a private babysitter has six children of her own, might she be allowed to care for a total of 10 or even 12 children at any one time (her own six children plus four to six others)?

Section 25(1) of the Child Care Licensing Act clearly specifies that family day home providers—who operate under contract to approved family day home agencies and comply with provincial standards—are only permitted to care for up to six children. For family day home providers, it is implicit that the six-child maximum includes the providers’ own children. Permitting unlicensed private babysitters to care for more children than approved, regulated providers is not logical. It is also not logical to regulate family day home providers yet have no standards for private babysitters, who also provide home-based child care.

Researchers have found that the absence of regulation for some, but not all, home-based child care providers creates a two-tiered system. It also creates inconsistent policy related to nurturing and protecting children. The lack of standards that apply to *all* non-relative caregivers “can lead to

inadequate and sometimes harmful care” (Kyle 2000, 88, cited in Fern and Friendly 2015, 16).

The recent tragedy of 22-month-old Mackenzy Woolfsmith, who died in the care of an unlicensed private babysitter, is one example of the harm that can result from unregulated child care.

The judge who led the Woolfsmith fatality inquiry recommended a comprehensive review of the legislative framework governing the provision of child care in Alberta, with a specific view toward “shifting the focus from solely regulating the size of unlicensed daycare to a focus on reducing risk and increasing protective factors in all forms of child care” (Bouwsema to Fuchinsky September 2019). The judge noted that legislative change alone is ineffective: it must be accompanied by appropriate oversight, enforcement, remedial powers and sanctions. The judge also acknowledged the stress and demands of providing child care without support from other adults, and recommended that private babysitters should be provided with support and tools for self-assessment.

Regulated family day home providers receive support from the agencies that contract and monitor them. Private babysitters could access such support if they became part of the regulated system.

Another concern is that parents do not have a clear understanding of the differences between regulated and unregulated child care. In fact, as the Ontario government has found, “given consumer protection in other areas of the economy, parents may have misconceptions about the lack of safeguards in unregulated care” (Ferns and Friendly 2015, 17).

The Alberta government needs to undertake a public awareness campaign to help families differentiate between regulated and unregulated child care and to keep their children safe.

Family day homes are required to display an official “Alberta Approved Family Day Homes” logo sticker to indicate they are regulated by a government-approved agency.

UPDATE AND CLARIFY THE LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS FOR PRIVATE BABYSITTERS

AECEA’s Recommendations

11. Legislate appropriate minimum standards for private babysitters.

These should include a requirement for private babysitters to post, at the entrance to their premises, a notice informing parents that they are not regulated and not monitored by government.

All children need quality early learning experiences and protection from abuse and harm—no matter who cares for them. Child care provided by private babysitters should comply with legislated minimum standards. Developing minimum standards requires consultation and an approach that balances children’s need for protection with providers’ need for autonomy (Doherty et al. 2000b). Parents must also be a part of the process.

Support for private babysitters must not be at the expense of Alberta’s regulated early learning and child care system. Private babysitters must be encouraged to become a part of this system.

12. Legislate clear and appropriate maximums for the number of children that private babysitters can care for at any one time.

Alberta’s “six children plus their own” maximum for private babysitters is much higher than what is allowed in other parts of Canada. In seven Canadian jurisdictions, the maximum number of children that can be cared for by an unregulated private babysitter ranges from two to five, including the babysitter’s own children. Quebec, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia allow a maximum of six children including the babysitter’s own. Only Saskatchewan and New Brunswick have a higher maximum than Alberta, allowing*

* Nova Scotia allows up to nine children if they are all school-aged.

private babysitters to care for up to eight children including their own (Friendly et al. 2018).

AECEA recommends that private babysitters in Alberta should be permitted to care for a maximum of five children, including their own preschoolers. No more than two children should be under the age of two.

Babysitters who wish to care for more than five children should be regulated through an approved family day home agency.

The *You Bet I Care!* study (Doherty et al. 2000b) recommends that unregulated private babysitters should be allowed to care for a maximum of four children (including their own preschoolers) and that no more than two children should be under the age of two. The study cautions that placing limits on the number of children a babysitter can legally care for might simply force private babysitters to go underground. In order to avoid this situation, limits must be accompanied by two complementary strategies:

- the removal of policies and practices that act as disincentives to join the regulated system (Disincentives include costs related to meeting regulatory standards, including the cost of home upgrading and buying equipment.)
- the provision of incentives to make regulation attractive (Access to fee subsidies and opportunities for training and professional development are incentives to join the regulated system.)

Early Childhood Educators Matter

Early Childhood Educators Need Appropriate Education

“Early childhood educators are the key to high quality services.”

—OECD (2006), *Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care* 2006, p. 157.

Well-qualified early childhood educators are the foundation of high-quality early learning and child care programs. Quality programs—and an effective, high-quality system—depend on well-educated, well-qualified staff to provide good developmental outcomes for children.

The OECD’s 2001 *Starting Strong* report established a link between “strong training and support of staff”—including appropriate pay and working conditions—and the quality of early learning and child care programs. The report also noted that staff with more formal education and more specialized training in early childhood development provided “more stimulating, warm, and supportive interactions with children” (OECD 2006, 158). Subsequent OECD reports (2018b) noted a strong correlation between high-quality child–staff interactions and children’s literacy, numeracy, behavioural and social skills. The OECD’s 2012 *Starting Strong* report noted that higher qualifications and more specialized training were closely correlated with better child development outcomes.

The importance of well-educated staff with specialized training has been corroborated in a number of Canadian studies. The *You Bet I Care!* studies (Doherty et al. 2000) found that the quality ratings of centre-based programs were predicted by whether or not at least some staff had *at least two years of early learning and child care training* (Friendly, Doherty and Beach 2006, 12).

“Staff with higher qualifications can create a more stimulating environment and use more appropriate pedagogical practices, which boost children’s well-being and learning outcomes” (Schleicher 2019, 27).

The link between higher standards of education and higher quality early learning and child care is well established. Although training requirements vary widely, many European countries require early childhood educators to have specialized bachelor’s or even master’s degrees (Schleicher 2019).

In a 2017 study of 22 OECD countries, more than 75% of early childhood educators who worked with children over three had a bachelor’s degree. For this age group, 88% of early childhood educators in Poland and Portugal had at least a master’s degree, as did 51% of early childhood educators in the United States.

The 2019 OECD *Good Practice for Good Jobs* study notes that many OECD countries have raised their minimum qualification standards in recent decades. Some countries now require master’s level qualifications for early childhood educators who work with children over three.

International Requirements for Early Childhood Educators

The University of Toronto's Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development (2019a) recently reported on early childhood education requirements for seven OECD countries. These countries had the following minimum educational requirement for early childhood educators:

- a three-year diploma in early learning and child care for all staff and a four-year degree for program leaders (in Norway)
- a two-year diploma in early learning and child care for all staff (in Denmark, Sweden and New Zealand)
 - Denmark also required a three- to five-year degree for supervisors.
 - Sweden also required a four-year degree for leaders.
- a one- or two-year certificate in early learning and child care (in Australia)
 - Australia also required a four-year degree for pre-primary teachers of children up to the age of eight.
- high-school-level early years training for all staff (in Italy)
 - Italy also required a specialized three-year degree for program leaders and a specialized five-year degree for program managers.
- in France's municipal child care system for children under three, a 120-hour child minder course; 40% of staff in this system had a four-year degree
- in France's school system for children aged three to six, a four-year degree

Although some countries did not require all their early childhood educators to be highly educated, all seven countries had degree requirements for at least some program staff.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN CANADA

Canada's minimum education requirements are well below international standards. For centre-based early learning and child care programs, Manitoba is the only Canadian jurisdiction that requires early childhood educators to have a degree—and that requirement only applies to program directors (Friendly et al. 2018).

No Canadian province or territory requires *all* early childhood educators in centre-based programs to have post-secondary credentials, but with the exception of Nunavut, all jurisdictions require that at least some staff are qualified (Akbari and McCuaig 2017). One year of specialized training is the minimum requirement in most Canadian jurisdictions, but not necessarily for all staff. In centre-based programs in New Brunswick, only one in every four early childhood educators requires a one-year credential, which means that 75% of the staff who care for children could have no education. In Yukon and Saskatchewan, 50% of centre-based staff who care for children could have *no* education (Friendly et al. 2018).

Although Canada's minimum education requirements lag behind other countries' (Halfon 2014; Friendly et al. 2018; Muttart 2019), minimum requirements have increased in some provinces. One example is Newfoundland and Labrador, where the new Child Care Act (2017) includes a requirement for early childhood "trainee" educators to upgrade and complete a one-year early learning and child care certificate within five years. Another is Nova Scotia, which is investing funds from the federal/provincial bilateral agreement on early learning and child care into a workplace training model that will help early childhood educators upgrade their education.* By 2021, all staff "required for ratio" will have or be working toward a minimum two-year diploma in early learning and child care (Pasolli 2019).

* Nova Scotia is also investing in leadership development training for centre directors and in and professional development for family day home providers and other early childhood educators.

Minimum educational attainment levels of Canadian early childhood educators have also increased, at least in some parts of the early learning and child care sector. The 2013 *You Bet We Still Care!* study reported that 89.6% of centre-based program staff had at least a one-year early learning and child certificate, compared to 81.7% in 1998; 59.1% of centre-based program staff had at least a two-year early learning and child diploma, compared to 48.2% in 1998 (Halfon 2014; Flanagan et al., 2014).

ALBERTA'S STANDARDS

“By comparison to other jurisdictions, the educational preparation of early childhood educators in Canada remains modest. The educational requirements for the early learning and care workforce in Alberta are no exception.”

—The Muttart Foundation (2019), *Advancing the Educational Preparation and Professional Development of Alberta's Early Learning and Care Workforce*, p. 6

While some countries require specialized master's degrees, the highest standard of education Alberta requires is a two-year diploma—and it doesn't necessarily have to be related to early childhood education. (See Table 4 on p. 79.) As shown in Table 3, 17% of the province's early childhood educators have only a one-year certificate, and 40% have only a 54-hour orientation course. Close to 60% of Alberta's early childhood educators have less than two years of post-secondary education.

This is not enough.

By comparison, kindergarten teachers in all Canadian jurisdictions except the Northwest Territories require at least a degree, and in Prince Edward Island and Quebec, kindergarten teachers must also have a specialization in early childhood education. The requirement for higher qualifications for kindergarten teachers is reflected in the higher wages they earn (Friendly et al. 2018).

The work society expects from early childhood educators is just as important and valuable as the work expected from teachers. Early childhood educators need to be as well educated as teachers—and as well paid. (See p. 116 for a discussion of wages in the sector.)

“Holding lower educational expectations for early childhood educators than for elementary school educators perpetuates the perception that educating children before kindergarten requires less expertise than educating K–3 students, which helps to justify policies that make it difficult to maximize the potential of young children and the early learning programs that serve them.”

—National Research Council (2015b), *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8*, pp. 513–514

Table 3. Certification levels (March 2018) and wages (September 2019) for early childhood educators in Alberta’s regulated child care system.* The dollar figures in parentheses are hourly wage enhancement top-ups provided by the provincial government.

Position	Training Requirement	Workforce at this Level	Average Employer-Paid Wage	Pre-accredited Program Wage Top-Up	Accredited Program Wage Top-Up
Child Development Assistant	54-hour child care orientation course or equivalent	6,495 (40%)	\$15.90	\$17.34 (\$1.44)	\$18.04 (\$2.14)
Child Development Worker	one-year post-secondary certificate in early learning and child care or equivalent	2,732 (17%)	\$16.91	\$19.61 (\$2.70)	\$20.96 (\$4.05)
Child Development Supervisor	two-year post-secondary diploma in early learning and child care or equivalent	7,103 (43%)	\$18.51	\$22.93 (\$4.42)	\$25.13 (\$6.62)

* The March 2018 workforce numbers are from the Alberta Children’s Services 2017–2018 annual report. The workforce also includes 238 “Not Certified (Unassigned)” child care educators, which brings the total number to 16,568.

The wage-related data for 2019 is from the Government of Alberta, “Incentives to Work in Child Care.”

The caregivers of Alberta’s children often have less education than the caregivers of Alberta’s pets.

Many entry-level dog groomers have completed a 160-hour course (Alberta School of Dog Grooming), and animal health technologists need at least a two-year diploma (ALIS careers website). By comparison, many early childhood educators in Alberta have only 54 hours of training.

HOW MUCH EDUCATION IS ENOUGH?

“There is some consensus that early childhood caregivers... should be trained to the bachelor’s degree level and should have credentials in courses that are specific to early childhood” (Melhuish et al. 2015, 70.) In the United States, the National Research Council (2015b, 513) recommends a minimum of a bachelor’s degree “with specialized knowledge and competencies” for all lead educators. As discussed earlier in this paper, many countries have significantly higher requirements.

In a series of province-wide consultations sponsored by the Muttart Foundation between 2012 and 2019, stakeholders identified a two-year diploma in early childhood education as an acceptable minimum standard.

Raising minimum education standards for early childhood educators has benefits for child care quality on many levels. Not only does it provide children with a richer learning experience, but it provides early childhood educators with tangible and intangible benefits. Studies have shown a direct link between higher training and higher job satisfaction, which in turn leads to lower staff turnover (Halfon 2014). And better-educated staff can command better wages.

The fact is that requirements for higher qualification standards cannot be viewed in isolation from wages and working conditions. Simply put, better-qualified early childhood educators deserve better pay. Low salaries are a major contributor to high staff turnover, which studies have

found to be a predictor of low quality in early learning and child care programs (Friendly, Doherty and Beach 2006, 12).

New educational standards for early childhood educators must be part of a comprehensive workforce strategy. (See p. 109.)

LEGISLATE AND PHASE IN NEW MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

AECEA's Recommendations

13. Legislate and phase in a two-year diploma in early childhood education* as the new minimum standard for early childhood educators in all parts of the regulated system.†

If educators of infants, toddlers and preschoolers are to merit the same respect and wages as educators of school-aged children, they must also have comparable levels of professional post-secondary education. A 54-hour course does not make someone a professional.

AECEA proposes that all early childhood educators in the regulated system should have met an interim minimum standard—early childhood educator I (transitional) and attained at least a one-year certificate in early childhood education by 2024. All early childhood educators in the regulated system should have met the new minimum standard—early childhood educator II—and attained at least a two-year diploma in early childhood education by 2027.

Early childhood educators will need flexible education programs, funding and workplace support to help them meet the new minimum standard.

* The importance of specialized early childhood education training is explained on p. 76.

† The Get Outside and Play organization has formally endorsed AECEA's recommendation of a specialized two-year diploma as the minimum standard for early childhood educators.

14. Legislate a requirement for early childhood educators to develop personalized educational upgrading plans that outline the pathways they will take to meet the new minimum standards.

What gets planned gets done. Both early childhood educators and their employers need to prepare for the future. Early childhood educators need to work with their employers to plan a reasonable, realizable course of action for upgrading their education.

Educational upgrading plans must show how an early childhood educator will move from the interim minimum standard—ECE I (transitional) certification—to the new, system-wide ECE II requirement. Once early childhood educators have met the new minimum requirements, they will require annual professional learning plans as a condition of credential maintenance. (See p. 84 for a discussion of professional learning and p. 89 for a related recommendation.)

LEGISLATE CREDENTIAL MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS

AECEA's Recommendation

15. Legislate a requirement for ongoing credential maintenance. Include ongoing professional learning as one requirement for certification renewal.

Professionals in any field are required to keep their qualifications current. Early childhood educators who are respected as professionals should be expected to do the same.

AECEA proposes that early childhood educators should be required to renew their certification every three years. Approvals for renewal should include a requirement for 40 hours of continuing education or professional learning completed during each three-year certification period. (See p. 75 for AECEA's position on ongoing professional learning.) They should also include a requirement for early childhood educators to maintain professional competence, comply with

professional standards and codes of ethics and self-report any circumstances that might affect their professional practice.

CREDENTIAL MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS IN OTHER PROVINCES

Prince Edward Island licenses early childhood educators and requires credential renewal every three years (Government of Prince Edward Island 2017)

In British Columbia, early childhood educators are certified for a five-year period. Credential maintenance requires compliance with the professional code of ethics prescribed by the Early Child Educators of BC, verification of work experience, a character reference letter and completion of 40 hours of professional development during the certification period.

In Ontario early childhood educators are required to register with the College of Early Childhood Educators. Members of the college must renew their membership every year and pay an annual membership fee. Early childhood educators who wish to renew their registration with the college must verify their employment information and their eligibility to work in Canada. They must also verify their compliance with the college's mandatory Continuous Professional Learning program and self-report any circumstances that might affect their practice in the profession. Circumstances that require self-reporting include the following:

- current investigations for professional misconduct, incompetence or incapacity, or resignation from any regulatory or licensing organization while being the subject of a complaint, investigation or proceeding related to these matters
- charges or findings of guilt for professional misconduct, incompetence or incapacity in the practice of early childhood education
- charges or findings of guilt for a criminal offence

- physical or mental conditions or disorders that might affect professional practice
- charges of misconduct while attending a post-secondary institution
- verified allegations or concerns by a child protection agency

Early Childhood Educators Need Top-Quality Programs

Early childhood educators are professionals. They need professional education from public post-secondary institutions that have well-established inter-institutional course and program transfer protocols. Going forward, they will need access to specialized high-quality programs and standardized curricula that include a focus on *Flight*—Alberta’s curriculum framework for early learning and child care.

This type of specialized education cannot be provided by vocational colleges. Going forward, it must be delivered by public post-secondary institutions that have highly qualified academic staff and that provide a standard of education that complies with national and international quality benchmarks. Vocational colleges often cannot meet these standards of excellence. As a result, the credentials students earn at vocational colleges are often not recognized by public post-secondary institutions. This leaves students unable to upgrade their education without an additional investment of time and money to repeat coursework that *is* recognized.

The qualifications of academic teaching staff are a benchmark of program excellence. Alberta’s vocational colleges typically require instructors in their early learning and child care programs to hold a bachelor’s degree. By comparison, the faculty at Mount Royal University and MacEwan University all have master’s degrees or PhDs. Most faculty in Alberta’s public-college-based early learning and child care programs have at least a master’s degree (Muttart 2019).

In Alberta, 10 public post-secondary institutions currently offer a two-year diploma in early learning and child care; 13 offer one-year certificate programs. Calgary’s Mount Royal University offers a bachelor’s degree;

Edmonton's MacEwan University will also offer a bachelor's degree as of September 2020.* The University of Alberta offers a 15-credit online certificate program, but Children's Services does not recognize this credential as a qualification for early childhood educator certification.

Few programs for more-advanced education in early learning and child care are available in Alberta, except through distance learning.† As a result, early childhood educators who wish to pursue post-diploma education often opt for related disciplines such as Education or Human Ecology. Alternatively, they enroll in early learning and child care graduate programs offered at universities outside the province.

As early childhood educators upgrade their qualifications and as new students enter the field, public post-secondary institutions will need to plan and expand their capacity. They will also need to address the issue of program transferability. Currently, not all programs are transferable to other institutions.

AECEA proposes that credentials from vocational colleges should be grandfathered in as Alberta transitions from the current certification categories to the proposed new ones.

WHY AN APPRENTICESHIP MODEL IS NOT APPROPRIATE

Early learning and child care is a profession, not a trade.

Professionals require education that develops their knowledge, understanding and ability to analyze and synthesize information—both within and beyond the workplace. Education builds competencies, capacities and soft skills that enable people to work more effectively.

Training typically focuses on developing skills that improve job performance. It gives people the specific tools they need to perform

* The University of Calgary offers a Bachelor of Education with a specialization in early childhood education.

† The University of Alberta's Department of Elementary Education periodically runs an Early Learning cohort as part of its Master of Education in Curriculum and Pedagogy.

specific tasks. Training-focused programs are best suited for trades that require the step-by-step performance of job-specific tasks.

Professionals need training as well as education, but training for professionals is development centred rather than skills based. It focuses on personal and organizational growth and integrates education with activities such as coaching, mentoring and experiential learning.

Training-focused job preparation often involves apprenticeship. AECEA's 2009 research on this subject found that an apprenticeship model is not appropriate for the early learning and child care sector.

Early childhood educators need to be critical thinkers, researchers, creative problem-solvers, organizers of opportunities and reflective professionals who embrace multiple perspectives and use pedagogical documentation tools to evaluate their work (Moss 2007). Apprenticeship-based training cannot offer the depth or breadth of professional knowledge that early childhood educators need to provide high-quality programs within a high-quality early learning and child care system.

AECEA's research study concluded that apprenticeship may exacerbate stress "in an already fractionalized and stressed child care community" (2009, 12). Apprenticeship will not address recruitment and retention issues in the sector, nor will it strengthen practice or improve outcomes for children and families. It cannot provide early childhood educators with the broad and deep educational preparation they need as professionals.

PROVIDE EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE EDUCATION THROUGH PUBLIC POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

AECEA's Recommendation

16. Provide early learning and child care education through public post-secondary institutions and recognized Indigenous colleges and universities.

Public post-secondary institutions offer educational programs whose content meets national and international standards. Indigenous colleges and universities provide early learning and child care programs that are grounded in Indigenous languages, culture and ways of knowing.

*Alberta's post-secondary institutions and Indigenous colleges and universities will need appropriate funding and support if they are to develop the capacity to provide high-quality education for the province's early childhood educators. Capacity includes facilities, equipment, resources and qualified teaching staff. **Post-secondary institutions cannot build the capacity they will need without proper funding.***

Alberta Needs a Post-Secondary Plan

Alberta Children's Services maintains a list of post-secondary institutions that offer early learning and child care education. However, not all programs are equivalent and inter-institutional course and transfer protocols have not been established. Early childhood educators must have the option of beginning their studies at one institution and completing them at another, should circumstances require, without having to make up courses.

Alberta needs to develop a list of approved institutions that offer well-respected, high-quality programs with appropriate transfer protocols. Alberta also needs to explore ways of integrating the province's Indigenous post-secondary institutions into the list.

Early Childhood Educators Need to Specialize

Researchers have identified seven broad areas required for professional competence (Muttart 2014):

- caring ethically
- applying an early years pedagogy based on knowledge of how children learn and develop
- working with curricular resources
- working with families
- supporting children with disabilities
- linking research to policy and practice
- communicating within a “democratic” community in which children, early childhood educators, parents and other stakeholders are valued and have a voice

Within these broad areas, early childhood educators must demonstrate mastery of a wide range of knowledge and skills:*

- They must be able to nurture children’s learning through “thoughtful and intentional pedagogy.”
- They must have deep and broad knowledge about children’s learning and development and be able to identify children’s varied abilities, strengths, interests and learning pathways.
- They must be able to identify and work with children with developmental delays and disabilities in an inclusive environment.
- They must understand the theories that underpin effective early learning pedagogy.

* This list of competencies was adapted from *New Zealand’s Te Whāriki: Early Childhood Curriculum* (New Zealand Ministry of Education 2018, 59).

- They must be experts in play-based curriculum and be able to plan and enact activities that are accessible, motivating and fun for all children.
- They must be able to integrate specific subject-matter knowledge (for example, literacy, science or arithmetic) into the curriculum.
- They must be able to support the cultural and linguistic diversity of all children and to create an inclusive learning environment in which all children can learn alongside their peers.
- They must know how to communicate with parents in a way that engages them in their children's learning.
- They must recognize children's rights and children's agency as resourceful, capable learners.
- They must be attentive to children's learning. They must be knowledgeable about and able to try alternative ways to support children's learning and development.
- They must be role models for lifelong learning and for practices that support their own health and well-being and that of others.
- They must be able to work as part of a team and know how to establish and maintain collaborative professional relationships.
- They must be thoughtful and reflective about what they do.
- They must use evidence, critical inquiry and problem-solving to shape their practice.
- They must be committed to ongoing professional development.

Early childhood educators require specialized education to help them develop the sophisticated competencies they need. Research shows that staff with a degree specializing in early childhood education have the greatest impact in creating high-quality early learning environments.

“These staff are better able both to provide pedagogical leadership and to demonstrate the professional competencies linked to effective early learning and care practice” (Muttart 2014, 24). than staff with lower-level qualifications and non-specialized education.

REQUIRE SPECIALIZATION IN EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE

AECEA’s Recommendation

17. Legislate a requirement for all early childhood educators who work in licensed and regulated child care programs to have specialized early learning and child care education.

Research shows that having knowledge and skills specifically related to early childhood education is associated with better outcomes for children (Flanagan and Beach, 2016).

ELIMINATE EQUIVALENCIES

A significant portion of Alberta’s early learning and child care workforce is undereducated. But even when early childhood educators have post-secondary education, this may be in an area completely unrelated to early learning and child care.

Part 3 of the Child Care Licensing Regulation sets out standards for the certification of early childhood educators. These standards have always allowed for the recognition of competencies or coursework considered equivalent to the early childhood education–related education specified in the legislation. Over time, the list of approved equivalencies became excessively broad. Although it has narrowed in the last few years, some credentials still recognized as equivalents do not require any competencies in early-years child development, play-based learning or early learning pedagogy.

In 2009, the Government of Alberta announced funding to create close to 9,500 new child care spaces and recruit 1,100 new early childhood

educators. To support this effort, the government broadened its definition of allowable equivalents for child care certification. The change was intended to make it easier for program operators to recruit staff to fill newly funded spaces. Unfortunately, studies in the disciplines that are recognized as equivalents have no requirement for any type of early learning and child care–related content. (See Table 4.)

Recognizing such studies as equivalents makes no more sense than recognizing a journeyman plumber’s credential as equivalent to a journeyman electrician’s.

Table 4. The Child Care Staff Certification Guide (Alberta Children’s Services 2018b) recognizes the following credentials as equivalent to one-year certificates and two-year diplomas in early learning and child care.

Certification and Educational Requirement	Recognized Equivalent
Child Development Worker <i>one-year certificate in early learning and child care (30 post-secondary credits)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Disability Studies diploma – Educational Assistant diploma – Bachelor of Science in Human Ecology with a family ecology major – Bachelor of Kinesiology or Kinesiology diploma – Community Rehabilitation degree or Rehabilitation Assistant diploma – Therapeutic Recreation diploma or degree – Social Work diploma
Child Development Supervisor <i>two-year diploma in early learning and child care (60 post-secondary credits)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Alberta Teaching Certificate – Bachelor of Child Studies degree – Bachelor of Education degree or two-year after-degree – Child and Youth Care degree or diploma – Bachelor of Social Work degree

The practice of recognizing equivalencies is one indicator of the difficulty child care programs have in finding qualified staff who are willing to work for the low wages that programs can afford. Even with the current low educational standards and over-broad recognition of educational equivalencies, child care licensing staff are often forced to authorize exemptions to legislative requirements in order to keep programs open.

Some centre-based early learning and child care programs have been unable to find directors with the required two-year diploma; some programs have no staff with two-year diplomas.

AECEA's Recommendation

18. Remove the provision for educational equivalencies from the Child Care Licensing Regulation. Implement a bridging plan to help child care providers whose certification is based on an educational equivalency to upgrade to the new standard.

A combination of early childhood specialization and higher education is considered essential for high-quality programs (Flanagan and Beach 2016; Muttart 2010). “Teachers who have specific preparation, knowledge, and skills in child development and early childhood education are more likely to engage in warm, positive interactions with children, offer richer language experiences, and create more high-quality learning environments” (Flanagan and Beach 2016, 62).

In Alberta, persistent recruitment and retention issues have led to the recognition of equivalency qualifications. This is misguided.

Recruitment and retention must be addressed by raising wages and providing adequate system supports, not by lowering standards.

Equivalencies are not qualifications.

Early Childhood Educators Need Management Skills and Pedagogical Leadership Education

Early childhood educators play a variety of roles within Alberta's early learning and child care system. They develop and administer programs, recruit staff, manage finances and human resources, set standards for quality improvement and evaluate progress. They are leaders and mentors who provide guidance for their staff. They are communicators and relationship-builders who engage with children, families and the broader community. They help connect families to community supports and sometimes advocate on their behalf.

The different roles played by early childhood educators need different types of education and training.

Research shows that, in addition to specialized early childhood development education, program managers and supervisors need additional specialization in management and administration, preferably at the bachelor's or master's degree level (Muttart 2014, 16, citing Goffin 2013; OECD 2006; Peeters and Vandebroek 2011; Urban, Vandebroek, Lazzari, Peeters and Van Laere 2011; and Whitebook and Ryan, 2011). Such specialized education gives managers the skills they need to deal with issues such as budgets, finances, strategic planning and human resources management, including staff performance, motivation and development. Management education helps program administrators develop the leadership, communication and policy development skills they need to work with government bodies, licensing offers, accreditation agencies and other stakeholders.

In addition to management education, program administrators need advanced-level early learning and child care education to prepare them as pedagogical leaders who can deal with issues related to teaching approaches, curriculum and quality of learning (Muttart 2014, 16). As pedagogical leaders, program managers provide guidance, support and

formalized mentorship for their staff and for practicum students looking to enter the field. They use data to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of their programs. They foster continuous quality improvement and inspire organizational change.

As pedagogical leaders, program managers build a culture of reflective practice that engages staff intellectually and emotionally. Reflective practice is interactive. It continually questions “how theory informs practice and practice informs theory” and encourages educators to think critically about their curriculum practice.

Pedagogical leaders must know how to facilitate high-quality interactions with children. They must also know how to engage parents as partners in children’s learning.

Pedagogical leaders must be well-grounded in the values, guiding principles and concepts of Alberta’s early learning and child care curriculum framework, *Flight*. They must be capable of leading and supporting their staff as they incorporate *Flight* in their work.

Pedagogical leaders must have a deep understanding of child development and be on top of the latest research literature. They must be able to facilitate professional learning that shows their staff and their practicum students how to create high-quality environments for children. Perhaps most importantly, they must be able to share what they know—with their staff, with parents, with other professionals and with the broader community.

The role of a pedagogical leader is to raise up other leaders—building leadership capacity throughout the early learning and child care system.

In Canada, there is growing recognition that management and pedagogical leadership are critical skills for early learning and child care program administrators. Three Ontario colleges have recently launched a common applied degree in early childhood leadership and administration (Muttart 2014).

In Alberta, MacEwan University offers a post-diploma applied human services administration degree that is open to early childhood educators.

Mount Royal University's Bachelor of Child Studies (early learning and child care major) and MacEwan University's new Bachelor of Early Childhood Curriculum Studies both have a pedagogical leadership emphasis.

REQUIRE ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT OR PEDAGOGICAL LEADERSHIP EDUCATION FOR ALL PROGRAM DIRECTORS AND MANAGERS

AECEA's Recommendation

- 19. Legislate and phase in a requirement for all early childhood educators who work as program directors to be certified as ECE IIIs, a classification that requires a post-diploma certificate in management or pedagogical leadership in addition to a two-year diploma specializing in early learning and child care.**

Researchers agree that early learning and child care program managers need specialized education in leadership and administration, preferably at the degree level. This education should address topics such as pedagogy, learning quality, curriculum, staff performance, motivation and child development (Muttart 2014).

AECEA proposes that the post-diploma certificate for ECE IIIs should require six to eight credit courses in organizational management or pedagogical leadership. Ideally, ECE IIIs should have education in both disciplines.

Early Childhood Educators Need Ongoing Professional Learning and Support

The work of early childhood educators requires specialized knowledge and pedagogical practices that can only be acquired through formal education and ongoing professional learning.

Early childhood educators need different types of professional learning and support at different stages of their careers. Like nurses, teachers, dental assistants and other professionals, they need mentorship and encouragement when they first begin practice. They also need education and training to broaden their knowledge, refine their skills and keep pace with new research and developments (Nutbrown 2012).

Professional learning can take a variety of forms, ranging from post-secondary education to workshops and conferences to participation in professional learning communities. It can include courses, workshops, staff meetings, subject-specific training, supervised practices and mentoring (OECD 2019). It can also be field-based training in which staff receive feedback on their practices.

To be most effective, “professional learning needs to be tailored to the needs of specific staff and offered on a long-term basis. The key is to provide courses that help staff to stay abreast of the latest developments, and the training that provides staff with the tools needed to apply this knowledge in their work” (OECD 2019, 39).

Ongoing professional learning makes it possible for early childhood educators to stay abreast of the latest advances in pedagogy, curriculum and care practice. It helps weaker staff become more effective. It may also improve sector-wide staff retention by improving career satisfaction, opening new career paths and reinforcing early childhood educators’ identity as professionals (OECD 2019).

Most importantly, ongoing professional learning supports pedagogical quality and better outcomes for children and families (OECD 2011). In fact, research suggests that relevant professional learning “is one of the most effective levers for process quality and for supporting children’s development, learning, and well-being” (OECD 2019, 38).

“Research shows that relevant, well-planned professional learning can be inspiring and motivating. Early childhood educators who participate in ongoing professional learning tend to stay in the field and are better equipped to deal with the demanding, complex work they do each day” (AECEA 2018, 76).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ON THE CANADIAN SCENE

There is growing recognition of the importance of professional learning—both across Canada and internationally. Ongoing professional learning is mandatory in some OECD countries, including Slovenia, Austria, Luxembourg.

In Canada, Ontario’s Child Care and Early Years Act is supported by a regulation that requires “written policies and procedures with respect to staff training and development” (Government of Ontario 2019, section 58). A requirement for professional development is also part of BC’s Community Care and Assisted Living Act. BC requires forty hours of professional development for certification.

Many of the provincial/federal bilateral agreements signed as part of Canada’s Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework (see p. 131, Appendix 4) focus on professional learning and development. Here are a few examples (Pasolli 2019; Dublenko):

- BC will provide targeted grants for approved professional development, including grants related to the province’s early learning framework.
- Manitoba will fund a variety of online training programs and pilot a mentorship program to support licensed home-based providers.

- New Brunswick will develop workshops and mentorship programs.
- Northwest Territories will invest in online professional development and on-the-job training.
- Yukon will fund an annual professional development training event.
- Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Nunavut will make investments to support professional development and training.

In 2017–2018, funding allocated through federal/provincial bilateral agreements helped 1,780 Canadian early childhood educators access professional development opportunities (Employment and Social Development Canada 2019b).

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IN ALBERTA

Although the value of ongoing professional learning is clear, this important area is often neglected.

A 2016 survey conducted by Public Interest Alberta found that 11% of child care operators offered no professional development for their staff—even in the form of reading material. Only three in 10 operators supported their staff in taking post-secondary courses, and only four in 10 provided paid time off for professional development. Seven in 10 operators provided on-site workshops or funding for staff to attend educational events.

In spite of limited workplace support, early childhood educators themselves are keen to improve their professional learning and skills. In AECEA’s 2018–2019 workforce survey (Buschmann and Partridge 2019), more than 71% of respondents said they were interested in continuing their education. Interestingly, this percentage was constant across subgroups: early childhood educators with four-year degrees were just as likely to be interested in further education as early childhood educators with high school diplomas.

Although they were eager to learn, AECEA’s survey respondents identified time and money as major challenges. Additional challenges included the availability of appropriate specialized programs, access to these programs and cost (both training cost and the cost of covering staff while they are away for training).

WHAT KIND OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IS NEEDED?

For the past 12 years, since 2008, AECEA has held a Children’s Services grant to provide professional development funding for child development supervisors.* The association administered the grant on the ministry’s behalf. Between 2014 and January 28, 2020, AECEA made 6,816 professional development grants to help child development supervisors improve their knowledge and skills. Although this represents an investment of more than \$1.2 million, funding shortfalls meant that hundreds of qualified applicants were turned away each year.

Table 5. Number of professional development grants that AECEA awarded to child development supervisors between 2014 and 2020. The grants were available to child development supervisors in contracted family day home agencies or in licensed day care or out-of-school care programs. Supervisors who worked in preschools, as family day home providers or on reserve were not eligible.

Year	PD grants	
2014–2015	1,395	\$215,557
2015–2016	782	\$149,972
2016–2017	827	\$152,127
2017–2018	1,169	\$211,282
2018–2019	1,522	\$287,432
2019–January 28, 2020	1,121	\$225,199

Over the course of administering its grant program, AECEA has collected data on what types of education and training supervisors are looking for to advance their own professional development.

* Alberta Children’s Services will take over the administration of grant funding for child development supervisors as of March 31, 2020. This will provide a single funding-application point of access for early childhood educators at all certification levels.

AECEA's analysis of 2019 data related to foundational early learning and child care education found the following:

- 34% of child development supervisors indicated that they needed information found in certificate-level courses.
 - Within this group, the two top educational priorities were guiding behaviour (41%) and development through play (16%). Both of these topics are directly related to Alberta's early learning and child care curriculum framework, *Flight*.

Alberta's post-secondary early learning and child care programs now include instruction about *Flight*.

- 35% of child development supervisors indicated that they needed information found in diploma-level courses.
 - Within this group, the four top educational priorities were leadership and management (22%), development and inclusive care (16%), training about Alberta's early learning and child care curriculum framework (14%) and creative play (13%).
- 13% of child development supervisors indicated that they needed degree-level courses.
 - Within this group, the two top educational priorities were leadership and collaboration (46%) and mental health and trauma (28%).
- 18% of child development supervisors indicated that they needed other types of professional development

Early childhood educators need to understand the content, recommendations and implications of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee, the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. AECEA and its Indigenous partners will discover ways of working together in defining appropriate strategies and approaches for this work.

REQUIRE MANDATORY ONGOING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

AECEA's Recommendation

- 20. Legislate a requirement for ongoing professional learning for all early childhood educators in all sectors of the regulated system.**

Ongoing professional learning should be a requirement for credential maintenance. See Recommendation 15 on p. 70.

“There is growing evidence that a comprehensive and well-delivered, high-quality program of ongoing professional learning, at an institutional or program level, provides positive benefits for staff and program quality” (Muttart 2014, 27).

All early childhood educators—including preschool teachers, early childhood educators in approved family child care programs and early childhood educators who work in licensed and approved First Nations and Métis Settlements child care programs—need support for professional learning. This part of the workforce is excluded from current grant programs.

The importance of ongoing professional learning is clear, and legislating a requirement is a good start. However, early childhood educators and their employers need support to make the legislation work. Staff need incentives to enroll, including financial assistance and time off. Workplaces also need funding support to allow their staff to pursue ongoing professional learning.

- 21. Legislate a requirement for early childhood educators to develop annual professional learning plans that show what education, training, skills development or pedagogical development activities the individuals will undertake each year to improve their qualifications and maintain their certification status.**

Ongoing professional learning linked to a formal learning plan is an important component of quality early learning and child care. Ongoing professional learning helps early childhood educators strengthen their knowledge, skills and competencies in areas such as

child development, management and leadership. It also helps them to build on specialized topics such as outdoor and nature play, nutrition, cultural diversity, inclusion, children’s rights and Indigenous studies.

In Canada, the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (2010) has identified participation in life-long professional development and continuous learning as an occupational standard for early childhood educators. This standard requires early childhood educators to

- *develop professional learning plans*
- *engage in ongoing professional learning activities that enhance their skills, knowledge and experience*
- *network with peers and encourage collaboration by sharing ideas with their professional colleagues*

A Curriculum Framework Provides a Foundation

“The growing practice of creating and using a curriculum framework recognizes...the complementary and complex nature of care, learning and development; that child care is much more than custodial work; and, that early learning is much more than the ‘pushing down’ of school subjects upon very young children—or ‘schoolification’ as this practice is termed” (Muttart 2012, 37–38).

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2012) identifies the design and implementation of curriculum and learning standards as one of five “policy levers” for creating a well-functioning, high-quality early learning and child care system.*

Curriculum frameworks (Muttart 2012, OECD 2012, European Commission 2014) set out the values and guiding principles that guide early childhood educators’ approach to children’s learning and care. They establish learning standards that ensure consistent quality across different program settings. They guide staff in adopting pedagogical approaches that support children’s learning and well-being. They keep parents engaged in and informed about their children’s early learning and

* The five OECD policy levers are listed on p. 29 of this document,

child care programs. They help parents understand child development and support parents' role in early learning in the home. Finally, they help to connect community-based, school-based and early childhood program-based services and they serve as a resource for all staff who provide services for children and families.

Different countries take different approaches to framing their early learning and child care curricula. Some focus on staff expectations; others focus on expected child outcomes (OECD 2012, 11). In Canada, some provinces' curriculum frameworks take a child development approach; others—including Alberta's—"emphasize children as active, engaged learners" (Muttart 2012, 38).

In spite of such variations in approach, effective early learning and child care curriculum frameworks include a number of standard elements (Muttart 2012; McCuaig 2014; Bennett 2004; European Commission 2014; OECD 2011c; New Zealand 2017): Effective frameworks

- establish a learning and care philosophy, guiding principles and standards
- reflect the best available knowledge, evidence and best practices related to early learning and child care
- set out pedagogical approaches and care practices that recognize children's care, learning and socialization as an inseparable whole
- articulate broadly based, open-ended learning goals that contribute to children's overall development
- support inclusion for all children

"Inclusion encompasses gender and ethnicity, diversity of ability and learning needs, family structure and values, socio-economic status and religion" (New Zealand 2017, 13).

- celebrate the diverse social, linguistic and cultural experiences of individual children and their families
- recognize children’s right to be heard and to have their opinions considered
- recognize that parents are children’s first and most influential teachers, acknowledge parents’ aspirations for their children and involve parents in decision-making concerning their children
- embed everyday, local knowledge and resources within the context of early learning and child care and embrace parents, families and communities as partners in children’s learning and development

Effective early learning and child care curriculum frameworks are child centred.

They recognize the rights of children as confident, curious, capable, creative and resourceful learners and citizens. They respect children’s diverse abilities, interests, personalities and preferences and involve them in decisions about their learning experiences.

A child-centred approach acknowledges children as learners who are engaged with their learning environments (New Zealand 2017). It emphasizes children’s potential and recognizes that the “strengths, interests and passions” of children are the “focus of care, learning and growth” (Muttart 2012, 40).

Effective early learning and child care curriculum frameworks promote good health, nurture children’s well-being and foster a sense of identity and belonging.

They establish children’s connections to “family, community, culture and place”—including their place in the wider world—and prepare children for life and citizenship in their society. They support “the right of each

child to be confident in their own culture” and encourage “children to understand and respect other cultures” (New Zealand 2017, 10).

“All children need to know that they are accepted for who they are and that they can make a difference. Feeling that they belong contributes to their wellbeing and gives them the confidence to try new experiences” (New Zealand 2017, 31).

Effective early learning and child care curriculum frameworks are age appropriate and development focused (Muttart 2012; Bennett 2004; European Commission 2014; New Zealand 2017).

They recognize that “learning leads development” and that learning and development take place at the child’s own pace, through active play. They respond to the “strengths, interests, abilities and needs of each child and, at times, provide them with additional support in relation to learning, behaviour, development or communication” (New Zealand 2017, 13). They also support “children’s developing social competence and understanding of appropriate behaviour” (10).

The best development-focused curriculum frameworks define explicit goals that allow children to learn in their own way. They “address the holistic development of children across broad developmental domains,” including cognitive, emotional, physical and social development (European Commission 2014, 39).

Development-focus goal-setting within early learning and child care curriculum frameworks does not match a traditional subject-focused approach. Rather, it focuses on “meaning-making” as children explore and learn about themselves and about their place in the world. It includes movement, creative expression, language and communication—including learning how to interact with people, how to make friends, and how to communicate desires and needs (European Commission 2014, 42, citing Bennett 2013).

Effective early learning and child care curriculum frameworks are relationship based.

They recognize the importance of the “quality of interactions and relationships between adults and children, children and children, and adults and adults” (Muttart 2012, 38). They respect the “capacities, passions, knowledge, and creativity” (40) of every party in the relationship—children, families, early childhood educators and community partners.

Relationship-based curriculum frameworks facilitate communication and cooperation between early childhood educators, parents and children. They also facilitate liaison with other services. This supports the creation of interdisciplinary teams that can respond to children’s particular learning and development needs: early identification and intervention to address children’s learning and development challenges can prevent more serious problems down the road.

Relationship-based curriculum frameworks encourage collegiality and support reflective practice (European Commission 2014). Reflective practice requires early childhood educators to observe and document children’s learning experiences so they can respond to new challenges and changing needs. This deepens educators’ understanding of children’s learning and development.

Effective early learning and child care curriculum frameworks are play based.

“Play is how children experience, engage with and make sense of their world; it helps children develop the skills necessary to build strong bodies and brains” (Pickles 2019, 7).

Children learn through play (European Commission 2014; New Zealand 2017; Australian Government 2018).

Play allows children to explore every aspect of their environment—“natural, social, physical, spiritual and human-made” (New Zealand 2017, 46). Play empowers children. It sparks their curiosity and fosters their well-being, learning and growth. Through play, children learn to respect and make sense of their world. They learn to cope with uncertainty and imagine alternatives. They learn to make connections between prior experiences and new ones.

Play gives children opportunities to ask questions, figure out how things work, choose the materials they need to solve problems, take risks and develop independence. It nurtures children’s creativity, curiosity, reasoning skills, confidence and resilience. All these things are important foundations for learning. Through play, children begin to develop the skills, attitudes and expectations that will continue to influence their learning in school and throughout life (New Zealand 2017, 46).

Children’s right to play is internationally recognized and enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Alberta’s Curriculum Framework

AECEA supports Alberta's early learning and child care curriculum framework, *Flight* (Makovichuk et al. 2014). *Flight* was developed specifically for Alberta’s children with funding from Alberta Children’s Services. It is intended to guide the practice of early childhood educators working in centre-based child care and family day homes in the province. The *Flight* framework supports staff in working with all children and families, including those with diverse abilities and diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Flight is founded on evidence-based practice that centres on children’s physical and emotional well-being and creates a sense of belonging. It includes play-based learning, healthy nutrition, physical activity and meaningful routines.

Following the *Flight* curriculum framework requires sound knowledge and understanding of child development and family dynamics. This means that educators view all children as competent and capable beings. They plan and deliver well-designed learning experiences that reflect the uniqueness of each child and family. Their curriculum-related decisions are based on observation, reflection, documentation and critical thinking as well as on interactions with children and families.

Introducing the *Flight* framework into all of Alberta’s early learning and child care programs will substantially improve the quality of these programs. However, using the framework effectively requires a well-educated and well-supported workforce. *Flight* is a comprehensive and complex document designed to be used by early childhood educators with diploma-level qualifications. “Staff with modest educational qualifications will not have the capacity to follow the framework without additional foundational education and ongoing pedagogical support” (AECEA 2018, 79).

“Most successful curricula are closely linked to an educator’s training and implementation of pedagogical practices. They are characterized by intensive professional development that often involves coaching...and assessments...to inform educators...[about children’s] progress and provide children with individualized instruction.” (Garon-Carrier 2019, 6).

BUILD A QUALITY SYSTEM FOUNDED ON EVIDENCE-BASED CURRICULUM

AECEA’s Recommendations

22. Adopt Alberta’s early learning and child care curriculum framework, *Flight*, in all licensed and approved early learning and child care programs in the province.

Alberta’s early learning and child care curriculum framework, Flight, was published in 2014 (Makovichuk et al.). Like other province’s frameworks, Flight draws on research about how children learn, how development shapes learning and how families and communities

support children's early learning (Muttart 2012). Like other province's frameworks, Flight includes a vision, values and guiding principles. Its open-ended approach defines broad-based learning goals and supports a variety of pedagogical approaches.

Research shows that three operational conditions must be in place for curriculum frameworks to succeed (Muttart 2012, 41):

- *appropriate infrastructure, including staffing, learning materials and physical site resources*
- *appropriate systems to provide information on quality and service delivery*
- *well-educated staff who have the training they need to understand the framework and the support they need to implement it in their day-to-day work*

In order for Flight to be successfully implemented across Alberta's early learning and child care system, it must be embedded in all the province's post-secondary early learning and child care education programs.

Appropriate review, monitoring and updating processes must be developed to ensure that Flight stays current with emerging research and best practices

A Summary of Recommendations for Legislative Change

Words Matter

Update the outdated child-care-related terminology in Alberta's legislation

1. Change the name of the Child Care Licensing Act to the *Early Learning and Child Care Licensing Act*. Throughout the act and regulation, replace all references to “child care” with “early learning and child care.”
2. Change the term “day care program” to “centre-based early learning and child care program.”

Give early childhood educators the respect they deserve

3. Adopt the term “early childhood educators” to replace the current classifications of “child development supervisor,” “child development worker,” and “child development assistant.”

Acknowledge that well-qualified early childhood educators are the foundation of a high-quality early learning and child care system

4. **Recognize the importance of well-qualified early childhood educators in the preamble to the act.**

Legislate new certification classifications

5. Replace the current three-level certification system (child development assistants, child development workers, child development supervisors) with the classifications early childhood educator I (ECE I, which is transitional), early childhood educator II (ECE II), early childhood educator III (ECE III) and early childhood educator IV (ECE IV).

Early Learning and Child Care Matters

Recognize the importance of high-quality early learning and child care

6. Recognize the importance of quality early learning and child care in the preamble to the act.

7. Enshrine Alberta's goals for high-quality early learning and child care that
 - helps children reach their potential and fully develop their talents and abilities
 - helps children develop the resilience, determination, confidence, creativity and critical thinking skills that prepare them for school, work and life
 - helps children develop strong communication and social skills
 - helps children develop into responsible citizens who value democratic rights and freedoms and make a positive contribution to society
 - teaches children the importance of peace, equality, friendship among all peoples and inclusion within society of people who are different
 - instills respect for nature, for the environment, and for social and cultural diversity

Children Have Rights

Legislate protection for the rights of children, including the right to high-quality early learning and child care

8. Recognize the rights of children in the preamble to the act. Recognize that high-quality early learning and child care is a critical component of the education to which every child has a right.

Legislate protection for children's right to play outdoors and enjoy nature

9. Amend the Child Care Licensing Regulation to incorporate the Get Outside and Play organization's recommendations for outdoor play. These include
 - increasing the amount of outdoor space required for children in licensed early learning and child care programs
 - instituting minimum daily outdoor playtime requirements

All Children Matter

Phase in and enforce new minimum education requirements across the system

10. Legislate new minimum requirements for higher educational qualifications for early childhood educators in all parts of the regulated system.

Update and clarify the legislative requirements for private babysitters

11. Legislate appropriate minimum standards for private babysitters. These should include a requirement for private babysitters to post, at the entrance to their premises, a notice informing parents that they are not regulated and not monitored by government.
12. Legislate clear and appropriate maximums for the number of children that private babysitters can care for at any one time.

Early Childhood Educators Matter

Legislate and phase in new minimum requirements for higher educational qualifications

13. Legislate and phase in a two-year diploma in early childhood education as the new minimum standard for early childhood educators in all parts of the regulated system.
14. Legislate a requirement for early childhood educators to develop personalized educational upgrading plans that outline the pathways they will take to meet the new minimum standards.

Legislate credential maintenance requirements

15. Legislate a requirement for ongoing credential maintenance. Include ongoing professional learning as one requirement for certification renewal.

Early Childhood Educators Need Top-Quality Programs

Provide early learning and child care education through public post-secondary institutions

16. Provide early learning and child care education through public post-secondary institutions and recognized Indigenous colleges and universities.

Early Childhood Educators Need to Specialize

Require specialization in early learning and child care

17. Legislate a requirement for all early childhood educators who work in licensed and regulated child care programs to have specialized early learning and child care education.

Eliminate equivalencies

18. Remove the provision for educational equivalencies from the Child Care Licensing Regulation. Implement a bridging plan to help child care providers whose certification is based on an educational equivalency to upgrade to the new standard.

Early Childhood Educators Need a Broad Range of Education

Require organizational management or pedagogical leadership education for all program directors and managers

19. Legislate and phase in a requirement for all early childhood educators who work as program directors to be certified as ECE IIIs, a classification that requires a post-diploma certificate in management or pedagogical leadership in addition to a two-year diploma specializing in early learning and child care.

Early Childhood Educators Need Ongoing Professional Development and Support

Require mandatory ongoing professional learning

20. Legislate a requirement for ongoing professional learning for all early childhood educators in all sectors of the regulated system. Ongoing professional learning should be a requirement for credential maintenance.
21. Legislate a requirement for early childhood educators to develop annual professional learning plans that show what education, training, skills development or pedagogical development activities the individuals will undertake each year to improve their qualifications and maintain their certification status

A Curriculum Framework Provides a Foundation

Build a quality system founded on evidence-based curriculum

22. Adopt Alberta's early learning and child care curriculum framework, *Flight* (Makovichuk et al. 2014), in all licensed and regulated child care programs in the province.

Policy Support for Legislative Change

Legislation that supports a highly qualified workforce is an important step in building a well-functioning early learning and child care system. But for legislation to be effective, it must be supported by system-wide planning and policy.

Accessible, Affordable Child Care

Raising strong, healthy children is a goal in which all sectors of society have a stake—parents, families, communities, businesses and governments. It follows that providing children with quality early learning and child care programs is a responsibility that all sectors must share. In Alberta today, parents and families bear the brunt of the burden.

Alberta's regulated system does not provide families with enough early learning and child care spaces to meet demand, and the high cost of regulated spaces makes them unaffordable for many families. A recent report by UNICEF (cited in Philpott 2019) noted that 60% of Canadian families pay as much as a third of their income for child care, and that 44% of Canadian children live in areas where quality early learning and child care is in short supply. Families who live in rural or remote parts of the province and families who have children with special needs face additional challenges in finding suitable early learning and child care. In addition, the changing world of work means that families need flexible child care options beyond the traditional 9-to-5 workday.

Public investment is needed to create accessible, affordable, high-quality early learning and child care spaces. And investments in spaces must come with sufficient dollars for staffing, programming and operational support.

Public Investment

“Two things are unequivocally critical for shaping ...[a high-quality early learning and child care system]: substantial, well-directed public funding and robust public policy. Limited public funding virtually guarantees that high quality services will be generally unavailable and unaffordable for many families while preventing the good wages needed to attract and retain highly qualified staff. At the same time, delivery of funds through ineffectual mechanisms and insufficient public management make it difficult to effectively ‘steer’ towards better integration of care and education and towards delivering the right mix of high quality affordable services that families want and need.”

—ChildCare2020 (2014), *Child Care in Canada by 2020: A Vision and a Way Forward*, p. 14

Alberta’s investment in early learning and child care is well below the national average and well below international standards. The province’s early learning and child care system is significantly underfunded, and recent and impending cuts will make the situation even worse.

- The UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre (Adamson 2008) recommends that developed countries should spend at least 1% of GDP on early learning and child care. GDP was \$336.3 billion in 2018 (Government of Alberta 2019e). One percent would be \$336.3 million.
- In 2015–2016, Alberta spent approximately \$2,422 for each regulated child care space. This was the fifth-lowest allocation among Canadian jurisdictions and well below the average of \$3,405 per space (Friendly et al. 2018, 169).
- Alberta’s spending per regulated child care space increased by 87% between 1992 and 2015–2016—from \$1,290 to \$2,422. By comparison, Newfoundland and Labrador’s spending per child care

space increased by 1029% in the same period—from \$468 to \$4,818. In 2015–2016, Newfoundland and Labrador ranked highest in Canada for spending on regulated child care spaces (Friendly et al. 2018, 169).

- Alberta provides subsidies to help low-income families cover child care fees. But child care affordability is a significant issue for modest- and middle-income as well as low-income families. The *Developmental Milestones* study found that, in 2018, annual child care fees in Edmonton and Calgary ranged from \$10,020 to \$13,200 per child (Macdonald and Friendly 2019).*
- Research shows that providing funding directly to parents is not an effective way to build a high-quality child care system. Parents, especially low-income parents, often choose child care for convenience or proximity rather than quality. (Howe, Jacobs, Vukelich and Recchia, 2013). In addition, quality early learning and child care may not be available in some communities, so parents may have to make other choices.

Many factors are needed to build a quality child care system in Alberta. Having subsidies go directly to parents will not create a sustainable system or support quality child care spaces.

“Several studies show that the benefits of early childhood education far outweigh the costs....While governments at all levels are in no position to boost program spending at this time given budget constraints, this is one area that they should consider making a high priority...”

- The Alberta Federation of Labour (2018a) reports that Alberta’s child care fees in Alberta are third highest in Canada.

—TD Economics Special Report (2012), *Early Childhood Education Has Widespread and Long Lasting Benefits*, p. 1.

*This is reduction from the \$10,600 to \$15,000 per child Macdonald and Friendly reported for 2017. The expansion of Albertas \$25-a-day program pilot accounts for the difference.

Ongoing Research and Evaluation

“What gets counted, counts.”

—ECMap (2014), *How Are Our Young Children Doing?*, p. 33, citing Clyde Hertzman of the University of British Columbia’s Human Early Learning Partnership

There is a serious lack of current, detailed statistical data about Alberta’s (and Canada’s) early learning and child care workforce. There are significant gaps in what we know about the composition of the workforce and about the strengths, challenges, needs and concerns of the province’s early childhood educators. Workforce-related research needs to be conducted regularly and systematically in order to identify changing needs and trends, to identify areas of concern and opportunities for innovation, and to ensure accountability within the system.

Alberta also needs ongoing research about how its children are doing. Research data provides a foundation for evidence-based best practices. It ensures that program dollars are invested where they are most needed and where they will do the most good. It is important for Alberta to continue to collect and analyze standardized Early Development Instrument data as part of a comprehensive, province-wide early childhood development monitoring system.

Good data supports good decision-making

“Consistent collection of ECEC data is vitally important to ensure the best policy and program design, services planning, accountability of public funds, and evaluation of program effectiveness. The lack of good quality ECEC data means that meeting these objectives is increasingly difficult today.”

—Carolyn Ferns and Martha Friendly (2015), *The State of Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2012*, p. 21

Public Awareness and Understanding

There is a need for public education to increase Albertans' understanding of the importance of the early years and the importance of high-quality early learning and child care. There is also a need to increase public understanding of the important role early childhood educators play—both in nurturing children's development and well-being and in building a democratic society.

Building a high-quality early learning and child care system for Alberta means recognizing early childhood educators as respected, valued, well-educated professionals who earn a fair wage for the important work they do.

There is still a long way to go.

The 2013 provincial benchmark survey conducted by the Alberta Centre for Child, Family and Community Research found that “the average Albertan’s knowledge about early development is still quite low” (ECMap 2014, 35).

Community-based Partnerships

“It takes a village to raise a child.”

The well-being of a community influences the well-being of its children. The community coalitions created through Alberta's Early Child Development Mapping Project engaged community members and facilitated communication across all sectors committed to the well-being of young children. The coalitions “became central to planning responses to the data and were a valuable source of information on local needs, strengths and gaps for policy-makers and decision-makers” (ECMap 2014, 2014).

Recent funding cuts have forced the dismantling of community coalitions. This is an unfortunate setback in Alberta's commitment to build an effective, integrated early learning and child care system. Improving early

childhood outcomes will not happen without community-based planning mechanisms that engage children, families and other stakeholders in what early learning should look like. It is these individuals who best know what their communities need.

Parental Engagement

The ability to engage parents as partners in their children's early learning and development is an important competency for early childhood educators. But parents need additional support if they are to be effective teachers and champions of their children's learning.

Since 2004, Alberta's Parent Link Centres have provided accessible, affordable, community-based resource programs to support parents and families in raising healthy, well-adjusted children. Core services provided through the centres encompassed parent education, early childhood development, family support, developmental screening, and information and referral services.

The Alberta government recently announced that current contracts for the province's network of 130 Parent Link Centres will be replaced with a new model of delivery and funding. The new, collaborative Family Resource Network will standardize the types of services that are provided. Current Parent Link Centres will need to apply for funding under the new structure.

Strategy Support for Legislative Change

Recommendations for an Early Learning and Child Care Workforce Strategy for Alberta

“The early care and education workforce is at risk financially, emotionally, and physically, subject to a vicious cycle of inadequate resources, low qualification expectations, low education levels, and low wages that is difficult to break. Appropriate income, resources, support, and opportunities for career development are essential for bringing excellent candidates into the workforce, retaining them as they further develop their knowledge and skills, and ensuring that they advance their knowledge and skills through professional learning opportunities.”

—National Research Council (2015b), *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8*, p. 479

One of the three expected outcomes outlined in the 2019–2023 business plan for Alberta Children’s Services is that “the growth and development of children is supported through accessible, affordable and quality child care” (Government of Alberta 2019c, 17). Quality child care can only be delivered by caring, competent early childhood educators: they are the foundation of a quality early learning and child care system.

Alberta needs an early learning and child care workforce strategy that supports early childhood educators in providing quality early learning and child care. Quality care in turn supports Alberta’s children and families. It is the foundation of a strong economy and a vibrant democratic society.

A workforce strategy for early childhood educators must address three key issues:

- education
- fair pay and benefits
- working conditions

These issues are interrelated and they must be addressed through comprehensive system change. This will require political will, public support and significant investment. Status quo is not acceptable. Without system-wide change, early childhood educators will never attain the fair wages and respect they deserve, early learning and child care programs will continue to be plagued by the challenges of recruiting and retaining qualified staff and Alberta’s children will continue to be short-changed. Alberta’s early learning and child care system will remain unstable, quality will remain modest or low, and positive child and family outcomes will be compromised.

Education

Early childhood educators must be well-educated, highly-competent professionals

Early childhood educators need in-depth specialized education.

The majority of early childhood educators in Alberta’s early learning and child care system are significantly undereducated and underqualified for the important work they do. As shown in Table 3 on p. 67, only 43% hold a two-year diploma—which many experts consider to be a minimum standard—and among this number, a significant proportion are certified on the basis of equivalencies rather than specialized early childhood education. This is not acceptable.

There is no question that raising qualification standards for Alberta’s early childhood educators will lead to higher-quality early learning and child care for Alberta’s children. Legislative change to increase minimum education requirements is an important first step. But legislation must be supported by policy and financial support—for early childhood educators themselves, for their workplaces and for the post-secondary education sector.

In the short term, increasing educational requirements may exacerbate staff shortages because the cost of education may keep people from entering the field. It may also be difficult to accommodate large numbers of new students within existing post-secondary early learning and child care programs.

In the long-term, increasing educational standards for early childhood educators will have significant benefits on all fronts—for the workforce, for employers, for Alberta families, for the province’s economy, and most importantly, for Alberta’s children and for society as a whole.

Raising minimum standards for early childhood educators will require substantial public investment. AECEA’s position is that the benefits far outweigh the costs. Alberta’s early childhood educators deserve fair wages and the respect due to well-educated professionals. And Alberta’s children deserve high-quality early learning and child care that only well-educated, well-respected and properly remunerated early childhood educators can provide.

Implications for early childhood educators

High standards for education are critical for a host of reasons. At the same time, raising qualification requirements “can be a barrier to entry into the profession for people who lack financial resources” (OECD 2019, 20). The lack of financial resources and the lack of access to education can also be barriers for early childhood educators who are already working in the field. AECEA’s 2018–2019 survey of Alberta’s early learning and child care workforce confirms these observations. Survey respondents noted the need for tuition support and for flexible part-time and online learning options.

Early childhood educators are poorly paid, and they will need financial support to help them further their training and professional development.

In 2019–2020, the average tuition for full-time undergraduate students in Alberta was \$6,463 (Statistics Canada 2020). For tuition alone, it would cost approximately \$6,500 for a child development assistant to upgrade to the new interim minimum certification as an ECE I, and an additional \$6,500 to upgrade to an ECE II level. These costs are prohibitive for staff who don't earn much more than minimum wage.

Aspiring early childhood educators will also need financial support. From 2011 to 2019, Alberta offered an Early Learning and Child Care Career scholarship program to support high school graduates who wanted to become early childhood educators. The scholarship provided up to \$2,500 for first-year tuition—a relatively modest amount. By comparison, New Zealand provides aspiring early childhood educators with scholarships to cover tuition plus a grant of \$10,000 NZD (6,000 EUR). In Denmark, training is free and students get a salary for their practical placements. They also receive a monthly grant while studying and can take out a loan if they need to (OECD 2019).

AECEA recommends that the Alberta government provide scholarships, bursaries and financial support to help early childhood educators upgrade their education and help new staff enter the field.

Implications for workplaces

In addition to financial support, early childhood educators will need support from their workplaces so that they can take time off to study. They will also need access to flexible, easy-to-access educational programming. Manitoba's highly successful Early Childhood Education Workplace Training Program offers an interesting and effective model that supports both early childhood educators and their workplaces in raising the quality of the early learning and child care system.

Manitoba's program is an accelerated post-secondary diploma that students can complete while they continue to work in licensed early learning and child care programs. The Manitoba government covers the

cost of substitute staff for the two days per week when students attend classes. Students pay their own tuition and related costs and complete their practicum placements in the centres where they work. A staff replacement grant provided to their employers means that students continue to earn their regular full-time salary as they pursue their studies, and employers can afford to pay replacement staff while their regular staff are in school.

AECEA recommends that the Alberta government provide direct financial support to early learning and child care programs so that they can provide their staff with paid release time to upgrade their education.

Implications for Alberta's post-secondary system

Increasing qualification standards for early childhood educators will have a significant impact on Alberta's post-secondary education sector. Alberta will need to invest in post-secondary infrastructure to increase the capacity of post-secondary education institutions to graduate more diploma-level students. Approximately 6,500 child development assistants and 2,700 child development workers will need to upgrade their education to meet the new recommended minimum standard of a two-year diploma in early learning and child care. At least 9,200 post-secondary spaces will be needed immediately—for current staff to upgrade. This is far more than are currently available.

Alberta will need to invest in more post-secondary programs, more program spaces and more qualified instructors in order to meet the needs of two groups of students—(1) early childhood educators who are upgrading their education and (2) new students who are entering the field.

In 2016–2017, an estimated 525 to 550 Alberta students graduated with a one-year early learning and care certificate (or its equivalent), and were eligible for certification as child development workers. A further 340 to 360 students graduated with a two-year diploma and were eligible for certification as child development supervisors (Muttart 2019).

In addition, if Alberta’s early childhood educators are to become a professional workforce, the province’s public post-secondary institutions will need to expand their early childhood education offerings to include bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees. This will provide early childhood educators with career paths that will help to keep them in the field.

In addition to increasing capacity and program options, post-secondary institutions will need to develop flexible delivery models, including online and part-time options. Prospective students who responded to AECEA’s 2018–2019 workforce survey (Buschmann and Partridge 2019) indicated a strong preference for part-time online education. Early childhood educators who were already upgrading their education also preferred online delivery, with a slight preference for full-time rather than part-time education.

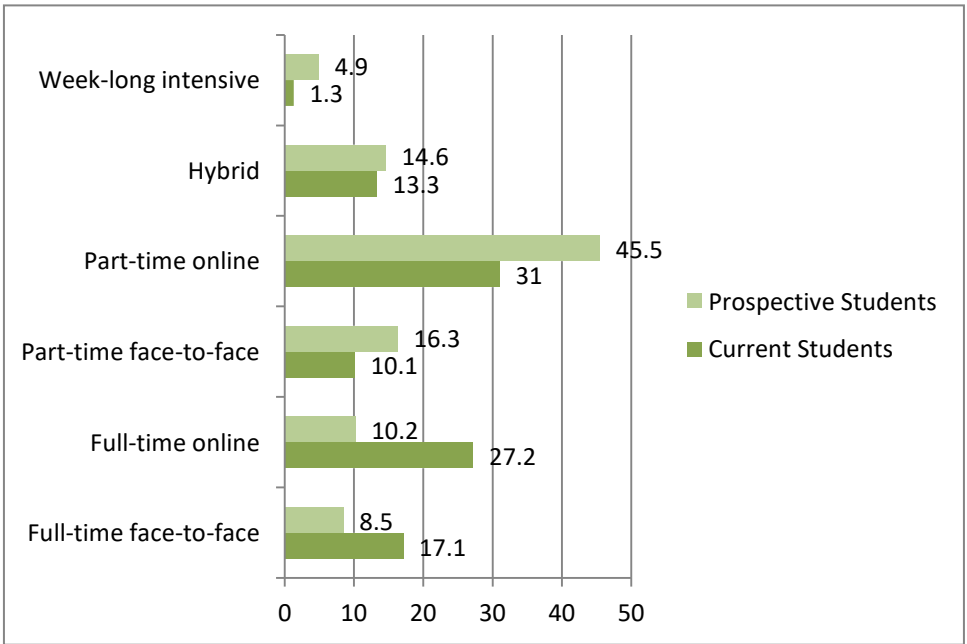


Figure 4. Early childhood educators’ education delivery preferences (as reported in Buschmann and Partridge 2019)

As Alberta builds new public post-secondary infrastructure to support early learning and child care, it must also develop program and quality standards that are comparable across delivery systems. This will allow

students who begin a program at one Alberta institution to transfer credits and complete their studies at another institution in the province. Alberta must also ensure that the instructors who teach in public post-secondary early childhood education programs are well-qualified specialists in this specialized field.

AECEA recommends that the Alberta government provide post-secondary institutions with funding for staff, program development and infrastructure to support the new minimum standards and meet the needs of students in the field of early learning and child care.

Early childhood educators need access to ongoing professional learning and opportunities for career advancement

The bilateral agreements in support of Canada's Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework show that other provinces are increasing their investment in professional development for early childhood educators.

Supporting early childhood educators in ongoing professional learning is integral to high-quality practice and better outcomes for children and families. This is why AECEA has recommended legislative change to make professional learning a requirement for certification, as it is in many other provinces. This change must be supported with adequate funding.

AECEA recommends that the Alberta government provide adequate funding for ongoing professional learning. This funding must be accessible to all early childhood educators, including preschool teachers, early childhood educators in approved family child care programs and early childhood educators who work in licensed and approved First Nations and Métis Settlements early learning and child care programs.

AECEA also recommends that the Alberta government provide funding support to workplaces to help them support their staff in pursuing ongoing professional learning.

Fair Pay and Benefits

“A large body of Canadian and international research demonstrates a strong correlation between the compensation of early learning and child care staff and the quality of services delivered.”

— Child Care Human Resources Sector, What Factors Influence Wages and Benefits in *Early Learning and Child Care Settings?*, p. 2.

Quality early learning and child care can only be delivered by a well-educated, well-supported, well-qualified workforce that stays current with the latest research and best practices in the field. Earning educational qualifications comes with a price. If early childhood educators are to undertake the education expected of a professional workforce, their investment of time and tuition dollars must be properly compensated with professional-level wages.

In Alberta and across Canada, early childhood educators are poorly paid, and many lack workplace benefits such as medical insurance, paid sick leave and pension plans. The *2017 Alberta Wage and Salary Survey* (Government of Alberta 2018a) found that the average hourly wage for early childhood educators in Alberta was \$16.81. By comparison, the average hourly wage across all industries was \$28.39—69% higher.*

Nearly one in 10 respondents to AECEA’s 2018–2019 workforce survey had to work outside the sector to supplement their income (Buschmann and Partridge 2019).

* Statistics Canada’s 2017 *Labour Force Survey* (as cited in the Government of Alberta’s *2017 Alberta Labour Force Profiles: Women*) reports that the average hourly wage in Alberta was \$30.01. The *Labour Force Survey* also reports that average hourly wages for Alberta women were \$26.86 compared to \$32.91 for men.

The difference between the average wages reported in the *Labour Force Survey* and the *Alberta Wage and Salary Survey* is attributable to different survey methodologies. The *Labour Force Survey* reports an annual average; the *Alberta Wage and Salary Survey* reports estimates from a specific point in time. In addition, participation in the former survey is compulsory, while participation in the latter is voluntary. *Labour Force Survey* data is therefore more reliable.

As shown in Table 6, early childhood educators earn significantly less than other education sector workers with comparable training. Early childhood educators earn one-third less than educational assistants—even though both occupations typically require at least one year of post-secondary education. Early childhood educators must also be certified. Certification is not required for educational assistants, and there is no legislation regulating this profession.

Table 6. Comparison of average hourly wages for early childhood educators and educational assistants, as reported in the Government of Alberta's 2017 Alberta Wage and Salary Survey

Industry	Average Starting Salary	Overall Average Salary	Average Top Salary
Early Childhood Educator	\$14.62	\$16.81	\$19.33
Educational Assistant	\$18.22	\$22.19	\$26.20
Difference	24.6%	32.0%	35.5%

Early childhood educators also make significantly less than Alberta's elementary school teachers, who earn an average of \$41.01 per hour. On the other hand, teachers have at least four years of post-secondary training, while many early childhood educators are underqualified for their work. The unfortunate fact that a significant portion of Alberta's child care workforce is poorly educated is a direct consequence of poor wages in the sector.

Low wages, the lack of professional development and career opportunities, and limited understanding of the importance of early childhood education make it difficult to recruit and retain qualified staff. The recent cancellation of Staff Attraction Incentive Grant funding will make the situation even more challenging.

Staff turnover in the early learning and child care sector is estimated to be as high as 25% per year (Muttart 2019), and there is a shortage of qualified staff to work in regulated child care settings. High staff turnover is costly for program operators. It also has a negative impact on children

and families who rely on stable, trusting, long-term relationships with early childhood educators.

The *2017 Alberta Wage and Salary Survey* reports that 62% of employers of early childhood educators had to recruit staff in the last two years. Of these, nearly 30% reported facing hiring difficulties and 6% had unfilled vacancies of over four months. The recent cancellation of the Benefit Contribution Grant cuts will hurt programs with better-educated staff proportionally more than programs with staff at certified at lower levels. Loss of grant funding may force programs to hire less-qualified staff to make up the shortfall.

A 2013 study found that 15% of the directors and 23% of the staff in Alberta child care programs were actively looking for new jobs (Flanagan and Beach 2016, citing the 2013 *You Bet We Still Care!* study). For directors, this was the highest proportion in the country. For staff, it was the second-highest proportion—below Ontario.

Low wages are a direct cause of high staff turnover. High staff turnover has significant social and economic cost, and it affects the quality of children’s early learning and child care experiences. Children need continuity of care to form the close, trusting relationships essential for healthy development.

Addressing the issue of low wages requires public investment to provide early childhood educators with fair wages and benefits. Alberta’s wage enhancement program provides wage top-ups to help employers recruit and retain staff, but this program falls far short of what is needed. Even with top-ups, early childhood educators are still paid much less than most Albertans.

“Without appropriate remuneration and benefits, recruitment and retention of qualified workers will remain a problem, and the overall quality of [early learning and child care] will suffer” (Pasolli 2019, 79). Prince Edward Island has recently introduced a wage grid to help address

the issue. The previous Ontario government also made a commitment to a wage grid as part of its plan to support high-quality early learning and child care.

Appropriate remuneration for early childhood educators requires far-reaching system-wide change supported by substantial public investment. Over the long term, this means that Alberta’s early learning and child care education system for preschool children must receive the same level of public funding as the province’s education system for school-aged children. Without such support, it is unlikely that Alberta’s early childhood educators will ever earn the living wages and benefits they deserve.

AECEA recommends that the government increase wage enhancements, restore the staff attraction grant program and provide operational funding that will allow early learning and child care programs to provide their staff with fair, competitive salaries and benefits.

Over time, it may be possible to replace Alberta’s current wage enhancement program with a salary grid that includes pension and other benefits. For now, wage enhancements are critical for the viability of the early learning and child care sector.

AECEA proposes that wage enhancements be increased as workforce education standards increase. The proposed new certification level—ECE IV—will require wage enhancements commensurate with the level of education that is required.

Working Conditions

Like all Albertans, early childhood educators deserve fair wages and benefits, satisfying work and supportive working conditions. Early childhood educators also deserve to be respected as professionals. Unfortunately, there is a lack of public awareness and understanding of the important, complex role early childhood educators play—both in nurturing children’s development and well-being and in building a democratic society. Too often, the work of early childhood educators is seen as low level and trivial. This lack of respect translates into public

tolerance of the low wages and challenging working conditions that are early childhood educators' lot.

A workforce strategy for early childhood educators must include public education to increase awareness of the importance of quality early learning and child care. Public recognition of the immeasurable value of early childhood educators and their work is critical for garnering public support for the investment needed to build a quality early learning and child care system.

AECEA's 2018–2019 workforce survey found that, while more than 90% of respondents felt respected by parents, only 58% felt respected by the public.

Early childhood educators who did not feel respected by parents were twice as likely to work outside the early learning and child care sector than their colleagues who felt respected. Early childhood educators who worked in out-of-school care programs were less likely to feel respected by parents than their colleagues in centre-based programs, family day homes and preschools.

Early childhood educators with *more experience* were less likely to feel *less respected* by the public. At the same time, older early childhood educators were more likely to feel respected. The significance of this finding is unclear. The survey analysts propose that respondents with more experience might have accumulated more experiences of being demeaned as mere babysitters.

Early childhood educators certified at the highest level were less likely to feel valued by the public than their colleagues. This may suggest that “those certified at the highest level may feel some sense of frustration that, despite their efforts to educate themselves, these efforts were not recognized or rewarded publicly” (11). These results suggest that “there is still a long way to go in promoting the importance of the...[early learning and child care] profession in Alberta.

Closing Thoughts

Quality early learning and child care has wide-reaching benefits for children, for families, for Alberta’s economy and for all of society. That makes it everyone’s business, and it’s important to get our business right.

Getting it right is important for “making life better for Albertans,” which the Government of Alberta has committed to doing.

Legislative change that supports a highly qualified early learning and child care workforce is an important first step. But legislation alone is not enough.

Sound legislation must be supported by policy that creates an effective, integrated early learning and child care system and by a workforce strategy that can translate legislative and policy goals into reality. None of this can happen without appropriate public investment.

Creating an effective well-functioning early learning and child care system for Alberta will not happen quickly and will not come cheaply. It will require significant commitment from all sectors of society and significant investment of public funds. It will also require “a strategic, progressive trajectory of change over time to transform the professional landscape” (National Research Council 2015b, 16).

AECEA’s recommendations for legislative change centre on improving the education of Alberta’s early childhood educators. This is the first step toward professionalizing the workforce and ensuring that early childhood educators can enjoy the fair wages and good working conditions that every Albertan deserves. It is also the first step in ensuring that all Alberta children have the high-quality early learning and child care that is every child’s right.

Well-educated early childhood educators are the cornerstone of a high-quality early learning and child care system. We need to get the system right.

Getting it right is what's best for Alberta's children. And our children are worth it.

Appendix 1: System Models for Early Learning and Child Care

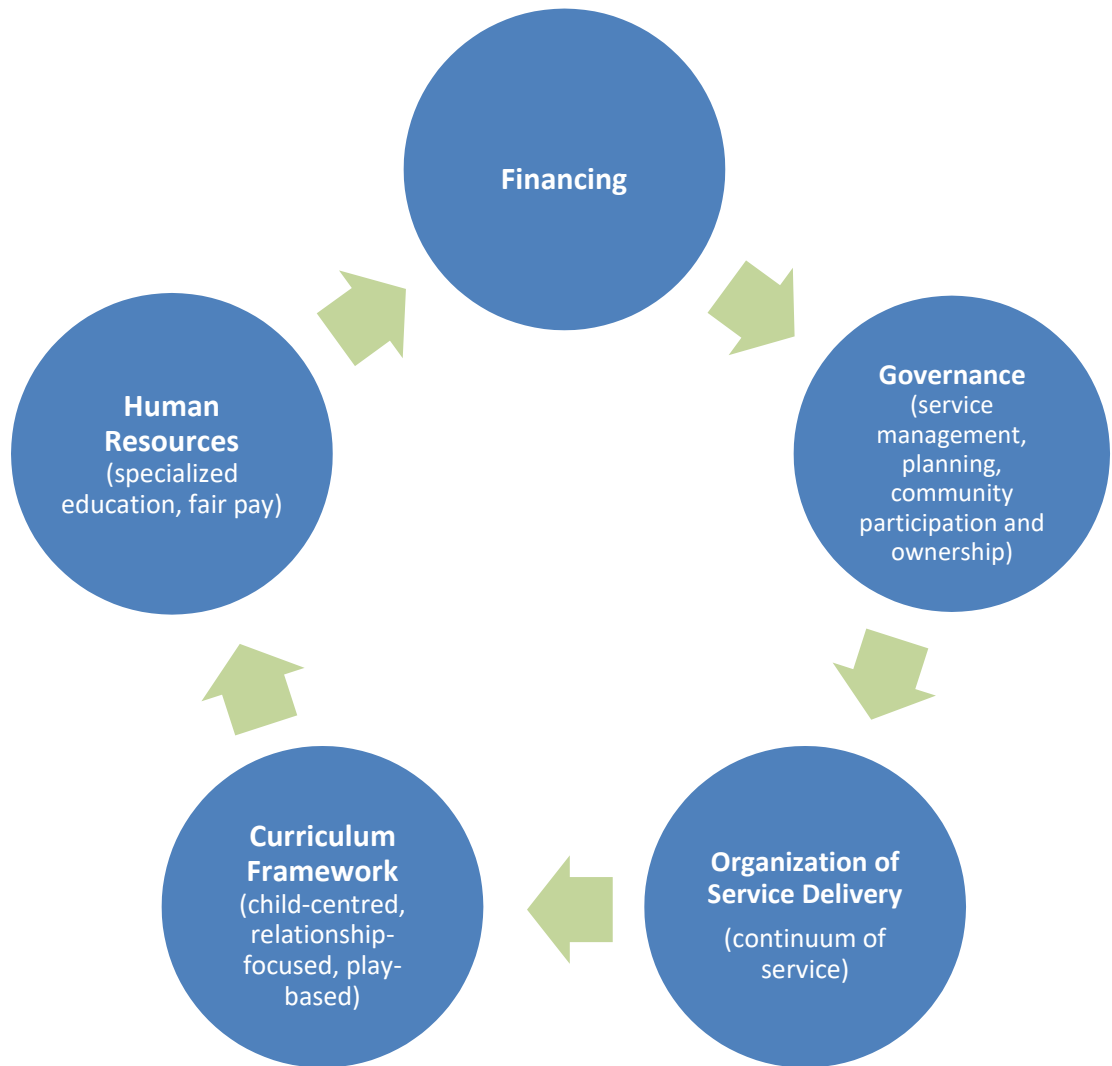


Figure 5. An integrated early learning and child care system as defined in province-wide stakeholder consultations sponsored by the Muttart Foundation (2012; 2013). The system is part of a comprehensive policy framework that sets out a vision, guiding principles, goals and guidelines related to the nature and level of public and private investments in the system. Each piece is interconnected.

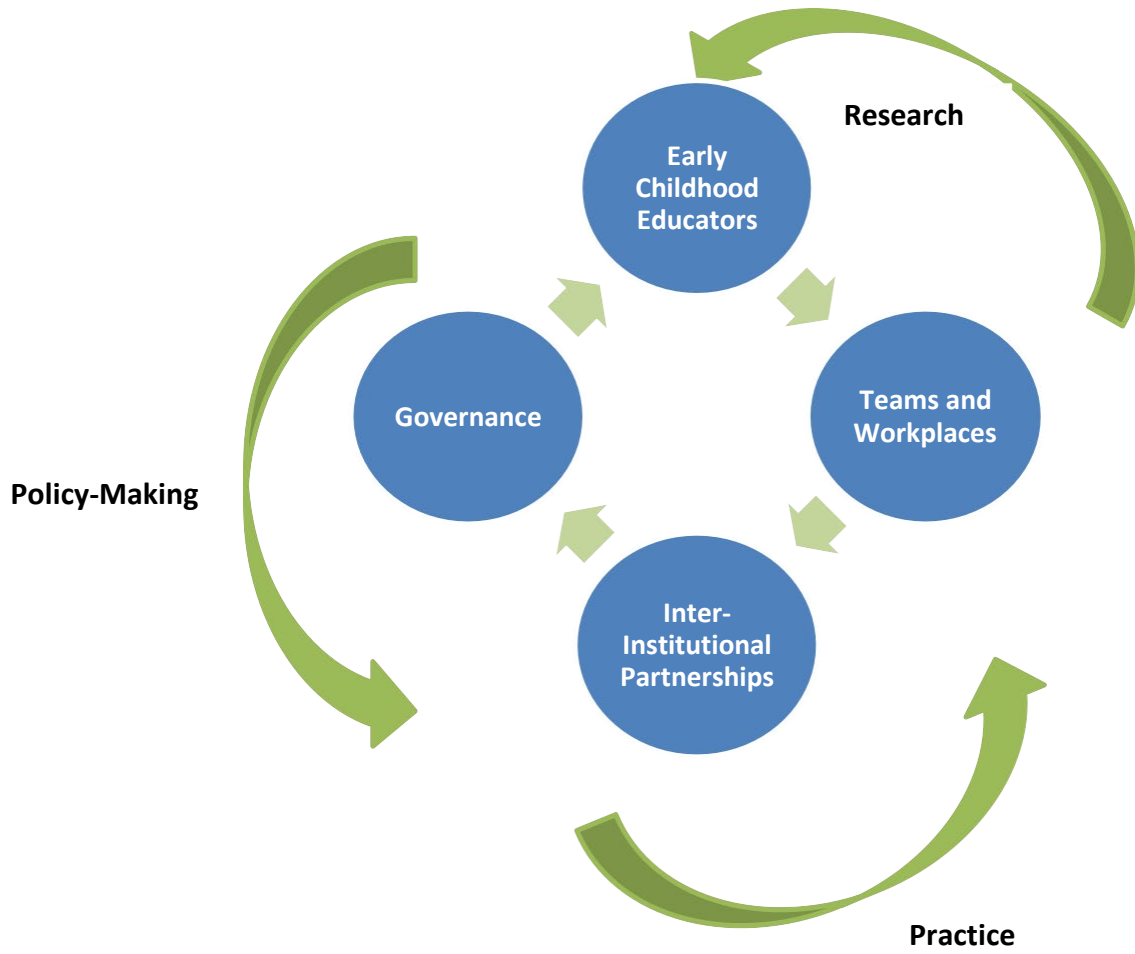


Figure 6. An integrated early learning and child care system as proposed by Peeters (2012) and Peeters and Peleman (2017).



Figure 7. An integrated early learning and child care system as proposed by the Childcare Resource and Research Unit at the University of Toronto (Friendly and Beach 2005)

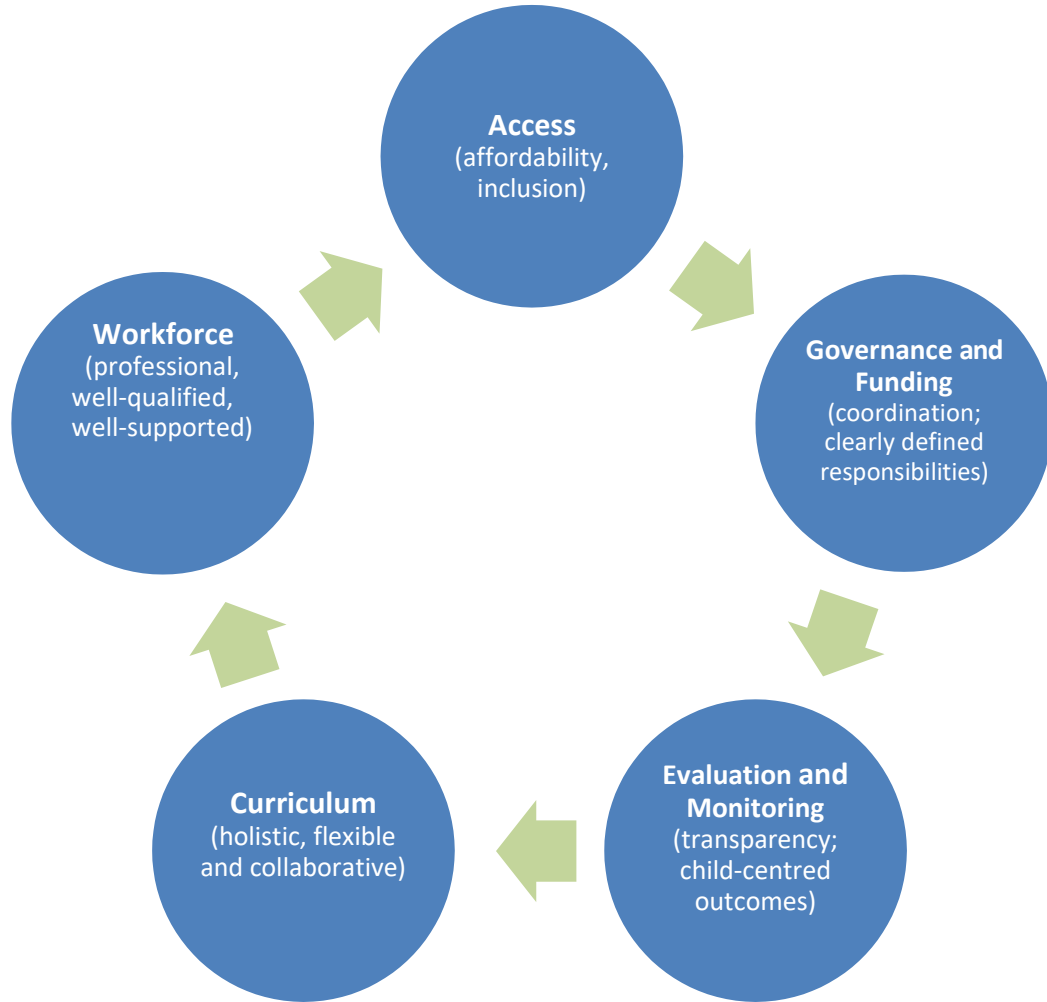


Figure 8. An integrated early learning and child care system as proposed by the European Commission Working Group on Early Childhood Education and Care (2014)

Appendix 2: AECEA's Recommended Changes to the Preamble of the Child Care Licensing Act

AECEA's Recommended Revisions to the Preamble

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta recognizes that children are citizens in their own right;

WHEREAS children have the right to play and to experience nature and the outdoors;

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta acknowledges Indigenous families as partners in developing early learning and child care programs that are rooted in Indigenous traditions, languages and ways of knowing;

WHEREAS education is a right enjoyed by all citizens;

WHEREAS children's education and development begins at birth;

WHEREAS early learning and child care is an important part of children's education;

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta recognizes that quality early learning and child care is in the best interest of the child;

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta recognizes that all children and their families deserve and have a right to accessible, affordable, high-quality early learning and care;

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta recognizes and values early childhood educators for their role in providing high-quality early learning and child care;

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta recognizes the importance of ensuring the safety, well-being and development of children enrolled in early learning and child care programs;

WHEREAS the well-being, safety, security, education and health of children are priorities for Albertans;

WHEREAS ensuring that every child has the opportunity to become a successful adult benefits society as a whole;

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta is committed to facilitating choice for families who require early learning and child care; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta recognizes and values the role of parents in the provision of quality early learning and child care;

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta acknowledges Indigenous families as partners in developing early learning and child care programs that are rooted in Indigenous traditions, languages and ways of knowing;

Current Child Care Licensing Act

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta recognizes the importance of ensuring the safety, well-being and development of children receiving [early learning and] child care;

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta is committed to facilitating choice for families who require [early learning and] child care; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta recognizes and values the role of parents in the provision of quality [early learning and] child care;

Appendix 3: An At-a-Glance View of AECEA's Recommended Changes to the Legislation

Update the outdated child-care-related terminology in Alberta's legislation

1. Change the name of the Child Care Licensing Act to the *Early Learning and Child Care Licensing Act*. Throughout the act and regulation, replace all references to "child care" with "early learning and child care."
2. Change the term "day care program" to "centre-based early learning and child care program."

Give early childhood educators the respect they deserve

3. Adopt the term "early childhood educators" to replace the current classifications of "child development supervisor," "child development worker," and "child development assistant."

Acknowledge that well-qualified early childhood educators are the foundation of a high-quality early learning and child care system

4. Recognize the importance of well-qualified early childhood educators in the preamble to the act.

Legislate new certification classifications

5. Replace the current three-level certification system (child development assistants, child development workers, child development supervisors) with the classifications early childhood educator I (ECE I, which is transitional), early childhood educator II (ECE II), early childhood educator III (ECE III) and early childhood educator IV (ECE IV).

Recognize the importance of high-quality early learning and child care

6. Recognize the importance of quality early learning and child care in the preamble to the act.
7. Enshrine Alberta's goals for high-quality early learning and child care that
 - helps children reach their potential and fully develop their talents and abilities
 - helps children develop the resilience, determination, confidence, creativity and critical thinking skills that prepare them for school, work and life
 - helps children develop strong communication and social skills
 - helps children develop into responsible citizens who value democratic rights and freedoms and make a positive contribution to society
 - teaches children the importance of peace, equality, friendship among all peoples and inclusion within society of people who are different
 - instills respect for nature, for the environment, and for social and cultural diversity

Legislate protection for the rights of children, including the right to high-quality early learning and child care

8. Recognize the rights of children in the preamble to the act. Recognize that high-quality early learning and child care is a critical component of the education to which every child has a right.

Legislate protection for children's right to play outdoors and enjoy nature

9. Amend the Child Care Licensing Regulation to incorporate the Get Outside and Play organization's recommendations for outdoor play. These include
 - increasing the amount of outdoor space required for children in licensed early learning and child care programs
 - instituting minimum daily outdoor playtime requirements

Phase in and enforce new minimum education requirements across the system

10. Legislate new minimum requirements for higher educational qualifications for early childhood educators in all parts of the regulated system.

Update and clarify the legislative requirements for private babysitters

11. Legislate appropriate minimum standards for private babysitters. These should include a requirement for private babysitters to post, at the entrance to their premises, a notice informing parents that they are not regulated and not monitored by government.
12. Legislate clear and appropriate maximums for the number of children that private babysitters can care for at any one time.

Legislate and phase in new minimum requirements for higher educational qualifications

13. Legislate and phase in a two-year diploma in early childhood education as the new minimum standard for early childhood educators in all parts of the regulated system.
14. Legislate a requirement for early childhood educators to develop personalized educational upgrading plans that outline the pathways they will take to meet the new minimum standards.

Legislate credential maintenance requirements

15. Legislate a requirement for ongoing credential maintenance. Include ongoing professional learning as one requirement for certification renewal.

Provide early learning and child care education through public post-secondary institutions

16. Provide early learning and child care education through public post-secondary institutions and recognized Indigenous colleges and universities.

Require specialization in early learning and child care

17. Legislate a requirement for all early childhood educators who work in licensed and regulated child care programs to have specialized early learning and child care education.

Eliminate equivalencies

18. Remove the provision for educational equivalencies from the Child Care Licensing Regulation. Implement a bridging plan to help child care providers whose certification is based on an educational equivalency to upgrade to the new standard.

Require organizational management or pedagogical leadership education for all program directors and managers

19. Legislate and phase in a requirement for all early childhood educators who work as program directors to be certified as ECE IIIs, a classification that requires a post-diploma certificate in management or pedagogical leadership in addition to a two-year diploma specializing in early learning and child care.

Require mandatory ongoing professional learning

20. Legislate a requirement for ongoing professional learning for all early childhood educators in all sectors of the regulated system. Ongoing professional learning should be a requirement for credential maintenance.
21. Legislate a requirement for early childhood educators to develop annual professional learning plans that show what education, training, skills development or pedagogical development activities the individuals will undertake each year to improve their qualifications and maintain their certification status

Build a quality system founded on evidence-based curriculum

22. Adopt Alberta's early learning and child care curriculum framework, *Flight* (Makovichuk et al. 2014), in all licensed and regulated child care programs in the province.

Appendix 4: Canada’s Multilateral Framework and Bilateral Agreements

The 2017 Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework sets out a long-term vision of a Canada “where all children can experience the enriching environment of quality early learning and child care” so they can reach their full potential. Five guiding principles support the framework: quality, accessibility, affordability, flexibility and inclusivity.

The framework is the foundation of three-year bilateral funding agreements between the federal government and Canada’s provinces and territories (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2019a). In support of these agreements, the Government of Canada pledged \$7.5 billion over 11 years to support affordable, high-quality early learning and child care across the country:

- \$1.2 billion was allocated to help provincial and territorial governments address their specific early learning and child care needs.
- \$95 million was allocated toward closing data gaps, tracking progress and child care challenges, and supporting evidence-based decision-making. Funding has also been allocated to develop a federal research strategy for collecting and analyzing early learning and child care–related data.
- \$100 million was earmarked for innovative practices in early learning and child care.

The bilateral agreements are available on the following website:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/early-learning-child-care-agreement/agreements-provinces-territories.html>. The agreements include action plans and brief descriptions of each jurisdiction’s particular challenges.

Analysis and reporting related to Canada’s bilateral early learning and child care agreements can be found in the following documents:

- Employment and Social Development Canada. 2019b. *Investing in Our Future: National Progress Report on Early Learning and Child Care 2017–18*. Government of Canada. www12.esdc.gc.ca/sgpe-pmps/servlet/sgpp-pmps-pub?lang=eng&curjsp=p.5bd.2t.1.3ls@-eng.jsp&curactn=dwnld&pid=68347&did=5620.
- Pasolli, Lisa. 2019. *An Analysis of the Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework and the Early Learning and Child Care Bilateral Agreements*. Child Care Now (Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada). www.muttart.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Child-Care-Now-The-Multilateral-Early-Learning-and-Child-Care-Framework-and-the-Early-Learning-and-Child-Care-Bilateral-Agreements-Feb.-2019.pdf.

Appendix 5: The AECEA/ALC Joint Policy Committee

AECEA is the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta.

ALC is the Alberta Early Learning and Care Leaders Caucus. ALC is funded and supported by the Canadian Child Care Federation (CCCF).

An asterisk (*) indicates members of the policy committee's position paper advisory group. Two asterisks (**) indicate experts invited to review the paper.

Committee Member	Organization	Location
Lea Blust	ALC	Calgary
Nicki Dublenko*	AECEA/ALC	Edmonton
MaryAnn Farebrother*	ALC	Calgary
Shefali Geoffroy Chateau	ALC	Calgary
Jasvinder Heran	AECEA	Edmonton
Janet Huffman	ALC	Fort McMurray
Rebecca Leong	ALC	Calgary
Manna Middleton*	AECEA	Picture Butte
Tara Stang*	ALC	Edmonton
Carol Sullivan**	AECEA	Edmonton
Christine Villeneuve	ALC	Westlock

Bibliography*

In this section, ^P (short for “properties”) indicates a date cited in the document metadata properties.

Adamson, Peter. 2008. *The Child Care Transition: A League Table of Early Childhood Education and Care in Economically Advanced Countries – Report Card 8*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre. www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/rc8_eng.pdf.

Akbari, Emis, and Kerry McCuaig (Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development). 2017. *Early Childhood Education Report 2017*. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. <http://ecereport.ca/media/uploads/2017-report-pdfs/ece-report2017-en-feb6.pdf>.

Alberta Children’s Services. No date. “Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Career Scholarship.” www.alberta.ca/early-learning-and-child-care-elcc-career-scholarship.aspx.

Alberta Children’s Services. No date. “Incentives to Work in Child Care.” www.alberta.ca/incentives-to-work-in-child-care.aspx#toc-1.

Alberta Children’s Services. 2007a. *Building Quality Child Care Together: Proposed Child Care Licensing Regulation – Discussion Guide, Consultations with Albertans*. www.assembly.ab.ca/lao/library/egovdocs/2007/alchs/160247.pdf.

Alberta Children’s Services. 2007b. *Building Quality Child Care Together: Workbook on Recommended Standards*. https://archive.org/details/buildingqualityc00albe_0.

Alberta Children’s Services. 2007c. Questionnaire to accompany the *Building Quality Child Care Together* workbook on recommended standards. www.assembly.ab.ca/lao/library/egovdocs/2007/alchs/170570.pdf.

Alberta Children’s Services. 2007d. *What We Heard: Consultation on the Proposed Child Care Licensing Regulation*. www.assembly.ab.ca/lao/library/egovdocs/2007/alchs/162919.pdf.

Alberta Children’s Services. 2017. *Business Plan 2017–20*. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/cec324e7-e339-4254-a3e7-17471adee0d2/resource/627a7406-5e11-45b4-8e53-ef0d0df85c82/download/childrens-services.pdf>.

* NOTE FOR ONLINE READERS: To open Government of Alberta documents, you may need to copy and paste the hyperlink into a web browser.

- Alberta Children’s Services. 2018a. *Annual Report 2017–18*.
<https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/476d1e4b-bdfa-4330-a88a-79bdacee1a9a/resource/4954b31c-add8-429f-91d5-57462c148cf9/download/childrenservices-annual-report-2017-2018.pdf>.
- Alberta Children’s Services. 2018b. *Child Care Staff Certification Guide*.
<https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/5837df5e-0abd-4a77-ae21-466b38a786ec/resource/f7dbcda2-0755-4aa1-bbf0-13fabbfd4d51/download/child-care-staff-certification-guide-2018.pdf>.
- Alberta Children’s Services. 2019a. “About Child Care in Alberta.”
www.alberta.ca/about-child-care-in-alberta.aspx.
- Alberta Children’s Services. 2019b. “Accreditation Funding for Child Care Programs.” www.alberta.ca/accreditation-funding-for-child-care-programs.aspx.
- Alberta Children’s Services. 2019c. *Annual Report 2018–2019*.
<https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/476d1e4b-bdfa-4330-a88a-79bdacee1a9a/resource/27f9738e-5146-434b-9a3e-a70eee1431d4/download/children-services-annual-report-2018-2019-web.pdf>.
- Alberta Children’s Services. 2019d. “Incentives to Work in Child Care.”
www.alberta.ca/incentives-to-work-in-child-care.aspx.
- Alberta Children’s Services. 2019e. *Well-Being and Resiliency: Evaluation Framework*. <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/9781460143377>.
- Alberta Federation of Labour. 2018a. “[A Fair Start] For Kids.” Blog entry posted by Allison Alberto, March 26, 2018. <https://www.fairstartalberta.ca/forkids>.
- Alberta Federation of Labour. 2018b. “[A Fair Start] For Workers.” Blog entry posted by Allison Alberto, April 10, 2018.
www.fairstartalberta.ca/forworkers.
- Alberta Federation of Labour. 2018c. “[A Fair Start] For Families.” Blog entry posted by Allison Alberto, April 11, 2018.
www.fairstartalberta.ca/forfamilies.
- Alberta School of Dog Grooming. “Canine Stylist Technician.” Web page.
www.albertaschoolofdoggrooming.com/for-students/canine-stylist-technician/.
- Alexander, Craig, Kip Beckman, Alicia Macdonald, Cory Renner and Matthew Stewart. 2017. *Ready for Life : A Socio-Economic Analysis of Early Childhood Education and Care*. Ottawa: Conference Board of Canada.
www.conferenceboard.ca/e-Library/document.aspx?did=9231.

- Alexander, Craig, and Dina Ignjatovic. [Cited within the text as TD Economics 2012.] 2012. *Early Childhood Education Has Widespread and Long Lasting Benefits*. Special Report. TD Economics.
www.td.com/document/PDF/economics/special/di1112_EarlyChildhoodEducation.pdf.
- Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta (under its former name, the Alberta Child Care Association). 2009. *Apprenticeship in Child Care in Alberta*. Prepared for the Muttart Foundation by Dr. Sherrill Brown.
- Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta. 2018. *Qualified Educators, Quality Care: The Role of the Association of Early Childhood* (abbreviated as “AECEA’s mandate document”).
<https://aecea.ca/sites/aecea.ca/files/AECEA%20Mandate%20Document%20FINAL%20REVISED%20Sept%2024%2C%202018.pdf>.
- Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario’s Decent Work Task Force. November 30, 2017. *Transforming Work in Ontario’s Early Years and Child Care Sector: Workforce Strategy Recommendations Presented to the Ministry of Education*.
- Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development. 2019a. *OECD Governance Models*. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto.
https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/atkinson/UserFiles/File/Publications/OECD_governance_models.pdf.
- Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development. 2019b. “Policy Monitor: Early Childhood Program and Policy Update.” Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto.
www.oise.utoronto.ca/atkinson/Resources/Policy_Monitor/index.html.
- Australian Government Department of Education and Training. 2018^p. *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*. www.acecqa.gov.au/media/24251.
- Bennett, John. 2004. “Curriculum in Early Childhood Education and Care.” *UNESCO Policy Brief on Early Childhood* 26.
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000137401>.
- Bertrand, Jane, and Kerry McCuaig. 2019. *The Rationale for Expanding Public Education to Include Preschool-Aged Children*. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto.
https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/atkinson/UserFiles/File/Policy%20Commentaries/The_Rationale_for_Expanding_Public_Education_to_Include_Preschool-Aged_Children.pdf.

Bouwsema to Fuchinsky, September 25, 2019.

<https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/c0485cf2-dc5f-4a49-8459-fe60e29d3bac/resource/127e1bee-a1c7-4b93-ae94-7e1155e7cbb1/download/jsg-woolfsmith-cs-response-to-recommendations.pdf>.

Breitkreuz, Rhonda, Damian Collins, Kay Cook, Rebecca Gokiert, Laurel Sakaluk, and Iryna Hurava. 2013. *Child Care Policy and the Experiences of Employed Albertan Families with Pre-school Children: Final Report*. Alberta Centre for Child, Family and Community Research [now PolicyWise for Children and Families]. <https://policywise.com/wp-content/uploads/resources/2016/07/11SGBreitkreuzFinalReportFebruary2013pdf.pdf>.

British Columbia Early Learning Framework. 2019(?).

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/early-learning/teach/earlylearning/early_learning_framework.pdf.

Buschmann, Rob, and Erica Partridge. 2019. *The 2018-2019 AECEA Survey of the Alberta Early Childhood Education Workforce: Results and Analysis*. Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta and Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families, University of Alberta.

Canadian Labour Congress. October 2019a. "Labour Market Snapshot: Q3 2019."

<http://documents.clcctc.ca/communications/LabourMarketSnapshot/Q3-2019-EN.pdf>.

Canadian Labour Congress. November 15, 2019b. "CLC's 2019 Q3 Labour Market Snapshot Shows Need for National Child Care Strategy." Web page.

<https://canadianlabour.ca/q3-labour-market-snapshot-childcare-strategy/>.

Carlberg, Courtney, and Jen Budney. 2019. *Saskatchewan's Failing Report Card on Child Care*. Regina: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Saskatchewan Office.

www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/Saskatchewan%20Office/2019/02/Failing%20Report%20Card%20on%20Child%20Care%20%2801-23-19%29.pdf.

CBC News (Natasha Reibe). November 17, 2019. "Parents Worry End to Parent Link Centres Will Leave Gap in Vital Services."

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/parent-link-centres-edmonton-alberta-1.5360317>.

- Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, Canadian Child Care Federation, Childcare Research and Resource Unit, and Campaign 2000. 2016. *Shared Framework for Building an Early Childhood Education and Care System for All*.
www.childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/sharedframework_jan2016.pdf.
- Child Care Human Resources Sector Council. 2007. *What Factors Influence Wages and Benefits in Early Learning and Child Care Settings?* Ottawa: Author. www.ccsc-cssge.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/Projects-Pubs-Docs/Factors_Wages-Benefits_Eng.pdf.
- Child Care Human Resources Sector Council. 2009. *A Portrait of Canada's Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Workforce (2009)*. www.ccsc-cssge.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/About-CHRSC-Docs/portraitbrochure_e.pdf.
- Child Care Human Resources Sector Council. 2010. *Occupational Standards for Early Childhood Educators*. Ottawa: Author. www.ccsc-cssge.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/ECE-Post-Secondary-docs/OSECE_2010_EN.pdf.
- Child Care Human Resources Sector Council. 2012. *Occupational Standards for Early Childhood Educators*. Ottawa: Child Care Human Resources Sector Council. www.ccsc-cssge.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/ECE-Post-Secondary-docs/OSECE_2010_EN.pdf.
- Childcare Resource and Research Unit. Quality by Design project website. www.childcarequality.ca/.
- ChildCare2020. 2014. *Child Care in Canada by 2020: A Vision and a Way Forward*. Discussion paper prepared for the ChildCare2020 national policy conference in Winnipeg, November 13—15, 2014. Toronto. timeforchildcare.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/visionchildcare2020nov3eng.pdf.
- College of Early Childhood Educators. "Membership Renewal Guide." Web page. www.college-ece.ca/en/Members/membership-renewal-guide.
- Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. 2014. *CMEC Early Learning and Development Framework*. www.cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/327/2014-07-Early-Learning-Framework-EN.pdf.
- Cuthbertson, Richard. 2012. "More than a Quarter of Alberta Kids Face 'Great Difficulty' when Starting Kindergarten." *Calgary Herald*. www.earlyyearsvaluation.com/images/site_docs/CalgaryHerald_2012-06-25.pdf.

- Doherty, Gillian, Donna S. Lero, Hillel Goelman, Annette LaGrange, and Jocelyne Tougas. 2000a. *You Bet I Care! A Canada-wide Study on Wages, Working Conditions, and Practices in Child Care Centres*. Guelph: Centre for Families, Work, and Well-Being, University of Guelph.
- Doherty, Gillian, Donna S. Lero, Hillel Goelman, Jocelyne Tougas, and Annette LaGrange. 2000b. *You Bet I Care! Caring and Learning Environments: Quality in Regulated Family Child Care Across Canada*. Guelph: Centre for Families, Work, and Well-Being, University of Guelph.
<http://publications.gc.ca/collections/Collection/RH34-10-3-2000E.pdf>.
- Doherty, Gillian, Martha Friendly, and Jane Beach. 2003. *OECD Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care Canadian Background Report*. Government of Canada. www.oecd.org/education/school/33852192.pdf.
- Doherty, Gillian, and Barry Forer. 2004. *Shedding New Light on Staff Recruitment and Retention Challenges in Child Care*. [An analysis of data from the 2001 *You Bet I Care!* study.] Ottawa: Child Care Human Resources Sector Council. www.csc-cssge.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/Projects-Pubs-Docs/2.33-SheddingLight_Eng.pdf.
- Donaldson, Gordon. 1967. "Working Women and Daycare." CBC Television Broadcast. *Newsmagazine*. <https://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/working-women-and-daycare>.
- Dublenko, Nicki. 2018. "Bilateral Agreement Provincial Comparison." Unpublished.
- Early Years Study 4*. Website of the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation. <https://earlyyearsstudy.ca/>.
- ECMap (Early Child Development Mapping Project Alberta). 2014. *How Are Our Young Children Doing? Final Report of the Early Child Development Mapping Project*. Prepared for Alberta Education. Government of Alberta. https://ecdcoalitions.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/ECMap_Final_Report_20141118.pdf.
- Employment and Social Development Canada. 2015. *Public Investments in Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2013*. Government of Canada. www12.esdc.gc.ca/sgpe-pmps/p.5bd.2t.1.3ls@-eng.jsp?pid=8722.
- Employment and Social Development Canada. 2019a. "Early Learning and Child Care." Web page updated on August 16, 2019. <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/early-learning-child-care.html>.
- Employment and Social Development Canada. 2019b. *Investing in Our Future: National Progress Report on Early Learning and Child Care 2017–18*. Government of Canada. www12.esdc.gc.ca/sgpe-pmps/servlet/sgpp-pmps-pub?lang=eng&curjsp=p.5bd.2t.1.3ls@-eng.jsp&curactn=dwnld&pid=68347&did=5620.

- European Commission Working Group on Early Childhood Education and Care. 2014. *Proposal for Key Principles of a Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care: Report of the Working Group on Early Childhood Education and Care under the Auspices of the European Commission*. Brussels: European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture. https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/education/policy/strategic-framework/archive/documents/ecec-quality-framework_en.pdf.
- Ferns, Carolyn, and Martha Friendly. 2015. *Background Paper on Unregulated Child Care for the Home Child Care: More than a Home Project*. Occasional Paper 28. Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit. www.childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/Occasional%20paper%2028.pdf.
- Findlay, Leanne. 2019. *Early Learning and Child Care for Children Aged 0 to 5 Years: A Provincial/Territorial Portrait*. Statistics Canada, Catalogue No. 11-626-X — 2019013 - No. 099. www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-626-x/11-626-x2019013-eng.pdf.
- Findlay, Tammy, with Stella Lord. 2015^P. “A New Economy Needs Child Care.” *In Focus*. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Nova Scotia Office. www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/Nova%20Scotia%20Office/2015/04/New_Economy_Needs_Childcare.pdf.
- Flanagan, Kathleen. 2019. *PEI Workforce Strategy Project: Final Report*. https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/early_years_workforce_strategy.pdf.
- Flanagan, Kathleen, Jane Beach, and Petr Varmuza. 2013. *You Bet We Still Care! A Survey of Centre-Based Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada – Highlights Report*. Ottawa: Child Care Human Resources Sector Council. http://www.ccsc-cssge.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/Projects-Pubs-Docs/EN%20Pub%20Chart/YouBetSurveyReport_Final.pdf.
- Flanagan, Kathleen, and Jane Beach. 2016. *Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Commission: Final Report*. https://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/childcare/childcare_news/pubs/final_report.pdf.
- Friendly, Martha. 2006. *Early Learning and Child Care: How Does Canada Measure Up? – International Comparisons using data from Starting Strong II (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2006)*. Child Care Briefing Notes. Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit. www.childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/BN_EarlyLearning06.pdf.
- Friendly, Martha. 2008. *Why Canada Can't Work without Good Child Care: How Early Childhood Education and Care Supports the Economy*. Child Care Briefing Note. Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit.

- Friendly, Martha. 2015. "Taking Canada's Child Care Pulse: The State of ECEC in 2015." *Our Schools/Our Selves* (Summer 2015): 7–24.
www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2015/09/OS120_Summer2015_Canadas_child_care_pulse.pdf.
- Friendly, Martha. 2019. *A Bad Bargain for Us All: Why the Market Doesn't Deliver Child Care that Works for Canadian Children and Families*. Occasional Paper 31. Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit.
www.childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/OP31-A-bad-bargain-for-us-all.pdf.
- Friendly, Martha, Jane Beach, and Michelle Turiano. 2002. *Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2001*. Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research, University of Toronto.
www.childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/Preface_explanatorynotes_0.pdf.
- Friendly, Martha, and Donna S. Lero. 2002. *Social Inclusion through Early Childhood Education and Care*. Working Paper Series. Toronto: The Laidlaw Foundation. http://laidlawfdn.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/wpsosi_2002_june_social-inclusion-for-canadian-children.pdf.
- Friendly, Martha, and Jane Beach. 2005. *Elements of a High Quality Early Learning and Child Care System*. Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit. www.childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/QbD_Elements.pdf.
- Friendly, Martha, Gillian Doherty, and Beach, Jane. 2006. *Quality by Design: What Do We Know about Quality in Early Learning and Child Care, and What Do We Think? A Literature Review*. Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit. http://childcarequality.ca/wdocs/QbD_LiteratureReview.pdf.
- Friendly, Martha, Elsie Larsen, Laura Feltham, Bethany Grady, Barry Forer and Michelle Jones. April 2018. Revised May 31, 2018. *Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2016*. 11th edition. Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit. <http://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/ECEC-in-Canada-2016.pdf>.
- Fuchinsky to Bouwesma. 2018. Mackenzy Woolfsmith –Public Fatality Inquiry: Response to Recommendations. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/c0485cf2-dc5f-4a49-8459-fe60e29d3bac/resource/4e28b054-9ac1-4fd5-808a-d8bdbb0638d2/download/woolfsmith-letter-to-cs-copy.pdf>.
- Garon-Carrier, Gabrielle. 2019. *Defining and Measuring the Quality of Early Learning and Child Care: A Literature Review*. Employment and Social Development Canada, 2019. <http://www12.esdc.gc.ca/sgpe-pmps/servlet/sgpp-pmps-pub?lang=eng&curjsp=p.5bd.2t.1.3ls@-eng.jsp&curactn=dwnld&pid=68491&did=5569>
- Government of Alberta. 2013a. *Together We Raise Tomorrow: An Alberta Approach to Early Childhood Development*.

- Government of Alberta. 2013b. *Together We Raise Tomorrow : Alberta's Poverty Reduction Strategy Discussion Paper*.
- Government of Alberta. 2103c. *Together We Raise Tomorrow: Children's Charter*. Fact sheet.
- Government of Alberta. 2018a. *2017 Alberta Wage and Salary Survey: Average Wages by Industry and Economic Region*.
- Government of Alberta. 2018b. *2017 Alberta Wage and Salary Survey: Methodology Report*. (R. A. Malatest and Associates. Prepared for Alberta Labour.) <https://alis.alberta.ca/media/698176/awss-methodology-report.pdf>.
- Government of Alberta. 2018^Pc. "2017 Alberta Wage and Salary Survey: Survey Overview." <https://work.alberta.ca/documents/wage-and-salary-survey-overview.pdf>.
- Government of Alberta. 2019a. "About Child Care in Alberta." www.alberta.ca/about-child-care-in-alberta.aspx.
- Government of Alberta. 2019b. "Become an Approved Family Day Home." www.alberta.ca/become-an-approved-family-day-home.aspx.
- Government of Alberta. 2019c. *Children's Services Business Plan 2019–23*. open.alberta.ca/dataset/cec324e7-e339-4254-a3e7-17471adee0d2/resource/79d12b07-09ab-427c-b9b3-829f1637455b/download/childrens-services.pdf.
- Government of Alberta. 2019d. *Family Day Home Standards Manual for Alberta*. <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/9781460143124>.
- Government of Alberta. 2019e. "Gross Domestic Product." November 14, 2019. <https://economicdashboard.alberta.ca/GrossDomesticProduct>.
- Government of Alberta. 2019f. "Speech from the Throne." May 22, 2019. www.alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=63917C64E6B09-B4A4-F921-AE339867F37FB833.
- Government of British Columbia. "Renew and Maintain Early Childhood Educator Certification." Web page. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/early-learning/teach/training-and-professional-development/become-an-early-childhood-educator/renew-maintain-ece-certification>.
- Government of Canada. 2017. *Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework*. www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/early-learning-child-care/reports/2017-multilateral-framework.html.
- Government of Canada. November 14, 2017. "Rights of Children." www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/rights-children.html.

Government of Canada. 2018. *Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework*. <http://www12.esdc.gc.ca/sgpe-pmps/servlet/sgpp-pmps-pub?lang=eng&curjsp=p.5bd.2t.1.3ls@-eng.jsp&curactn=dwnld&pid=64290&did=5360>.

Government of New Zealand. See also: New Zealand Ministry of Education.

Government of New Zealand. *Children’s Act 2014*. www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2014/0040/latest/096be8ed818288ae.pdf.

Government of New Zealand. *Education Act 1989*. www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1989/0080/latest/whole.html#DLM7266701.

Government of Ontario. See also: Ontario Ministry of Education.

Government of Ontario. “Child Care Rules under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA).” Web page. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/child-care-rules-child-care-and-early-years-act>.

Government of Ontario. 2014. *Child Care and Early Years Act*. https://www.ontario.ca/laws/docs/14c11_e.doc.

Government of Ontario. 2019. *O. Reg. 137/15: General* (under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014). https://www.ontario.ca/laws/docs/150137_e.doc.

Government of Prince Edward Island. 2017. *Early Learning And Child Care Act* (former Child Care Facilities Act repealed 2010) https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/legislation/e-01-early_learning_and_child_care_act.pdf.

Government of Prince Edward Island. 2017 *Early Learning And Child Care Act Regulations*. https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/legislation/e.01g-early_learning_and_child_care_act_regulations.pdf.

Halfon, Shani. October 2014. *Canada’s Childcare Workforce*. Moving Childcare Forward Project. (A joint initiative of the Childcare Resource and Research Unit, Centre for Work, Families and Well-Being at the University of Guelph, and the Department of Sociology at the University of Manitoba.) http://www.movingchildcareforward.ca/images/policybriefs/MCCF_canadas_childcare_workforce.pdf.

Halfon, Shani, and Martha Friendly. September 2015. *Work around the Clock: A Snapshot of Non-Standard Hours Child Care in Canada*. Occasional Paper 29. Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit. [www.childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/Occasional%20paper%20No.29%20\[Revised,%20Sept%2016\].pdf](http://www.childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/Occasional%20paper%20No.29%20[Revised,%20Sept%2016].pdf).

- Halfon, Shani, and Rachel Langford. 2015. “Developing and Supporting a High Quality Child Care Workforce in Canada: What Are the Barriers to Change?” *Our Schools/Ourselves* (Summer 2015): 131–144.
www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2015/09/OS120_Summer2015_Workforce.pdf.
- Hankivsky, Olena (Simon Fraser University). 2008. *Cost Estimates of Dropping Out of High School in Canada*. Canadian Council on Learning. www.ldanb-taanb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/CostofdroppingoutHankivskyFinalReport.pdf.
- Harvard University Center on the Developing Child. 2007. *A Science-Based Framework for Early Childhood Policy: Using Evidence to Improve Outcomes in Learning, Behavior, and Health for Vulnerable Children*.
https://46y5eh11fhgw3ve3ytpwxt9r-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Policy_Framework.pdf.
- Hawkes, Joshua B. 2018. *Report to the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General: Public Fatality Inquiry – Mackenzy Jane Woolfsmith*. Calgary.
<https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/c0485cf2-dc5f-4a49-8459-fe60e29d3bac/resource/adc0a267-4d51-4b91-9caf-c4a00fced419/download/woolfsmith-fatality-inquiry-report.pdf>.
- Howe, Nina, Ellen Jacobs, Goranka Vukelich and Holly Recchia. 2013. “Canadian Parents’ Knowledge and Satisfaction Regarding Their Child’s Day-Care Experience.” *Journal of Early Childhood Research* 11, no. 2, 133–148.
<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/268f/6253f752d36c0d1b65a44cdeb690bb613766.pdf>.
- ISSA is the International Step by Step Association.**
- ISSA. 2010. *Competent Educators of the 21st Century: Principles of Quality Pedagogy*. www.earlychildhoodworkforce.org/download/file/fid/598.
- Kohen, Dafna. May 27, 2019. “Child Health and Well-Being in Canada.” *Research Blog*. Statistics Canada. www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/blog/cs/child-health.
- Macdonald, David. 2018. *Child Care Deserts in Canada*. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.
<https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2018/06/Child%20Care%20Deserts.pdf>
- Macdonald, David, and Martha Friendly. 2019. *Developmental Milestones: Child Care Fees in Canada’s Big Cities 2018*.
<https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2019/02/Developmental%20milestones%20%284%29.pdf>.
- Macdonald, David, and Martha Friendly. 2017. *Time Out: Child Care Fees in Canada 2017*. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, December 2017. www.policyalternatives.ca/timeout.

- Makovichuk, Lee, Jane Hewes, Patricia Lirette, and Nancy Thomas. 2014. *Flight: Alberta's Early Learning and Care Framework*. (Formerly called *Play, Participation, and Possibilities: An Early Learning and Child Care Curriculum Framework for Alberta*.)
flightframework.ca/downloads/Flight%20Framework%20Document%20F.pdf.
- Marope, Mmantsetsa, and Yoshie Kaga, eds. 2015. *Investing against Evidence: The Global State of Early Childhood Care and Education*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000233558>.
- Marope, Mmantsetsa, and Yoshie Kaga. 2015. "Repositioning ECCE in the Post-2015 Agenda." In *Investing against Evidence: The Global State of Early Childhood Care and Education* edited by the authors, 8–33. Paris: UNESCO Publishing. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000233558>.
- Macdonald, David, and Martha Friendly. 2016. *A Growing Concern: 2016 Child Care Fees in Canada's Big Cities*. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. www.policyalternatives.ca/growing-concern.
- Macdonald, David, and Martha Friendly. 2017. *Time Out: Child Care Fees in Canada 2017*. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. www.policyalternatives.ca/timeout.
- Macdonald, David, and Martha Friendly. 2019. *Developmental Milestones: Child Care Fees in Canada's Big Cities in 2018*. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/developmental-milestones.
- McCain, Margaret Norrie, and J. Fraser Mustard. 1999. *Reversing the Real Brain Drain: Early Years Study Final Report*. Toronto: Ontario Children's Secretariat, www.ontla.on.ca/library/repository/mon/10000/208725.pdf.
- McCuaig, Kerry (Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development). 2014. *Review of Early Learning Frameworks in Canada*. https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/atkinson/UserFiles/File/Resources_Topics/Resources_Topics_CurriculumPedagogy/Review_of_Early_Learning_Frameworks_in_Canada-all.pdf.
- McCuaig, Kerry (Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development). 2018. *Ontario's Early Years Revolution*. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/atkinson/UserFiles/File/Policy%20Commentaries/Ontarios_early_years_revolution_-_April_2018.pdf.
- McCuaig, Kerry (Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development). November 26, 2018. "Canada Needs a National Strategy to Address the Shortage of Early Childhood Educators." Address to the Pearson Institute Year 4 Forum. https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/atkinson/UserFiles/File/Policy%20Commentaries/Canada_needs_a_national_strategy_to_address_the_shortage_of_early_childhood_educators.pdf.

- Melhuish, Edward, Katharina Ereky-Stevens, Konstantinos Petrogiannis, Anamaria Ariescu, Efthymia Penderi, Konstantina Rentzou, Alice Tawell, Pauline Slot, Martine Broekhuizen and Paul Leseman. 2015. *A Review of Research on the Effects of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) upon Child Development*. Curriculum Quality Analysis and Impact Review Project. CARE Project: European Early Childhood Education and Care. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/291970194>.
- Mogstad Slind, Tove. April 13, 2019. "Early Childhood Education and Care: ECEC the Nordic Way – Sharing Experiences and Approaches to ECEC Policies and Pedagogies in Norway." Presentation on behalf of the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research to the Early Childhood Educators of BC 2019 conference. Vancouver.
- Moss, Peter. June 15, 2007. "Working with Uncertainty: Developing a Workforce for a Democratic, Inclusive and Integrated Early Childhood Service." Presentation to the Ryerson University and University of Victoria–sponsored session, "Broadening and Deepening Our Understanding of Quality," which preceded the Canadian Child Care Federation's Halifax conference, "Set Sail for Quality on an Ocean of Caring."
- Moyser, Melissa. 2017. *Women and Paid Work*. Statistics Canada Catalogue No. 89-503-X. Ottawa: Minister of Industry. www150.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-503-x/2015001/article/14694-eng.pdf.
- The Muttart Foundation and Jane Bertrand (George Brown College). 2010. *In the Best Interests of Children and Families: A Discussion of Early Childhood Education and Care in Alberta*. www.muttart.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/A-Discussion-of-Early-Childhood-Education-and-Care-in-Alberta-112010.pdf.
- The Muttart Foundation. 2012. *Toward a Provincial Framework for Early Learning and Care in Alberta: Putting the Pieces Together – The Integrative Elements of a New Early Learning and Care Framework*. www.muttart.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Putting-the-Pieces-Together-102012.pdf.
- The Muttart Foundation. 2013. *Toward a Provincial Framework for Early Learning and Care in Alberta: A Draft Framework Design for Discussion*. www.muttart.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/A-Draft-Framework-Design-for-Discussion-032013.pdf.
- The Muttart Foundation and Rachel Langford (Ryerson University). 2014. *Advancing the Educational Preparation and Professional Development of Alberta's Early Learning and Care Workforce*. www.muttart.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Alberta-Full-Report-102015.pdf.

- The Muttart Foundation and Joanne Baxter (Mount Royal University). 2019. *A Description of Post-Secondary Early Learning and Child Care Programs in Alberta with Strategies to Advance the Educational Preparation of Early Childhood Educators*. www.muttart.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/MTF-2019-Strategies-to-Advance-Educational-Preparation.pdf.
- National Research Council. 2015a. *Professional Learning for the Care and Education Workforce*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/21786>.
- National Research Council. 2015b. *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/19401>.
- New Zealand Ministry of Education. 2017. *Te Whāriki: Early Childhood Curriculum*. <https://education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Early-Childhood/Te-Whariki-Early-Childhood-Curriculum-ENG-Web.pdf>.
- New Zealand Ministry of Education. 2018. *Licensing Criteria for Early Childhood Education and Care Services 2008 and Early Childhood Education Curriculum Framework*. As amended May 2016. <https://education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Early-Childhood/Licensing-criteria/ECE-Licensing-Booklet-Early-Childhood-Aug2018.pdf>.
- Educa. “Curriculum, Frameworks and Guidelines.” Web page. <https://www.geteduca.com/frameworks/>.
- Noble, Kate. “Children Learn Through Play: It Shouldn’t Stop at Preschool.” November 17, 2018. On *The Conversation* website. <https://theconversation.com/ca>.
- Noël, Jean-François. January 7, 2015. “The Convention on the Rights of the Child.” Department of Justice, Canada. www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/fl-lf/divorce/crc-crde/conv2c.html.
- Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality. 2016. *The Rights of the Child in Norway: Norway’s Fifth and Sixth Periodic Reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child*. www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/0ada3bee46b54f498707f51bbc7d4b2c/barnekonvensjonen-engelsk-versjon-uu.pdf.
- Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research. 2007. *Early Intervention for Lifelong Learning*. Summary of Report No. 16, 2006–2007. www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/a48dfbadb0bb492a8fb91de475b44c41/en-gb/pdfs/stm200620070016000en_pdfs.pdf.
- Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. 2018. *Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia’s Early Learning Curriculum Framework*. <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/docs/nse1curriculumframework.pdf>.

Nutbrown, Cathy. 2011. *Mapping the Early Education and Childcare Workforce: A Background Paper*. United Kingdom.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/495128/Mapping_the_early_education_and_childcare_workforce_a_background_paper.pdf.

Nutbrown, Cathy. 2012. *Foundations for Quality: The Independent Review of Early Education and Childcare Qualifications – Final Report*. Department of Education, United Kingdom.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175463/Nutbrown-Review.pdf.

OECD is the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

OECD. 2006. *Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

<http://api.ning.com/files/rixsrZcBjQLNdZUDO8XLT7kPtdFyVuLG3HQQRYgGxFP8WjGcqY3eZynSy1iFZOBIZsdXJgaXZGTHEY90D9r5PsbWGFkCzmU/STARTINGSTRONG2.pdf>.

OECD. 2011^a. *International Comparison: Job Titles, Qualifications and Requirements*. Encouraging Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care series. www.oecd.org/education/school/49322268.pdf.

OECD. 2011^b. *Lessons Learned from Improving Qualifications, Training and Working Conditions*. Encouraging Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care series. www.oecd.org/education/school/49360062.pdf.

OECD. 2011^c. *Research Brief: Curriculum Matters*. Encouraging Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care series.

<http://www.oecd.org/education/school/48308711.pdf>.

OECD. 2011^d. *Research Brief: Qualifications, Education And Professional Development Matter*. Encouraging Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care series. www.oecd.org/education/school/49322232.pdf.

OECD. 2011^e. *Research Brief: Working Conditions Matter*. Encouraging Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care series.

www.oecd.org/education/school/49322250.pdf.

OECD. 2011^f. *Summary of Strategy Options to Tackle Challenges in Improving Workforce Development and Working Conditions*. Encouraging Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care series.

www.oecd.org/education/school/49322469.pdf.

OECD. 2012. *Starting Strong III: A Quality Toolbox for Early Childhood Education and Care*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

www.dji.de/fileadmin/user_upload/icec/Starting%20Strong%20III_english.pdf.

OECD. 2017. *Starting Strong 2017: Key OECD Indicators on Early Childhood Education and Care*.

- OECD. 2018a. *Education at a Glance 2018: OECD Indicators*. Paris: OECD Publishing. https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/education-at-a-glance-2018_eag-2018-en#page8.
- OECD. 2018b. *Engaging Young Children: Lessons from Research about Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care*. Starting Strong series. Paris: OECD Publishing. https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/engaging-young-children_9789264085145-en#page1.
- OECD. 2019. *Good Practice for Good Jobs in Early Childhood Education and Care*. Paris: OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/64562be6-en>.
- Ontario Ministry of Education. 2017. *Ontario's Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework*. www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/eycc_action_plan_en.pdf.
- Ontario Ministry of Education. 2018. *Growing b: Ontario's Early Years and Child Care Workforce Strategy*. www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/growing-together-eycc-workforce-en.pdf.
- Pacini-Ketchabaw, Veronica. 2005. "The Meanings Embedded within Childcare Regulations: A Historical Analysis." *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood* 8, no. 1: 41–53. www.researchgate.net/profile/Veronica_Pacini-Ketchabaw/publication/240794535_The_Meanings_Embedded_within_Childcare_Regulations_A_Historical_Analysis/links/55f7909608aeba1d9efb3394/The-Meanings-Embedded-within-Childcare-Regulations-A-Historical-Analysis.pdf.
- Pasolli, Lisa. 2019. *An Analysis of the Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework and the Early Learning and Child Care Bilateral Agreements*. Child Care Now (Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada). www.muttart.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Child-Care-Now-The-Multilateral-Early-Learning-and-Child-Care-Framework-and-the-Early-Learning-and-Child-Care-Bilateral-Agreements-Feb.-2019.pdf.
- Pasolli, Kelly, and Lisa Young. 2012. "Comparing Child Care Policy in the Canadian Provinces." www.cpsa-acsp.ca/papers-2012/Pasolli-Young.pdf.
- Peeters, Jan. May 24, 2012. "Competence Requirements in Early Childhood Education and Care: A Study for the European Commission Directorate General for Education and Culture." Presentation to the VIDA conference, Copenhagen. http://edu.au.dk/fileadmin/edu/Forskningsprojekter/VIDA/Peeters_Staff_Compentence_Requirements_in_Early_Childhood_Education_and_Care.pdf.
- Peeters, Jan, and Brecht Peleman. 2017. "The Competent System at the Intersection of Research, Policymaking and Practice." Chapter 31 in *The Sage Handbook of Early Childhood Policy*, 522–536. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing. Accessed via www.researchgate.net.

- Petersson, Bengt, Rodrigo Mariscal, and Kotaro Ishi. 2017. *Women Are Key for Future Growth: Evidence from Canada*. IMG Working Paper, WP/17/166. www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2017/07/19/Women-Are-Key-for-Future-Growth-Evidence-from-Canada-45047.
- Pickles, Christina. 2019^P. *Outdoor Play in Child Care Settings: Recommendations for Child Care Licensing in Alberta*. Get Outside and Play. getoutsideandplay.ca/sites/default/files/FINAL%20Full%20Report%20Outdoor%20Play%20in%20Child%20Care%20Settings1.pdf.
- Philpott, David, Gabrielle Young, Kimberly Maich, Sharon Penny and Emily Butler. 2019. *The Preemptive Nature of Quality Early Childhood Education on Special Educational Needs in Children*. <https://research.library.mun.ca/13571/1/The%20Preemptive%20Nature%20of%20ECE%2C%20Feb%202012.pdf>.
- Public Interest Alberta. 2016. *2016 Child Care Survey*. <https://d3n8a8pro7vnm.cloudfront.net/publicinterestalberta/pages/80/attachments/original/1481601374/2016-Child-Care-Survey-Summary-Final.pdf?1481601374>.
- Pujadas Botey, Anna, Cecilia Bukutu, Angela Vinturache, Ben Gibbard, Kathryn MacLellan, Hamideh Bayrampour, Donna Slater, Rhonda Breitzkreuz, Laurel Sakaluk-Moody Sue Lynch, Tara Hanson and Suzanne Tough. 2014. *What Albertans Know about Child Development: A Comparison of the Provincial Benchmark Surveys 2007 and 2013*. Calgary: Alberta Centre for Child, Family and Community Research.
- Richardson, Brooke. 2015. *Speak Up for Child Care! Reframing the Child Care Conversation in Canada. Our Schools/Our Selves*. (Summer 2015): 171–182.
- Schleicher, Andreas. 2019. *International Summit on the Teaching Profession*. Paris: OECD Publishing. <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/deliver/9789264313873-en.pdf?itemId=%2Fcontent%2Fpublication%2F9789264313873-en&mimeType=pdf>.
- Scott, Jennifer. April 14, 1998. “Daycare during Wartime.” CBC Television Broadcast. *The National Magazine*. Ontario. <https://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/daycare-during-wartime>.
- Scott, Katherine. 2006. *Growing Up in North America: The Economic Well-Being of Children in Canada, the United States, and Mexico*. Canadian Council on Social Development and partners. www.ccsd.ca/images/research/Publications/PDF/EconomicWellBeingChildren_2008en.pdf.
- Shuey, Elizabeth A. and Miloš Kankaraš. 2018. *The Power and Promise of Early Learning*. OECD Education Working Papers No. 186. <https://doi.org/10.1787/19939019>.

Sinha, Maire. October 30, 2014. *Child Care in Canada*. Statistics Canada Catalogue No. 89-652-X. Ottawa: Ministry of Industry.

Slinde, Tove Mogstad (Senior Advisor, Ministry of Education and Research). April 13, 2019. "Early Childhood Education and Care: ECEC the Nordic Way – Sharing Experiences and Approaches to ECEC Policies and Pedagogies in Norway." Presentation to the ECECBC 2019 conference in Vancouver.

Statistics Canada. 2016 Census. "Census Family Structure and Presence and Ages of Children for Census Families in Private Households of Canada, Provinces and Territories." Data table for Alberta in the 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016387.

Statistics Canada. April 10, 2019a. "Early Learning and Child Care Arrangements for Children Aged 0 to 5 Years. www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2019026-eng.htm.

Statistics Canada. April 10, 2019b. "Survey on Early Learning and Child Care Arrangements, 2019." *The Daily*. www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/190410/dq190410a-eng.pdf.

Statistics Canada. July 1, 2019. "Population estimates on July 1st, by age and sex." Table 17-10-0005-01.

Statistics Canada. January 30, 2020. "Canadian Undergraduate Tuition fees by Field of Study" for Alberta. CANSIM Table 37-10-0003-01 (formerly CANSIM 477-0021). <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3710000301>.

TD Economics Special Report. 2012. See "Alexander, Craig, and Dina Ignjatovic."

Thomas, Rachel, Marianne Cooper, Ellen Konar, Megan Rooney, Mary Noble-Tolla, Ali Bohrer, Loreina Yee, et al. 2018. "Women in the Workplace 2018." New York and Toronto. <https://womenintheworkplace.com/>.

UNESCO is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

UNESCO. 1990. *World Declaration on Education for All*. Passed at the World Conference on Education for All* in Jomtien, Thailand. https://bice.org/app/uploads/2014/10/unesco_world_declaration_on_education_for_all_jomtien_thailand.pdf.

UNESCO. 2016. *Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning for all. – Towards Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All*. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245656>.

UNICEF is the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund.

* The Education for All (EFA) movement was launched in the 1990s by UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank, the UN Development Programme and the UN Population Fund.

UNICEF Canada (Lisa Wolff). 2018. *The Equalizer: How Education Creates Fairness for Children in Canada*. Canadian companion to UNICEF Report Card 15. <https://www.unicef.ca/sites/default/files/2018-10/UNICEFReportCard%2015CanadianCompanionENGLISH.pdf>.

UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre. See “Adamson, Peter.”

United Nations. 1979. *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*. www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CEDAW.aspx.

United Nations. 1989. *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/crc.pdf.

Vandenbroeck, Michel. 2015. “Quality ECEC For All: Why We Can’t Afford *Not* to Invest in It.” *Our Schools/Our Selves*. (Summer 2015): 171–182. www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2015/09/OS120_Summer2015_Quality_ECEC_for_all.pdf.

Varga, Donna. 1997. *Constructing the Child: A History of Canadian Day Care*. Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1997. Available for download from the Internet Archive, archive.org/details/constructingchil0000varg/page/n3.

Varmuza, Petr, Michal Perlman, and Linda A. White. 2019. “Understanding Early Childhood Education and Care Utilization in Canada: Implications for Demand and Oversight.” *International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy* 13, no. 7. <https://ijccep.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s40723-019-0063-8>.

Wolff, Lisa. See “UNICEF Canada.”

