

Qualified Educators, Quality Care

The role of the Association of Early
Childhood Educators of Alberta

May 2018

Qualified Educators, Quality Care

The role of the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta

Prepared by Marie Lesoway, Pentacle Productions

for the

Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta

#54, 9912 – 106 Street, Edmonton, AB T6K 1C5 (780) 421-7544 info@aecea.ca

This document was prepared in fulfillment of requirements for grant funding from Alberta's Ministry of Children's Services. It is intended for AECEA's members and partners, for government funders and policy-makers, and for the public.

Terms and abbreviations used in the document are included in Appendix 1.

First release: February 2018

Updated April 2018

Pentacle Productions
Research ★ Writing ★ Editing ★ Communications Advice
www.pentacleproductions.ca

Qualified Educators, Quality Care

The role of the Association of Early Childhood
Educators of Alberta

Contents

Executive Summary.....	1
Setting the Stage.....	3
Alberta’s Child Care Landscape	3
Building a High-Quality Early Learning and Child Care System ..	10
High-Quality Child Care Is a Public Good	17
About AECEA.....	21
History.....	21
Members.....	22
Organizational Structure and Governance	30
Strategic Direction	39
AECEA’s Mandate	39
AECEA’s Mission.....	39
AECEA’s Vision	41
AECEA’s Guiding Principles	42
Operations and Capacity	43
AECEA’s Approach	43
AECEA’s Work	44
Revenue Sources.....	60
Management Processes.....	62
AECEA’s Capacity	62
The Future: Steps Toward a Professional Early Learning and Child Care Workforce	66
Framework Steps at a Glance	68
Step 1: Raise the educational requirements for early childhood educators in Alberta’s regulated child care sector.....	69

Step 2: Make ongoing professional learning mandatory for all early childhood educators in the regulated system	75
Step 3: Develop infrastructure to support the new standards for education and ongoing professional learning	78
Step 4: Address the issue of workforce remuneration.....	83
Work Plan to Support AECEA’s Ten-Year Framework for Professionalizing the Early Learning and Child Care Workforce (2017–2027)	85
Appendix 1: Terms and Abbreviations	94
Appendix 2: The AECEA Board	96
AECEA Board Members, 2017–2018	96
Board Chairs.....	99
Appendix 3: AECEA’s Stakeholders	100
Bibliography.....	109

Executive Summary

The Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta (AECEA) is a member-based non-profit society that advocates for a well-educated, well-supported and well-remunerated early learning and child care workforce.

AECEA believes that a qualified workforce is the foundation for a high-quality child care system. This document defines AECEA's role, value and authority within this system. It summarizes the association's history and operations and outlines its vision, mission and goals. It describes the association's efforts and accomplishments in five key areas of its work on behalf of Alberta's early childhood educators:

- **leadership and planning.** AECEA uses the latest research to develop strategic and operational plans for the association. It empowers its members and inspires them with the confidence they need to help the association realize its goals.
- **advocacy.** AECEA uses persuasive communication, negotiation and partnership-building to advocate on behalf of Alberta's early learning and child care workforce. It builds public and political awareness and understanding of the need to recognize early childhood educators as professionals.
- **system building.** AECEA recognizes that professional early childhood educators are the foundation of a well-functioning, high-quality early learning and child care system that serves the public good. It understands that the pieces of the system are interconnected. Its direct message to early childhood educators is that increasing their education will lead to an increase in compensation, better working conditions and better outcomes—both for the workforce and for the children and families it serves.

- **professional learning and support.** Ongoing professional learning ensures that early childhood educators have access to the latest research and best practices in the field. This supports continuous improvement in the quality and delivery of child care programs and creates the best possible outcomes for children and families. AECEA sponsors conferences, workshops and Leaders Days that provide professional learning for its members. It also administers the Government of Alberta’s professional development grant program for child development supervisors.
- **communication and public relations.** AECEA uses a variety of communication networks to share research and information across the early learning and child care sector. It actively solicits its members’ opinions and develops programs and policies that respond to members’ needs. AECEA also builds public and political awareness of the issues that face the early learning and child care workforce and the broader early learning and child care sector.

Over the long term, AECEA’s mission is to transform Alberta’s early learning and child care workforce into a profession. This document outlines AECEA’s ten-year framework for realizing this goal. The success of AECEA’s work will ensure that Alberta’s early childhood educators are highly qualified, competent and well-paid professionals who are respected for the important work they do. AECEA’s success will also ensure that Alberta’s children and families have access to the high-quality child care system they deserve.

Quality child care is a matter of importance for all Albertans. The issues reach far beyond AECEA to every part of society. Quality child care increases female labour force participation and helps to eliminate poverty. It creates jobs and stimulates economic development. It helps to build strong families and strong communities.

Public support for high-quality child care means support for Alberta’s early childhood education workforce—and social justice for all citizens of the province.

Setting the Stage

AECEA and Alberta's child care system

Alberta's Child Care Landscape

All children and families deserve accessible, affordable, high-quality child care: this is a fundamental right with far-reaching benefits for society as a whole. Unfortunately, the high cost of child care, the shortage of spaces, and the challenges of recruiting and retaining qualified staff mean that regulated, high-quality child care services are often not accessible to the children and families who need them. The majority of Alberta parents must turn to other child care options, including paid or unpaid relatives and unregulated care.

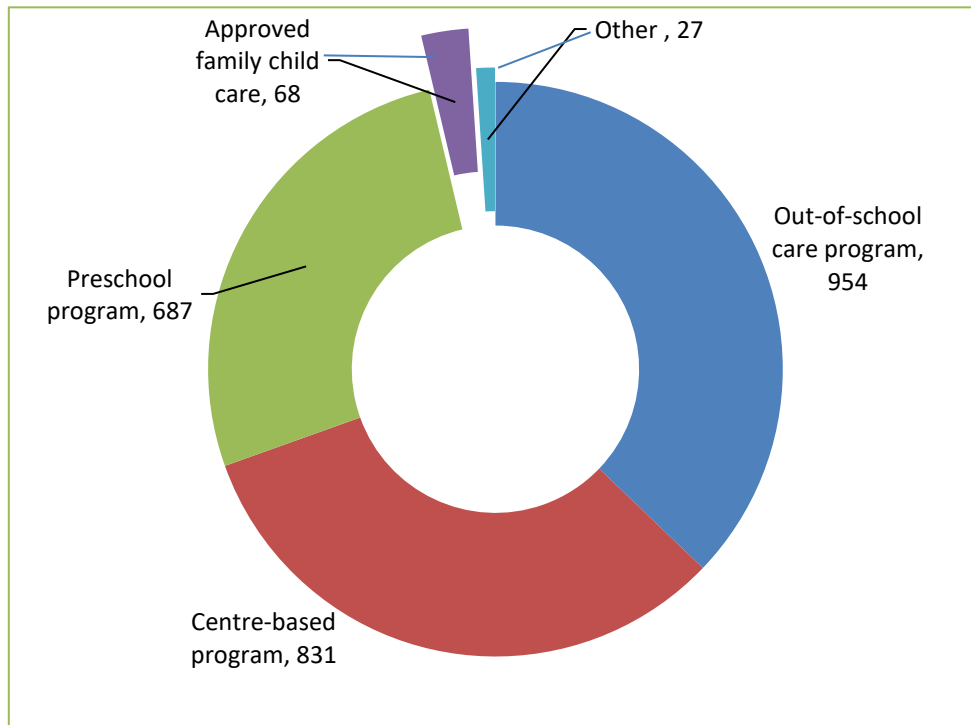


Figure 1. The distribution of licensed and approved child care programs in Alberta, March 2017

There were 2,567 licensed and approved child care programs in Alberta in March 2017.* As shown in Figure 1, the majority were centre-based child care programs (32%), preschools (27%) and out-of-school care programs (27%). 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%.

In March 2017, there were nearly 117,000 licensed and approved child care spaces in Alberta. Approximately 37% of these spaces (43,000) were in Edmonton; about 39% (45,000) were in Calgary. As shown in Figure 2, about 10% of the total available spaces were in family child care programs.

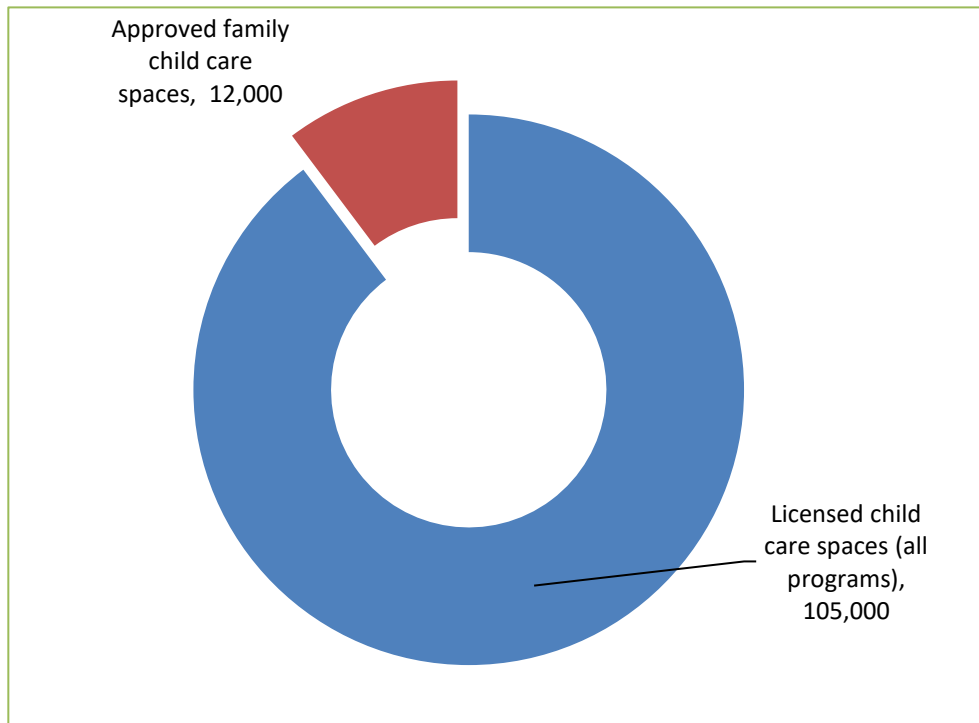


Figure 2. The distribution of licensed and approved child care spaces in Alberta, March 2017

* Alberta Children's Services, *Annual Report 2016–17*, p. 17.

Child care spaces are in short supply

In 2016, Alberta was home to more than 1.1 million families* and 333,254 children under the age of six.† An estimated 70% of these children have parents who work outside the home,‡ which means that most Alberta preschoolers—an estimated 233,278 children—spend some time in some sort of non-parental care.§

In Alberta and across Canada, the demand for child care “outstrips availability in most cases, especially for infants and toddlers.”** In 2014, only one in five Alberta preschoolers (20%) had access to child care within the province’s regulated system.** Regulated child care spaces were available for just 15.5% of children aged birth to 12.**

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 waiting lists, with an average of 59 children per list. In 2017, 66% of child care centres in Edmonton and 63% of centres in Calgary had waiting lists.§§

* Statistics Canada, “Census Alberta [Province] and Canada [Country]” (table) in *Census Profile, 2016*.

† Alberta Children’s Services, *Business Plan 2017–20*, p. 21.

‡ Government of Alberta, *Together We Build Tomorrow*, p. 15. A recent Statistics Canada study (Drolet, Uppal, and LaRoche-Côté) reports that, in 2014, 70% of Canadian women with children under the age of three participated in the labour force.

§ Seventy per cent of 333,254 represents 233,278 children.

** Macdonald and Friendly, *Time Out*, p. 19.

†† Friendly et al., *Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada, 2014*, p. 124.

‡‡Childcare Resource and Research Unit. “Finding Quality Child Care: A Guide for Parents in Canada–Alberta.”

§§ Macdonald and Friendly, *Time Out*, pp. 19–20. In Edmonton, 49% of centres reported waiting lists in 2016, compared to 66% in 2017.

Regulated child care is even more difficult to access in many rural and remote communities in Alberta, and few services “can accommodate the care needs of parents who work non-standard hours.”*

Child care costs are prohibitive for many Alberta families

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 2017 *Time Out* study† found that annual child care fees in the province’s major cities ranged from \$10,000 to \$15,000 per child.

- In Edmonton, median monthly fees were \$990 for infants, \$891 for toddlers and \$885 for preschoolers. This represents an annual child care cost of \$10,600 to \$11,880.
- In Calgary, median monthly fees were \$1,250 for infants, \$1,050 for toddlers and \$1,000 for preschoolers. This represents an annual child care cost of \$12,000 to \$15,000.

The Alberta Federation of Labour reports that child care fees in Alberta are among the highest in Canada.‡

Early childhood educators are poorly paid

The 2107 *Alberta Wage and Salary Survey* 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.§

* Muttart Foundation and Martha Friendly, *Engaging Alberta Municipal Level Governments*, p. 5.

† Macdonald and Friendly, *Time Out*, 7, pp. 10–13. The 2017 *Time Out* study is the latest in a series of annual studies conducted since 2014.

The study defines infants as being under the age of two, toddlers as between 18 months and three years, and preschoolers as between 2.5 and kindergarten age.

‡ Alberta Federation of Labour, “For Kids.”

§ Government of Alberta, *2017 Alberta Wage and Salary Survey*.

The survey reported wages for early childhood educators working in five industries: educational services, health care and social assistance, other services (repair, personal and related services), information, culture, recreation, and public administration. As shown in Table 1, early childhood educators who work in the educational services sector are better paid than colleagues who work in other industries. However, as shown in Table 2, 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.

NOTE: 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.

* Alis occupational profiles for "Early Childhood Educator" and "Educational Assistant." (Based on the Government of Alberta's 2017 *Alberta Wage and Salary Survey*.)

Industry	Average Salaries		
	Starting Salary	Overall Average	Top Salary
Educational Services	\$17.68	\$20.85	\$23.10
Health Care and Social Assistance	\$14.37	\$16.16	\$18.33
Other Services (Repair, Personal and Related Services)	\$12.95	\$16.17	\$19.92
Information, Culture, Recreation	\$13.31	\$15.36	\$18.52
Public Administration	\$17.82	\$18.66	\$19.93
All Industries	\$14.62	\$16.81	\$19.33

Table 1. Comparison of early childhood educators' salaries across different industries in Alberta, as reported in the Government of Alberta's 2017 Alberta Wage and Salary Survey

Industry	Average Salaries		
	Starting Salary	Overall 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%

Table 2. 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

Elementary school teachers have at least four years of post-secondary training and earn an average of \$41.01 per hour.* This is significantly more than the average wage of even the highest-paid early childhood educators.

"Much of the early learning and care workforce...has modest formal education, limited access to ongoing professional development and relatively low rates of remuneration. By comparison, staff in school-based programs...[have] higher levels of formal education (although not always in early childhood education), have access to ongoing professional development and enjoy competitive salaries and benefits."

—Muttart Foundation, *Toward a Provincial Framework: Draft*, p. 14

* Alis occupational profile for "Elementary School Teacher." (Based on the Government of Alberta's 2017 Alberta Wage and Salary Survey.)

Qualified early childhood educators are in short supply

For too long, the work of early childhood educators has been undervalued and underpaid. Low wages make it difficult for employers to attract qualified people, encourage them to upgrade their education and keep them in the field. Staff turnover is high and there is a shortage of qualified staff to work in regulated child care settings.*

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.†

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.‡ For directors, this was the highest proportion in the country. For staff, it was the second-highest proportion—below Ontario. High staff turnover has a social and economic cost.

Another unfortunate consequence of poor wages is that a significant portion of Alberta’s child care workforce is under educated. As shown in Table 7 (p. 69) 39% of workers in the regulated sector are certified as child development assistants, which means they have completed a 54-hour course. By comparison, many entry-level dog groomers have completed a 160-hour course.§

Even qualified early childhood educators lack the funding and support they need for professional learning and growth.

* The Muttart Foundation and Martha Friendly, *Engaging Alberta Municipal Level Governments*, p. 5.

† Alis, Occupational profile for “Early Childhood Educator.” (Based on the Government of Alberta’s *2017 Alberta Wage and Salary Survey*.)

‡ From the national 2013 *You Bet We Still Care* study, cited by Flanagan and Beach, *Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Commission*, p. 69.

§ Alberta School of Dog Grooming, “Canine Stylist Technician.”

*A 2009 study conducted for the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council found a Canada-wide shortage of more than 4,800 staff to fill available positions. “As a result, employers were increasingly hiring staff with lower qualifications than required by regulation.”**

Building a High-Quality Early Learning and Child Care System

A well-functioning, high-quality early learning and child care system[†] includes the following components:

- individual early childhood educators
- teams and workplaces
- local, national and international inter-institutional partnerships
- governance systems, which include legislative and funding frameworks

As shown in Figure 3, these components are interlinked. In order to effect system-wide change, research, policy-making and practice must work in tandem across the system.

* Flanagan and Beach, *Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Commission*, p. 68.

† Peeters, “Competence Requirements” and “From Stories,” and Peeters and Peleman, “The Competent System.”

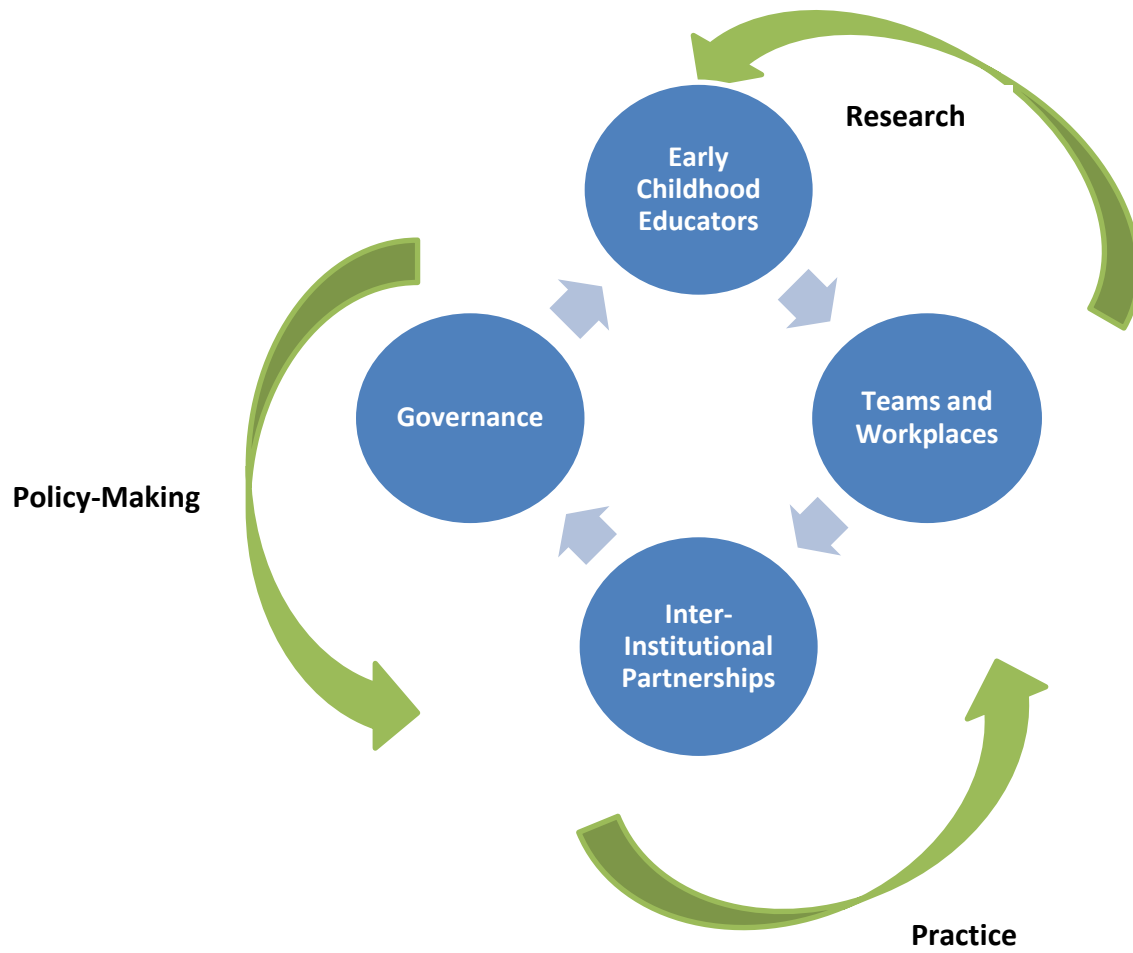


Figure 3. An integrated early learning and child care system

The Childcare Resource and Research Unit at the University of Toronto proposes that high-quality early learning and child care is founded on a system of seven interlinked elements, as shown in Figure 4.



Figure 4. The elements of a high-quality child care system

Figure 5 shows the European Commission’s five-element variation on this system.*

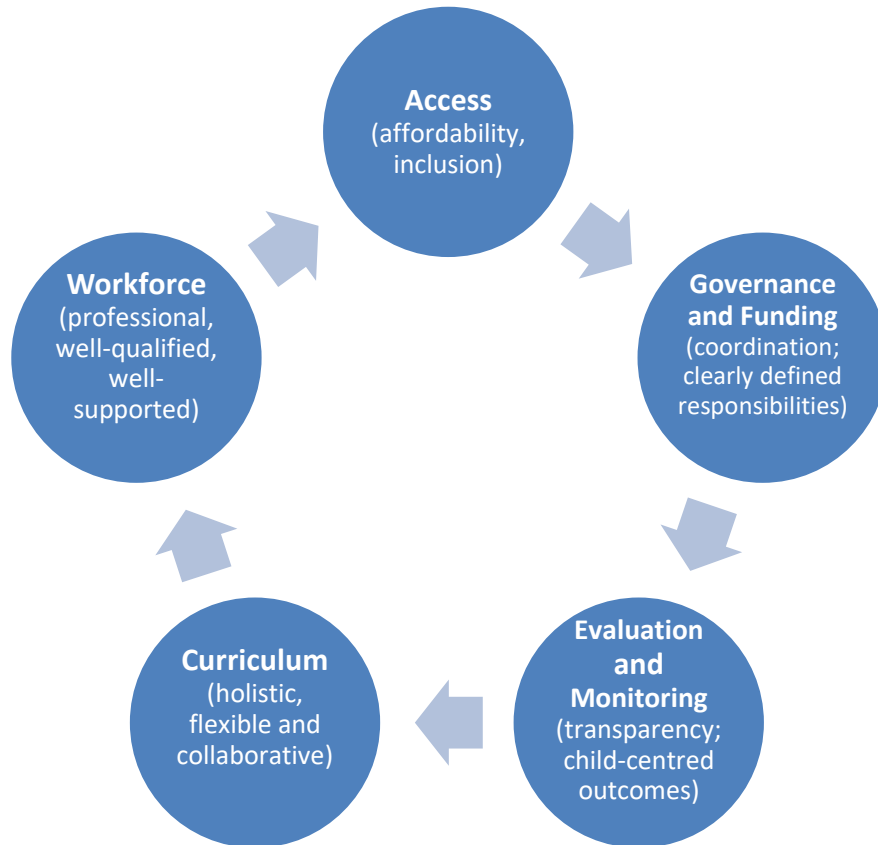


Figure 5. A quality framework for early learning and child care

The early learning and child care workforce is at the heart of all three system models.

* Milotay, “Proposal for a Quality Framework.”

The need for a professional workforce

The Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta believes that a well-qualified, well-remunerated and well-supported workforce is the heart of a high-quality early learning and child care system. Workforce-related system components include increased wages, higher educational standards, better working conditions and ongoing professional learning for Alberta's early childhood educators.

As shown in Figure 6, higher standards and improved qualifications for early childhood educators result in higher quality care for children. Highly qualified early childhood educators command respect, recognition and professional wages. Professional wages require public investment and support for high-quality child care as a basic human right and a public good.

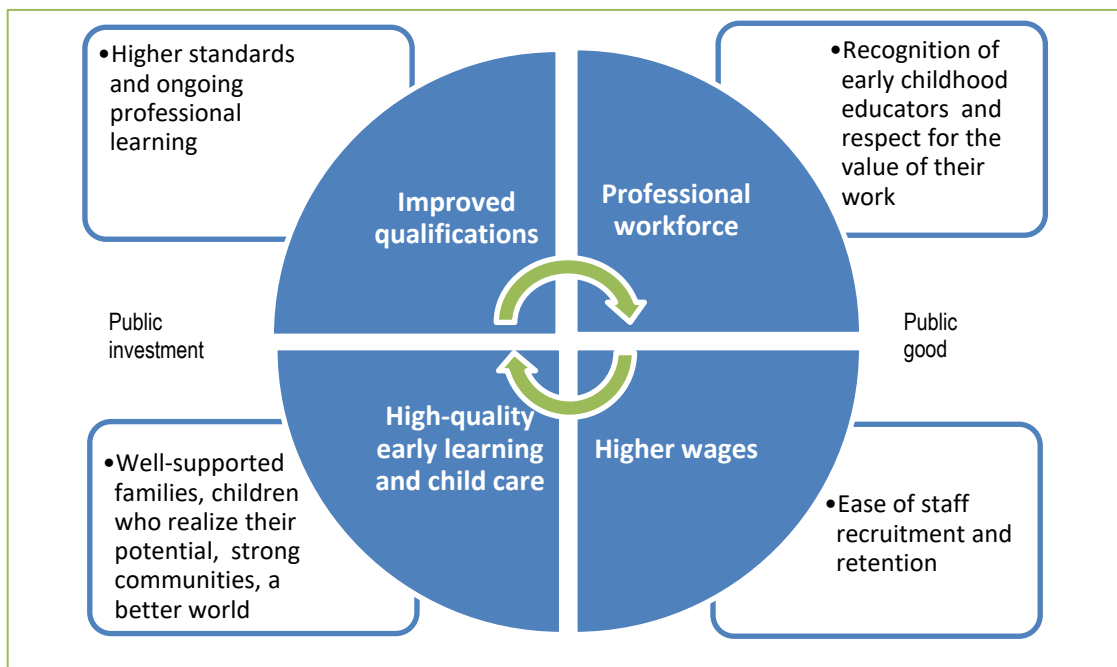


Figure 6. Workforce-related components of an effective early learning and child care system

A well-functioning early learning and child care system requires solid infrastructure. Developing this infrastructure requires substantial public investment in child care and in the early learning workforce that supports it. It requires long-term planning and an integrated, cross-ministry approach. It requires public and political recognition of the value of high-quality early learning and child care. And it requires a professional early learning and child care workforce.

AECEA recognizes that the issues related to professionalizing the workforce are complex and that change will be costly. The association also recognizes that change is imperative. The need is urgent. And over the long-term, the returns on investing in a professional early childhood education workforce are well worth the effort.

The need for planning

The Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Commission estimates that 1,000 new child care spaces require between 100 and 150 early childhood educators (including program directors).^{*} In March 2017, about 15,500 early childhood educators provided care to children in 117,000 regulated spaces in Alberta.[†] This is a ratio of about 132 staff per 1,000 spaces, which is within Manitoba’s recommended ratio guidelines. However, assuming that 233,278 children (70% of the population) need access to a regulated child care space, Alberta currently has a shortfall of about 116,300 spaces and 7,800 to 19,500 qualified early childhood educators.[‡]

Between 2017 and 2041, Alberta’s population is expected to grow at a rate of about 1.4% per year. The province’s population of preschoolers (under the age of five) is expected to remain fairly stable until the 2030s,

^{*} Flanagan and Beach, *Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Commission*, p. 63

[†] Government of Alberta, *Children’s Services Annual Report 2016–17*, p. 17, and workforce data provided to AECEA. For details, see Table 7 on p. 69.

[‡] See Table 3. The figures in the table row that “assumes no increase from 2016” is a proxy for Alberta’s current child care situation.

and reach 345,000 by 2041. The population of children aged five to 17 is expected to grow by an average of 2.1% per year over this period.*

Preschoolers in Alberta	2030	Assume 70% need a full-time child care space	Assume 100 educators/ 1,000 spaces	Assume 150 educators/ 1,000 spaces
Assume no increase from 2016	333,254	233,278	23,328	34,992
Assume a 1.4% annual increase	404,862	283,403	28,340	42,510
Assume a 2.1% annual increase	445,796	312,057	31,200	46,800

Table 3. Preschool population projections and the need for early childhood educators, 2030

Table 3 shows various preschool population growth scenarios. It also shows the numbers of qualified early childhood educators that will be needed to serve the needs of a growing population by 2030. Without realistic plans for infrastructure development—including significant increases to the capacity of Alberta’s publicly funded post-secondary institutions to train early childhood educators—the province will have a serious shortage of qualified staff as the population grows.

As Alberta’s early learning and child care system grows, the province’s publicly funded post-secondary institutions will need to build the capacity to educate growing numbers of students entering the field.

The need for partnership

Developing an accessible, affordable, high-quality early learning and child care system is a shared responsibility. Governments, post-secondary institutions, corporations, community organizations, early childhood educators, early learning and child care programs and parents and families all play a role.

Building an effective early learning and child care system requires system-wide change and partnerships between stakeholders across jurisdictions and institutions.

* Alberta Treasury Board and Finance. *Population Projection, 2017–2041*, 1, pp. 4–5.

Growth in the preschool population segment is a function of birth rate. Growth in the school-age population segment is a function of birth rate and migration to Alberta.

On the provincial front, AECEA works closely with the following provincial government departments:

- Alberta Children's Services, which sets health, safety and quality standards for child care services
- Alberta Education, which is responsible for Early Childhood Services, including kindergarten programs and programs for two-and-a-half- to five-year-old children with special needs
- Alberta Status of Women, which leads the government's work to increase gender equality in Alberta

As AECEA implements its ten-year framework for professionalizing the early learning and child care workforce, it will build a strong relationship with Alberta Advanced Education, which is responsible for post-secondary education programs in early learning and child care.

AECEA works with a broad range of community partners and stakeholders across the early learning and child care sector. Please see Appendix 3 (p. 100) for details.

High-Quality Child Care Is a Public Good

Alberta's children deserve high-quality child care

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

High-quality early learning and child care plays a crucial role in healthy child development. It improves cognitive abilities, fosters language development and improves future economic well-being and social outcomes. It improves children's physical and mental health later in life, and reduces the likelihood of poverty, criminality and addiction. It increases the likelihood that children will succeed at school and grow up to be productive, well-adjusted adults.

Everyone benefits

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.

Research shows that accessible, affordable, high-quality early learning and child care results in a host of social benefits.

Investments in child care increase female labour force participation. In 2015, labour force participation for women in Alberta was 77%, compared to 88.3% for men.*

High-quality child care stimulates economic development and growth. In Quebec, the economic activity generated by the child care system generated GDP growth of 1.7% in and an extra \$2.2 billion in tax revenue.† Another Quebec study shows that every dollar invested in child care has a net return of \$.20 for the province and \$.55 for the federal government.‡

Investment in child care creates jobs. The Alberta Federation of Labour reports that investments in child care generate 44% more direct and indirect jobs than the closest industry.§

Accessible, affordable, high-quality child care improves the status of women. The Alberta Federation of Labour reports that affordable child care for single mothers increased these women's labour force

* Moyser, *Women and Paid Work*, p. 7.

† Alberta Federation of Labour, "For Families."

‡ Flanagan and Beach, *Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Commission*, p. 32.

§ Alberta Federation of Labour, "For Workers."

participation by 22%, decreased their relative poverty rate by 14% and increased their median after-tax income by 81%.^{*}

A 2017 International Monetary Fund working paper reports 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 current 7% gap between male and female labour force participation would increase Canada's GDP by about 4%.[†]

Accessible, affordable, high-quality child care is an important tool for eliminating poverty. The City of Edmonton has identified affordable quality child care as one of six game-changers in its *End Poverty in a Generation* strategy.[‡]

High-quality child care helps to build strong communities. It helps newcomers integrate into their new neighbourhoods, and fosters appreciation and respect for diversity.

High-quality child care helps to build strong families. It helps parents and families link to community resources and supports and find a fulfilling work–life balance.

High-quality child care means...

...that children feel accepted, understood and supported. They enjoy interesting, engaging activities and positive relationships with other children.

...that parents feel confident that their children's development and well-being is nurtured in ways that respect their family's culture, traditions, values and goals. Parents are partners in their children's care, and have good relationships with their children's care providers.[§]

^{*} Alberta Federation of Labour, "For Families."

[†] Petersson, Mariscal, and Ishi, *Women Are Key*, pp. 24–33.

[‡] End Poverty Edmonton, *End Poverty in a Generation*, p. 45.

[§] Canadian Child Care Federation, "Quality Learning and Child Care: A Parent's Guide."

High-quality early learning and child care is a function of three interrelated components:

1. well-run **programs** based on a coherent curriculum and pedagogical approach
2. safe, nurturing **places** (learning and play environments) that give children the confidence they need to learn and explore
3. qualified **people**—early childhood educators who have the knowledge, skills and abilities to do their jobs well and to develop positive relationships with the children and families they serve

Recruiting and retaining excellent people means supporting “the early learning and child care workforce, ensuring appropriate remuneration levels, benefits and working conditions and striving to be sure that providers are seen as a respected group of professionals.”*

Qualified early childhood educators are masters of a wide range of core competencies. Please see p. 80 for details.

* Canadian Child Care Federation, “Quality Learning and Child Care: A Parent’s Guide.”

About AECEA

The Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta is a non-profit, member-based society that serves as a voice for Alberta's early learning and child care workforce.

AECEA supports and empowers early childhood educators in their efforts to gain recognition for the important work they do. It provides information and access to research and resources. It also administers grant funding and provides opportunities for ongoing professional learning.

Together with its members and partners, AECEA advocates for the recognition of the field of early childhood education as a profession that commands the respect, support, compensation and influence that this important work deserves.

History

AECEA traces its beginnings to 1987, when a grassroots network of child care organizations* formed in response to the Alberta government's proposed changes to day care funding.

The network's lobbying efforts were ultimately unsuccessful. Government cuts to day care operating allowances sparked a child care crisis, and it became nearly impossible to find qualified staff who would work for the minimal wages that programs could afford. In spite of this setback, the network continued its efforts to advocate for quality child care delivered by qualified staff. In 2003, it partnered with the Alberta government, the Canadian Child Care Federation and the Alberta Family Child Care Association to implement an accreditation standards system for the province.

* The early network included the Alberta Association for Young Children, the Early Childhood Professional Association and the United Child Care Association of Alberta.

As the network’s membership and authority increased, a more formal organizational structure evolved. The **Alberta Child Care Network Association** (ACCNA) was incorporated under the Society’s Act in 2004. Over time, although its legal name remained unchanged, ACCNA became known as the **Alberta Child Care Association**, or ACCA.*

In the fall of 2016, members voted to change the name from ACCA to AECEA—the **Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta**. AECEA’s new legal name reinforces the association’s focus on early learning and child care *educators*. It also reinforces the association’s connection to sister organizations in other provinces.

Some of AECEA’s Canadian Compatriots

Association of Early Childhood Educators of Newfoundland and Labrador (established 1989)

Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario (established 1950)

Early Childhood Educators of BC (established 1969)

Members

AECEA represents early childhood educators who work with children in a range of licensed and regulated settings, including day care centres, preschools, out-of-school care programs and family day homes. Individuals who support the work of early childhood educators are also eligible for membership; these members include post-secondary faculty and students in the early childhood education field.

* In a January 2009 bylaw change, the name “Alberta Child Care Association” is noted as an alternative to the association’s formal name, which remained the Alberta Child Care Network Association.

In 2013, the membership voted to change the association’s fiscal year end from August 31 to March 31 to correspond with government funding cycles. The change was filed with Alberta’s Corporate Registry on February 4, 2015.

Organizations that support AECEA's goals are eligible for membership as non-voting associates.

AECEA takes the position that allowing members from all facets of child care provides opportunities for education and information-sharing. Collaboration across delivery systems is a first step toward the system-wide change that must take place to professionalize Alberta's early learning and child care workforce.

Membership Categories

AECEA offers three membership categories:

- **Professional members** are Alberta-certified early childhood educators and post-secondary educators who work in the field of early learning and child care. This category also includes staff and contractors who work for or in support of licensed child care programs and approved family day home agencies.
- **Student members** are enrolled in post-secondary early learning and child care programs in Alberta. Students in leadership, management, human resources and other programs related to early learning and child care are also eligible for AECEA membership.
- **Associate members** are agencies or groups that support AECEA's goals.

Professional members and student members have voting rights at AECEA's general meetings. Associate members are welcome to attend AECEA meetings, but cannot vote.

As shown in Figure 7, AECEA currently has close to 800 members. The organizations in AECEA's associate membership category represent thousands of early childhood educators as well as staff and contractors of approved family day homes and licensed child care programs in Alberta.

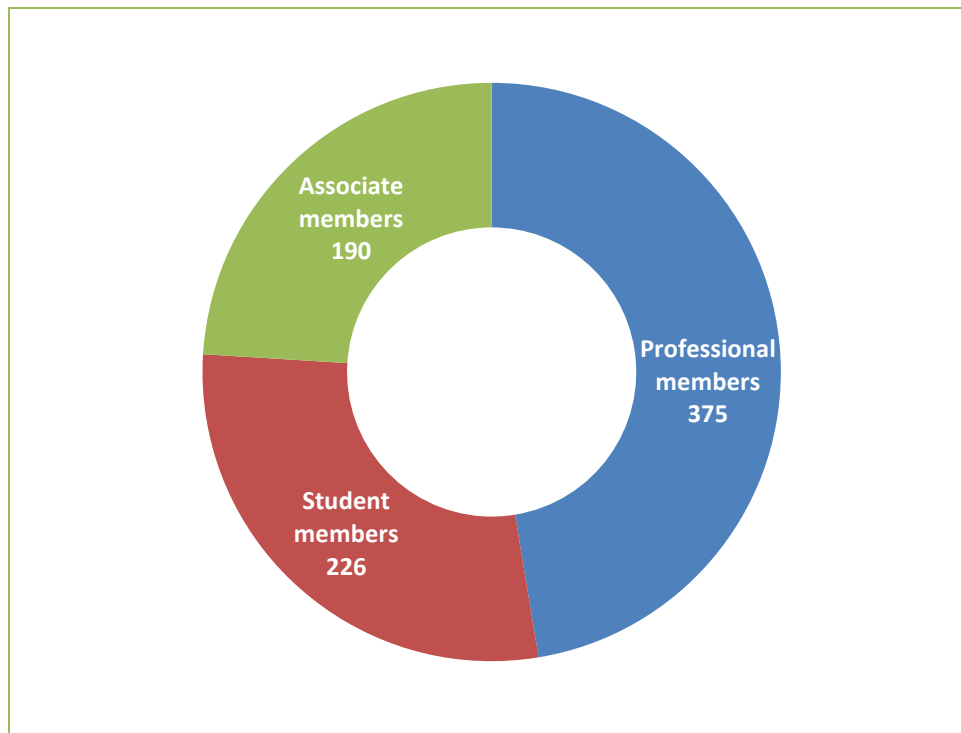


Figure 7. On December 1, 2017, AECEA's membership numbered 791 individuals and organizations.

Membership Fees

Membership in AECEA is free for full-time students enrolled in publicly funded post-secondary early childhood education programs in Alberta. Providing free student membership is a deliberate organizational and leadership development strategy. AECEA's hope is that engaging students in the association's work will ensure these individuals' engagement and support when they start their careers as early childhood educators.

Part-time students pay a reduced membership fee of \$50 per year.

Annual fees for associate members are \$125.

Annual fees for professional members are \$125.

Professional members whose employers participate in AECEA's group health plan pay \$95 toward their annual fees. The \$30 balance is paid by the health plan provider. (See p. 28 for details.)

Membership Benefits

Coming soon...

AECEA is developing a members'-only area on its website. It will include a job board, webinars, resources, Q & A and links to the latest research and best practices in the field of early learning and child care.

PROFESSIONAL AND STUDENT MEMBERS

AECEA's professional and student members are part of the association's strong, united voice on legislation, policy, funding, training, professional learning and other issues that affect early childhood educators.

AECEA's professional and student members enjoy the following benefits:

- the opportunity to contribute to AECEA's advocacy for accessible, affordable, high-quality child care delivered by a respected, well-compensated professional early learning and child care workforce
- opportunities for personal and professional growth through networking with colleagues and leaders in the field, including access to a members-only Facebook site
- a monthly e-newsletter, *Networking News*, that includes updates on AECEA's activities, information about professional learning opportunities and events, links to the latest research and inspirational stories from the field
- discounts on AECEA-sponsored workshops and events (including the popular annual conference, which is usually sold out)
- reduced fees for selected educational and professional learning offerings sponsored by AECEA's partners
- access to a group health benefits plan (available to professional and student members whose employers are AECEA associate members)

- reduced membership fees for professional members whose employers participate in AECEA's group health benefits plan
- AECEA's support and organizational backing to empower personal advocacy for the recognition of early childhood educators as well-qualified, well-compensated professionals
- opportunities to develop leadership skills and make a difference by getting involved in the association
- free affiliate membership in the Canadian Child Care Federation, which is a cost saving of \$65
 - **CCCF affiliate membership** includes discounts on books and resources, weekly email updates and access to the federation's members-only quarterly journal.
 - AECEA pays the CCCF \$25 per member per year to provide affiliate membership in the CCCF. Affiliate membership in the federation provides the same benefits as individual membership. The regular rate for CCCF membership is \$65 for individuals and \$90 for organizations.

Both AECEA members and the public have access to the association's online events calendar.

Certified child development supervisors who work in day care or out-of-school care programs or in family day home agencies can access professional development funding through AECEA even if they are not members of the association. (Funding is not available for child development supervisors who work in preschools or as family day home providers.)

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

AECEA's associate members enjoy the following benefits:

- free affiliate membership in the Canadian Child Care Federation, which is a cost saving of \$90
- access to a number of workforce- and workplace-related benefits and discounts, including the following:
 - a comprehensive group health benefit plan that offers life and disability insurance, coverage for prescription drugs, dental and vision care, and medical coverage for travellers
 - a 20% discount on TimeSavR, web-based software which is specifically designed to help child care professionals and organizations manage staffing, attendance, payments and other administrative tasks
 - access to Foster Park Brokers commercial insurance, which is tailored to the early learning and child care industry
- credits toward meeting the requirements for child care program accreditation
 - Membership in AECEA helps child care programs comply with Accreditation Standard 5, which requires that programs “collaborate with community organizations and services to respond to the needs of children and families they serve.” Membership in AECEA also helps programs prepare quality enhancement plans. These are required under Accreditation Standard 6, which mandates “continuous quality improvement...demonstrated through ongoing self-monitoring and evaluation processes.”

Group Health Plan: Responding to Workforce Needs

AECEA is proactive in developing business and service relationships that respond to its members' needs. For example, many early childhood educators face the dual challenge of low wages and no benefits. In 2008, AECEA partnered with a group health insurance provider to help address this issue.

Participation in AECEA's group health plan is restricted to employers who are associate members. The health plan service provider pays AECEA \$30 for each employee covered by an associate member's plan. If the employee is an AECEA professional member, the association applies this payment toward the individual's annual membership fee, reducing it from \$125 to \$95.

As of December 2017, 628 early childhood educators received health benefits through AECEA's group health plan, generating a gross annual revenue of approximately \$18,800 for the association. Of this group, 140 (approximately one in five) were AECEA professional members who paid a reduced membership fee as a result of their employers' participation in the health plan.

AECEA's health benefit program is currently administered by Benefex Inc. Insurance coverage is provided through Co-operators.

Growing Strong

AECEA's membership has steadily increased over the years. The handful of individuals and organizations that were members in 2005 is now nearly 800 strong. Historical membership numbers are not available, but as shown in Figure 8, the growth in membership revenues tells the tale.

AECEA's membership revenues have almost doubled over the past two years.

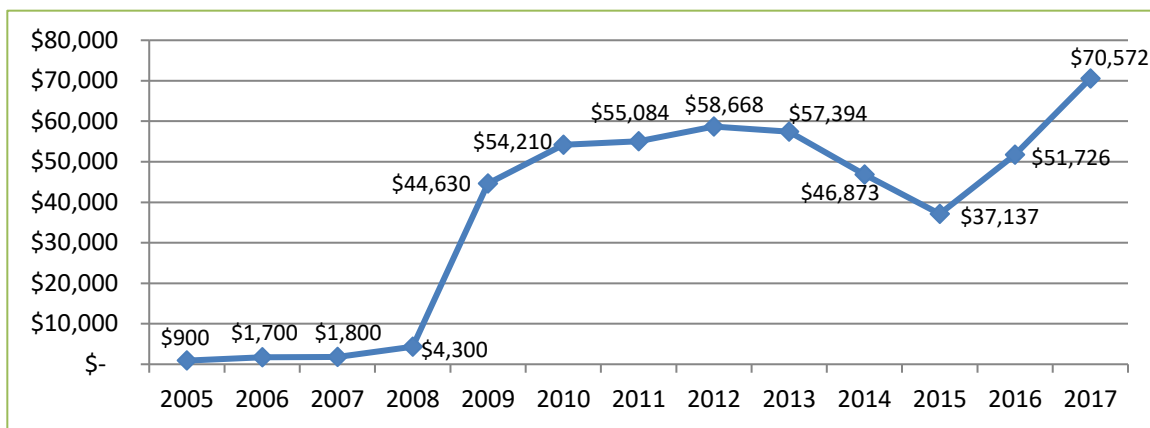


Figure 8. Growth in AECEA's membership revenues from 2005 to 2017.* Membership fees remained the same throughout this period.

* The decline in membership revenues between 2014 and 2015 is a function of the change in AECEA's fiscal year end from August 31 to March 31. The membership revenues reported for 2015 are for the seven-month period from September 1, 2014, to March 31, 2015.

The decline in membership revenues between 2013 and 2014 is a function of organizational stress. AECEA lost its paid staff during this period, and board membership was reduced to three people who managed to keep the organization viable against great odds. With the recruitment of a full board complement in 2015, membership revenues have continued to grow.

Organizational Structure and Governance

AECEA is a non-profit organization registered under Alberta's Societies Act. AECEA's operations are governed by its bylaws. The bylaws outline the responsibilities of AECEA's board of directors, which oversees the association's budget, planning, staffing and development. The bylaws also set out membership categories and member privileges.

Staff

AECEA has operated almost entirely on volunteer power for most of its thirty-plus-year existence. Consultants have been hired to assist with special projects, but the association did not have staff until recently. A full-time executive director—AECEA's first paid staff member—was hired in 2006.* This position was filled until 2013, when finances forced a different staffing model.

AECEA currently has a full-time office administrator whose primary responsibility is managing professional development funding for AECEA's Child Development Supervisor Professional Development Funding program. AECEA administers this program on behalf of the Alberta government's Ministry of Children's Services. AECEA's office administrator also manages the association's operations, website, communications and member and community relations.

Policy and procedures

Since 2013, AECEA has had a personnel policies manual that outlines standards of conduct, time-off benefits, compensation and other guidelines for staff.

* AECEA's executive directors were Tim Baier (2006–2008), Karen Baretta (2008–2010) and Natalie Weller (2010–2013).

Volunteers

AECEA is a grassroots organization that runs on the passion, commitment and hard work of volunteers. Each year, thousands of hours of people power make it possible for AECEA to achieve big goals with a small budget.

AECEA's volunteers hail from the association's membership and partners. Board members alone contribute close to 5,000 hours of unpaid time to AECEA projects each year.* (See Table 4.) This is the equivalent of 2.6 full-time staff members. Assuming \$85,000 annual salaries commensurate with board members' education and experience, this represents a financial contribution of more than \$220,000 per year.

Task	Hours Per Individual	Total Hours	Estimates
Monthly phone meetings	24	240	2 hours per meeting x 12 months
Quarterly face-to-face meetings	32	320	8 hours per meeting x 4 meetings (without travel time)
Research	24	240	2 hours per month x 12 months
Board communications	104	1,040	2 hours per week x 52 weeks
Stakeholder outreach	40	480	20 days (160 hours) by AECEA's chair and past chair plus 40 hours for each additional board member per year
Committee responsibilities	252	2,520	21 hours per month x 12 months
TOTALS:	476	4,560	

Table 4. An estimate of volunteer hours contributed by AECEA's nine-member board of directors and its board-appointed special advisor, 2017

*This is a conservative estimate. Board members spent thousands more hours each year in the early days—to launch AECEA, to administer hundreds of professional learning bursaries and grants without the support of paid staff, and to research, design and implement complex projects like the association's ten-year development framework. Between 2014 and 2017, it was not unusual for board members and the board adviser to devote 80 hours per month to AECEA activities. This represents a total contribution of 9,600 hours per year—or nearly 5.5 full-time staff equivalents.

Table 5 shows additional volunteer time that AECEA members contribute to their organization.

Task	Hours per year
Financial management (1 member)	240
Child care licensing review committee (12 members)	720
Conference and Leaders Day committees (15 members)	600
Professional learning and development committee (4 members)	434
TOTALS:	1,994

Table 5. Selected volunteer contributions to AECEA, 2017

Volunteers need support

AECEA is tremendously fortunate to have a solid base of dedicated volunteers. But an organization needs more than volunteer power if it is to thrive. To function effectively, it must be well funded and well resourced.

In previous decades, volunteer burn-out and the lack of resources led to a lack of confidence in AECEA and a decline in membership. AECEA's success in securing government funding to support the ongoing professional learning of early childhood educators has helped to reverse this trend. It has also provided spin-off benefits for the organization. Government funding pays a portion of AECEA's administrative costs and makes it possible for the association to carry on its important work on behalf of Alberta's early learning and child care workforce.

Board

A working board of up to nine directors is the legal authority of the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta. The board develops AECEA's strategic direction and operational plans. Working in collaboration with staff, members and community stakeholders, it also oversees the association's programs, finances and day-to-day operations.

Board members are elected at AECEA's annual general meeting and serve for terms of one, two or three years. Staggered terms help to prevent volunteer burn-out and provide flexibility for members who might not be able to make multi-year commitments. Staggered terms ensure a continual influx of new ideas while ensuring continuity within the organization. They also maximize the opportunity for AECEA members to take on leadership roles. An added bonus is that newly elected directors are mentored by longer-serving members of the board.

New board members are recruited each year. To the extent possible, recruitment efforts attempt to ensure representation from across the province, from different parts of the child care community and from outside the field. Board recruitment also aims to solicit specific skills to meet current organizational needs.

AECEA's board members represent early childhood educators and organizations from across the province. They are dedicated, visionary and highly qualified front-line educators, program administrators, mentors, academics and community leaders who are deeply committed to AECEA's mission. They bring a wealth of experience to the table.

AECEA board members volunteer their time and expertise. Their only compensation is for approved out-of-pocket expenses.

Voices of experience

Collectively, AECEA's nine board members have more than 200 years of experience in early learning and child care.

Appendix 2 (see p. 96) includes biographies of AECEA's 2017–18 board members and special advisor. It also includes a list of the association's board chairs from 2004 (when ACCNA, the Alberta Child Care Network Association was incorporated) to date.

ACCNA is AECEA's former name.

DIRECTORS AND ADVISORS

AECEA's bylaws stipulate that board members (directors) elect a chair, vice-chair, treasurer and secretary among themselves. These four directors constitute AECEA's board executive:

- The board **chair** provides leadership, chairs and coordinates board meetings, and ensures that AECEA's bylaws are properly followed. The chair also handles AECEA's media relations and prepares presentations and key messages about the association's purpose, role, goals and plans. These key messages guide AECEA's board and staff in their communications with members, stakeholders and the public.
- The **vice-chair** acts in the absence of the chair.
- The **treasurer** oversees AECEA's finances.
- The **secretary** creates and maintains minutes of board meetings and ensures that AECEA's corporate responsibilities are met.

All directors who serve on AECEA's board share responsibility for community liaison, fundraising, committee work (with the support of other association members), special events and effective governance.

The board may appoint advisors, as required. These individuals do not need to be AECEA members.

Playing by the rules

AECEA has job descriptions for its elected and appointed board members. All members of the board receive an orientation manual and follow the association's code of conduct and conflict of interest policy.

BOARD COMMITTEES

The AECEA board of directors is a working board. Every board member is expected to take on one or more committee responsibilities. The chair is an ex officio member of all AECEA committees.

The following are AECEA's standing committees:

- The **Governance Committee** develops policy and ensures that AECEA's bylaws and objectives are followed and kept up to date.
- The **Human Resources Committee** deals with personnel issues, including hiring, orientation, discipline, evaluation and supervision of AECEA's staff.
- The **Professional Learning and Development Committee** applies for and oversees professional development grant funding from Alberta Children's Services. It develops grant administration processes and prepares grant-related financial statements and progress reports. The committee undertakes research and engages with post-secondary institutions and other stakeholders in the early learning and child care sector. Its projects include developing a framework for advancing Alberta's workforce of early childhood educators. (For details, see p. 67.)
- The **Membership Committee** develops and implements strategies to recruit new members. Its work includes marketing as well as member retention and recognition.
- The **Nominating Committee** issues annual calls for nomination to AECEA's board of directors and prepares a slate of candidates for consideration at the association's annual general meeting.

Ad hoc committees are created as needed. As of January 2018, AECEA has three ad hoc committees:

- AECEA’s **Awards Committee** manages the application process, vets nominations and selects the winner of AECEA’s annual Dr. Sherrill Brown Award of Distinction. The award recognizes AECEA members who have at least 10 years of experience in early learning and child care and who have demonstrated innovation and professional excellence in pedagogical practice, partnership, research, leadership or education. Winners receive an engraved crystal plaque and a framed certificate, which are presented at AECEA’s annual conference. Winners are also acknowledged at the Government of Alberta’s annual Child Development Professional Awards of Excellence.
- AECEA’s **Child Care Licensing Regulation Review Committee** (established in July 2016) monitors legislative developments related to Alberta’s early learning and child care sector—particularly those that affect the workforce. This twelve-person committee of AECEA members represents a broad cross-section of the child care sector, including representatives from family day homes, centre-based child care programs, out-of-school care programs and rural communities. Its mandate includes developing recommendations for higher levels of education for early childhood educators.
- AECEA’s **Conference Committee** plans and manages AECEA’s popular annual two-day conference for child care educators. (See p. 56 for details.)

The Dr. Sherrill Brown Award of Distinction

Dr. Sherrill Brown (1950–2013) was an inspired leader, researcher, educator and advocate who served three terms at the helm of the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta (at the time when it was still known as the Alberta Child Care Network Association). Sherrill was a research officer and taught in the Early Learning and Child Care program at MacEwan University. She was instrumental in developing Alberta’s accreditation model for child care and in establishing the Alberta Resource Centre for Quality Enhancement.

AECEA established this award in recognition of Sherrill’s monumental contribution to the early childhood profession. The award is presented annually to recognize an individual who has made outstanding contributions to Alberta’s early learning and child care community. Winners have included the following:

- MaryAnn Farebrother, 2014
- Maria Valenti, 2015
- Wendy Reid, 2016
- Cathy Smey Carston, 2017

Stakeholders

The Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta works closely with a host of provincial and national organizations that share an interest in early learning and child care and the workforce on which the sector is founded. These stakeholders include anti-poverty organizations, human rights advocates, women's rights advocates, unions, charitable foundations, businesses and all three orders of government. A selected list is included in Appendix 3.

Strategic Direction

The information in this chapter reflects AECEA's strategic direction as of the date of this report.

AECEA regularly consults with members and stakeholders to refine its strategic direction within the context of an evolving early learning and child care system. This work is ongoing.

AECEA's Mandate

AECEA's organizational journey was launched in response to the issue of child care funding and wages. As the association evolved, it became more and more apparent that wages and workforce qualifications go hand in hand. Both elements must be addressed through system-wide change in the early learning and child care sector.

In 2015, AECEA resolved to focus directly on the early childhood educators within the broader child care system. The association's immediate priority is to get to know who this workforce is and what it needs. This means engaging individual early childhood educators, learning about the workforce, developing strategies to address workforce needs and advocating for much-needed system change. It also means planning for a future in which a well-qualified, well-compensated professional workforce provides Alberta's children and families with the high-quality child care they deserve and need.

AECEA's Mission

AECEA is the voice of early childhood educators in advocating for higher educational standards, better wages and working conditions, and comprehensive system supports.

Our mission is to transform Alberta's early learning and child care workforce into a recognized profession.

AECEA works toward its mission in a variety of ways. The association provides leadership and raises awareness about important issues—including the importance and value of high-quality early learning and child care and its benefit for all society. It engages in policy advocacy to influence governments, community leaders and the public and to make the case that the need for change is urgent. It supports early childhood educators by providing access to information, resources and professional networks of experts and colleagues. It provides professional learning through workshops and conferences and administers a Government of Alberta grant program that helps to fund these and other learning opportunities. It builds respect for early childhood educators and the important work they do.

AECEA is the voice of early childhood educators in advocating for the better wages, higher educational standards, better working conditions and ongoing professional learning that supports high-quality early learning and child care. The association supports its members in their struggle for quality and equality and empowers them as valued, contributing members of an important profession.

In working to achieve its mission, AECEA's goal is to professionalize Alberta's early learning and child care workforce across the spectrum. Only a professional workforce can make a legitimate claim to the professional wages that the important work of early childhood educators deserves.

Professionalism in early learning and child care is founded on education and ongoing professional learning. This means that *all* early childhood educators must have considerably more **education** than the current minimal requirements. Ongoing **professional learning** is also key. Together, formal educational preparation and ongoing professional learning can help educators provide high-quality early learning and care

that nurtures children’s curiosity, exploration, problem-solving and development and engages families in their children’s learning.

AECEA’s Vision

Well-qualified, well-compensated early childhood educators are respected as professionals, valued for their important work, and supported in providing high-quality child care for Alberta’s children and families.

In AECEA’s ideal future...

Early childhood educators are highly qualified, empowered professionals. They deliver high-quality services for children and their families, and they are supported in doing this well.

Early childhood educators earn a living wage—commensurate with their education and experience—with a pension plan and good benefits. Their work is valued by their employers and peers, by other professionals, by the families they serve and by society.

Early childhood educators feel supported as professionals—at their workplace and by their professional association. They work in supportive environments where lifelong learning is valued and best practices are the order of the day.

Early childhood educators see their profession as a viable and rewarding career path. They have opportunities to improve their education and professional learning and to advance in their field.

Early childhood educators have a voice in their professional organization and opportunities for advocacy on issues that affect them. They have the knowledge, skills and confidence to be agents of change and to take charge of their own professional learning and career paths.

Early learning and child care and the professional workforce that supports it are valued as a public investment made for the good of society.

AECEA's Guiding Principles

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

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

High-quality 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 the responsibility for giving the children of our province the best possible early learning and child care experiences.

Operations and Capacity

AECEA's Approach

AECEA is a member-based organization. The association communicates openly and shares information with its members. It relies on members' feedback and ideas to develop policy, advocacy and programs to meet their needs.

AECEA is accountable to its membership and to the funders, stakeholders and partners that support the association's work.

AECEA fosters continuous improvement and sets measurable goals to monitor progress. It practises prudent fiscal management and prides itself on its ability to accomplish great things with small budgets supported by passionate volunteers.

AECEA's policies, programs and approaches are based on the latest research evidence and proven best practice.

AECEA's approach is collaborative. The association works closely with governments, institutions and community agencies across the province and across the country. AECEA's strong partnership network facilitates the sharing of ideas, resources and expertise. The support of organizations that share AECEA's vision strengthens the association's position in advocating for early childhood educators.

AECEA's operations are respectful and inclusive. The association's work for the benefit of its members is also for the benefit of all society. The best interests of children and their families are at the heart of everything AECEA does.

AECEA's Work

AECEA's work on behalf of Alberta's early childhood educators falls within five broad categories:

- leadership and planning
- advocacy (see p. 49)
- system building (see p. 51)
- professional learning and support (see p. 55)
- communication and public relations (p. 59)

Leadership and Planning

As a voice for Alberta's early childhood educators, AECEA plays a leadership role.* The association establishes a clear vision for the future and shares this with its members and stakeholders. It provides its members with the information, knowledge, tools and resources needed to translate vision into reality. In doing so, AECEA empowers its members and inspires them with the confidence they need to help the association realize its goals.

AECEA's leadership approach is participative and supportive. The association regularly consults with members and stakeholders and considers their ideas and opinions. It identifies its members' needs and works for its members' welfare and best interests. In setting a path for the future, it coordinates and balances conflicting interests and priorities.

* Lutha, "Leadership," and Hellriegel et al., *Organizational Behavior*, pp. 385–403.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

AECEA has participated in several strategic planning sessions over the course of its history. The most recent of these, in the summer and fall of 2017, were facilitated by Alberta Culture and Tourism's Community Development Unit. AECEA's 2017 strategic planning meetings helped the association set priorities and develop a timeline for the work that needs to be done to attain professional recognition for Alberta's early childhood educators.

RESEARCH

AECEA's decision-making and planning are solidly grounded in the latest research about early learning and child care. AECEA's staff and board members keep on top of the latest national and international academic research and studies. AECEA also conducts regular surveys of its members and commissions Alberta-specific research when necessary.

AECEA responds to its members' needs

In June 2015, AECEA board members participated in minimum wage consultations sponsored by the Government of Alberta. Prior to these discussions, AECEA surveyed its members on how minimum wages affect early childhood educators and their employers.

BUILDING A STRONG ORGANIZATION

Establishing a strong professional organization is one step toward establishing a profession. AECEA works hard to provide its members with the **support** they need. This includes access to the following:

- networks of colleagues
- research and resources
- funding for professional learning
- opportunities for leadership and engagement in issues that affect them

AECEA also provides opportunities for its members to link research to practice. These include opportunities to engage in professional learning communities (see p. 61), to work on association committees and to share their expertise as invited presenters at AECEA events.

The **recruitment** of new members is an ongoing task for organization building. AECEA's board members are well-connected in communities across the province. They use every opportunity to spread the word about the association and its work.

In 2015, AECEA developed a **ten-year framework*** for professionalizing the early learning and child care workforce. The framework is an internal planning document that draws on the latest research and on data collected directly from the workforce. AECEA has shared its framework with government and post-secondary partners who support the association's efforts to develop a professional early learning and child care workforce.

AECEA's future plans include the development of a **code of ethics** and **standards of practice** for the early childhood education profession. The standards of practice will deal with early childhood educators' relationships and interactions with children and families, with other professionals and with the community.

AECEA's ten-year framework

MacEwan University is using AECEA's framework as part of its work to develop a new degree program in early learning and child care. MacEwan currently offers a two-year diploma in the field.

* AECEA's ten-year framework is presented in detail in the chapter called "The Future: Steps Toward a Professional Early Learning and Child Care Workforce." See p. 53.

AECEA reaches out to its members

In 2016–17, AECEA board members made more than a dozen presentations at colleges, universities and community events across Alberta.

In 2018–2019, AECEA is planning member-engagement and information-sharing consultations that will reach 2,500 early childhood educators across the province—including Edmonton, Red Deer, Calgary, Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray.

These consultations will help AECEA develop and build support for its ten-year workforce development framework. They will provide opportunities for AECEA to

- engage and establish relationships with the early learning and child care workforce
- listen to workforce members’ concerns
- gather information about workforce challenges, strengths and demographics
- build trust
- provide information about the association and its work
- spread the word about the importance of professionalizing the child care workforce

The data that is collected will help AECEA identify how it can best address workforce needs and build for the future.

EMPOWERING THE WORKFORCE

A strong organization has a strong, empowered membership. AECEA encourages early childhood educators from all sectors of the workforce to join the association and work together to professionalize their field. AECEA’s direct message to early childhood educators is that increasing their education will lead to an increase in compensation, better working conditions and better outcomes—both for the workforce and for the children and families it serves.

AECEA works hard to ensure that all early childhood educators feel supported as professionals. It engages in public relations and advocacy to ensure that the work of early childhood educators is recognized and valued—by families, by child care employers and administrators, by other professionals and the associations that represent them, by policy-makers and by the public. AECEA also advocates for fulfilling work, supportive workplaces, reasonable working conditions and appropriate wages and benefits for the early learning and child care workforce.

AECEA encourages its members to recognize their own capacity for leadership. It supports them in “mobilizing themselves and their communities to advocate for higher quality early childhood education and child care for children and families.”*

From vision to action

“As trusted educators, caregivers and leaders, ECEs have the potential to reach parents and community members in a way that researchers, academics and policy-makers do not. A powerful and informed child care workforce could in fact be a key component to finally winning a national child care program.”

—Shani Halfon and Lyndsay Macdonald, “From Vision to Action: ECEs Role in the Canadian Child Care Movement,” p. 16.

* Halfon and Macdonald, “From Vision to Action,” p. 13.

Advocacy

AECEA’s advocacy efforts focus on stimulating policy action and system change. They aim to shape public opinion, influence legislators and policy-makers, and garner widespread support for changing the status quo and recognizing early childhood educators as professionals.

Professionalizing the workforce is the first step in building an accessible, affordable, high-quality child care system for all Albertans—for children and their families, for business and communities, and for society as a whole. This is AECEA’s long-term goal.

AECEA advocates for a comprehensive, high-quality, Alberta **system of early learning and child care** delivered by a well-educated, well-compensated, and well-supported workforce. It strives to ensure that the workforce is a priority in all decisions related to system building, funding, education, ongoing professional learning, and wages and supports.

AECEA’s tools of advocacy are persuasive communication, negotiation, dialogue and partnership-building—with association members and prospective members, with the early childhood workforce as a whole, and with employers, community partners, government decision-makers, the media and the public. The intent of AECEA’s advocacy efforts is to raise awareness and foster understanding about issues of importance for early childhood educators.* These issues include quality standards, working conditions, education, certification, professional learning, wages and benefits. They also include the need for public investment, the need for system-wide planning and the need to recognize high-quality early learning and child care as a public good.

* Awareness and understanding build ownership and generate buy-in. The result is collective action for the public good.

Experience matters

AECEA has honed its advocacy expertise over the course of its thirty-year history. The association today is more experienced, more confident and more effective in working with community stakeholders and with all three orders of government.

AECEA has learned to understand the issues from multiple perspectives. It has grown proficient in developing unified approaches that both respect and balance competing priorities.

REGULATORY REVIEW

AECEA has formed a multistakeholder Child Care Licensing Regulation Review Committee to prepare for the Alberta government's upcoming review of the Child Care Licensing Act and regulations. The committee is meeting with AECEA members and other early childhood educators as part of its review. It will draw on the results of these consultations in making its recommendations to government.

MULTILATERAL EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE FRAMEWORK

AECEA is working with the Canadian Child Care Federation, the Muttart Foundation, Child Care Now and provincial and territorial partners to identify priorities and next steps for Canada's recently proposed multilateral (federal, provincial and territorial) Early Learning and Child Care Framework. The framework states that "the development of early learning and child care systems is one of the best investments that governments can make to strengthen the social and economic fabric of our country."^{*} It highlights five principles: high quality, accessibility, affordability, flexibility and inclusivity.

AECEA participated in framework-related discussions held in the summer of 2017. These discussions highlighted the need for an accessible, affordable, accountable system of high-quality child care that focuses on the early learning and child care workforce. The compensation,

^{*} Government of Canada, "Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework."

recruitment and retention of early childhood educators was identified as a top priority for Alberta.

AECEA board members participated in additional, direct discussions with the federal Ministry of Families, Children and Social Development in September and November 2017. On both occasions, the association reiterated that Alberta's portion of framework-related funding should be used to support the province's early learning and child care workforce. The minister's office advised that although the federal government has no jurisdiction over provincial labour matters, provinces were encouraged to invest in support for the workforce.

*Children's Services Minister Danielle Larivee signed the multilateral child care framework agreement in June 2017. In December 2017, the ministry announced plans to create up to 78 additional \$25-a-day early learning and child care centres thanks to its agreement with the Government of Canada.**

AN EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE FRAMEWORK FOR ALBERTA

AECEA's leadership and advocacy work resulted in a coalition of partners who are lobbying the Alberta government to establish a Commission on Early Learning and Child Care. (See p. 57 for details.)

System Building

Professionalizing the early childhood education workforce is part of a broader agenda of improving the quality of Alberta's early learning and child care system. Workforce-related issues are interlinked with other parts of the system and with other segments of the province's social infrastructure.

* Government of Alberta, "More Families to Get \$25-a-day, Quality Child Care."

AECEA works closely with its partners and stakeholders to build the systems and infrastructure needed to support Alberta's early childhood educators.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY-BUILDING

In 2004, with funding support from the Alberta government, AECEA worked with the Canadian Child Care Federation and other stakeholders to develop an accreditation program for child care programs. The result was the establishment of the **Alberta Association for the Accreditation of Early Learning and Care Services, AELCS**, which supports a voluntary accreditation process for licensed day care centres and out-of-school care programs and for approved family day home agencies. Accreditation promotes excellence and enhances the quality of services provided to children and families. Accredited programs qualify for additional funding to support program quality, including wage enhancements for staff.

In 2004, AECEA was instrumental in the creation of the **Alberta Resource Centre for Quality Enhancement (ARCQE)**, which helps child care programs achieve accreditation status. ARCQE also supports early childhood education programs and educators in implementing Alberta's *Play, Participation, and Possibilities* curriculum framework.

SYSTEM-WIDE STANDARDS AND BEST PRACTICES

AECEA supports Alberta's new early learning and child care curriculum framework, *Play, Participation, and Possibilities*, which was developed to guide the practice of early childhood educators working in centre-based child care and family day homes in Alberta. The framework supports staff in working with all children and families, including those with diverse abilities and diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Play, Participation, and Possibilities is founded on evidence-based practice that centres on children's well-being. It includes play-based learning, healthy nutrition, physical activity and meaningful routines.

Following the curriculum requires sound knowledge and understanding of child development and family dynamics. This means that educators view children as competent and capable beings. They plan and deliver well-designed learning experiences that reflect the uniqueness of each child and family.

The curriculum framework is a game-changer

Introducing the *Play, Participation, and Possibilities* 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.

In 2016, AECEA members had the opportunity to participate in a curriculum framework training day supported by the association.

EDUCATIONAL DELIVERY

The post-secondary system

AECEA recognizes that raising the qualification standards for early childhood educators will require significant investment to increase the capacity of post-secondary education programs. More programs and more qualified instructors will be needed 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 addition, if Alberta’s early childhood educators are to become a professional workforce, the province’s publicly funded post-secondary institutions will need to expand their early childhood education offerings to include bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees.

As Alberta builds new publicly funded 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 publicly funded post-secondary early childhood education programs are well-qualified specialists in this specialized field.

Pedagogical leadership

Managers and directors of early learning and child care programs are responsible for providing guidance and support to their staff. Because they are mentors as well as supervisors and administrators, pedagogical leadership is a critical skill. Effective pedagogical leaders must have a solid educational foundation in early learning and child care.

Pedagogical leadership provides a kind of formalized mentorship that can improve program quality and inspire organizational change. It supports and guides the teaching and learning process and engages parents in their children’s learning. It fosters continuous quality improvement and uses data to evaluate the effectiveness of early learning programs.

Pedagogical leadership builds a culture of reflective practice that engages educators intellectually and emotionally. Reflective practice is interactive. It continually questions “how theory informs practice and practice informs theory.”

Pedagogical leaders raise up other leaders—building leadership capacity throughout the early learning and child care system. As part of its ten-year framework for professionalizing the early learning and child care workforce, AECEA is actively engaging and recruiting emerging leaders who can share their experience and expertise with colleagues across the sector. AECEA supports these leaders by providing professional learning funding and opportunities to take on association-related projects that broaden their education, experience and skills.

Ongoing Professional Learning and Support

Ongoing professional learning linked to a formal learning plan is an important component of quality 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 the future, when early childhood education is recognized as a profession, ongoing professional learning will be mandatory for early childhood educators who wish to maintain their certification. It ensures that early childhood educators keep abreast of the latest research and best practice.

AECEA'S APPROACH

AECEA currently provides professional learning through conferences and workshops. It also provides grant funding to help child development supervisors undertake ongoing learning related to their field.*

All of AECEA's professional learning activities reflect current research trends and respond to members' needs. After each AECEA event, participants provide feedback and suggestions about topics they need to learn more about. The association uses this input to plan and develop future learning offerings. AECEA also solicits feedback on the reflection forms that its professional learning grant recipients must complete.

* AECEA administers this funding on behalf of Alberta Children's Services. In January 2018, AECEA submitted a proposal to administer professional learning grant funding for child development assistants and child development workers as well as child development supervisors. This funding is critical for advancing the early learning and child care workforce.

Ideas for professional learning

Delegates to AECEA's 2017 conference provided suggestions for professional learning topics they would like to study. Suggested topics included programming for infants and toddlers, inclusion of children with special needs, school-aged programs with diverse cultural perspectives, professionalism, leadership, curriculum framework concepts, pedagogy, parent engagement, mental health and self-care for early childhood educators.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

AECEA's popular annual two-day conference attracts hundreds of early childhood educators, administrators, family child care providers, school-age-care providers, students, instructors, research and policy analysts, and child care advocates.

Conference sessions deal with topical issues that respond to member-identified interests and learning needs.

AECEA members are eligible for a discount on their conference registration fees.

Since its launch in 2011, AECEA's annual conference has been a sold-out event that generates revenue for the association.

LEADERS DAYS

In 2017, AECEA assumed responsibility for the Leaders Day program, which was established by the Alberta Leaders Caucus as a forum for discussing change related to the province's early learning and child care system. With support from the Alberta Leaders Caucus, AECEA hosts two Leaders Days each year—in the spring and in the fall—in partnership with Mount Royal University and Bow Valley College. The partnership makes it possible for AECEA to recruit student volunteers to help with the Leaders Day program.

At AECEA's Leaders Days, leaders in the early learning and child care field come from every part of the province to network and engage in deep conversations on a host of topics, including advocacy leadership, pedagogical leadership, creativity, team-building, communication, workforce-related issues and child care–related policy and practice.

The recently formed coalition to establish an Alberta commission on early learning and child care is one of many positive results of AECEA's Leaders Day activities.

*AECEA, Public Interest Alberta, the Alberta Federation of Labour and the School Age Care Directors Association of Alberta are part of a coalition formed to lobby the Alberta government to establish a **Commission on Early Learning and Child Care**. The commission's role would be to assess and provide recommendations for improving the province's early learning and child care system.*

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING GRANT FUNDING FOR CHILD DEVELOPMENT SUPERVISORS

Since 2008, AECEA has held a Children's Services grant to provide professional development funding for child development supervisors.* The association administers the grant on the ministry's behalf.

Child development supervisors who work for contracted family day home agencies or in licensed day care or out-of-school care programs can apply for professional development funding to cover program or course tuition fees, conference and workshop registration fees, and costs related to participating in professional learning communities.†

Child development supervisors who work in preschools, as family day home providers or on reserve are not eligible under current program

* Professional learning funding for child development assistants and child development workers is currently available directly from Children's Services.

† The professional learning community funding stream was a test program. Funding for this program is now depleted.

guidelines. AECEA continues to advocate for the inclusion of these early childhood educators and for additional funds to cover the growing need for high-quality professional learning across the sector. Each year, hundreds of qualified applicants are turned away because of funding shortfalls.

Between March 1, 2015, and December 31, 2017, AECEA awarded close to \$400,000 to help 2,529 child development supervisors improve their knowledge and skills.

Funding Stream	2015–2016		2016–2017		2017–2018 (to Dec. 31, 2017)	
	Grant Recipients	Total Funds Awarded	Grant Recipients	Total Funds Awarded	Grant Recipients	Total Funds Awarded
Post-secondary courses and programs	43	\$19,158.43	56	\$26,396.52	53	\$35,368.55
Workshops and conferences	965	\$125,417.40	690	\$115,601.34	654	\$50,237.76
Professional learning communities	14	\$5,396.54	28	\$10,129.41	26	\$11,748.28
TOTALS:	1,022	\$149,972.37	774	\$152,127.27	733	\$97,354.59

Table 6. Professional learning grants, March 1, 2015, to December 31, 2017

AECEA has applied for a continuation of the Child Development Supervisor Professional Learning Grant for 2018–2021—with a new focus on foundational and specialized post-secondary education. The association has requested increased funding to meet program demand. It has also requested an extension of the program scope to include the following:

- child development supervisors in preschool programs and approved family day home providers (These early childhood educators do not qualify for funding under the current guidelines.)
- child development workers
- child development assistants

Communication and Public Relations

Communication is the foundation for advocacy and for social change. AECEA uses a variety of methods to share information with its members, partners and stakeholders—including the public.

AECEA launched a new and improved **website** in the summer of 2017. Members have applauded the website’s new inviting look and user-friendly structure. The content is well organized and information is easy to find.

AECEA uses **social media** to stay connected with its members and supporters. It has a Twitter account and an active Facebook site. The Facebook site can be viewed by the public, but only AECEA members can post comments.

AECEA’s monthly **e-newsletter**, *Network News*, monitors the latest research and studies and keeps members up to date on upcoming events and professional learning opportunities. The newsletter also provides opportunities for members to connect with one another and to share their stories from the field.

AECEA is an information-sharing hub

AECEA’s partnership networks allow the association to serve as an information-sharing hub that connects the early childhood education community and links AECEA members to colleagues across the province and across the country. The result is that AECEA members have access to the latest news, research and events information from across the early childhood education field.

Sharing information builds workforce awareness and helps to empower child care educators in advocating for their own cause. Sharing information also helps AECEA raise public awareness, build partnerships and establish relationships with communities, funders and other stakeholders.

Revenue Sources

AECEA-Generated Revenue

AECEA relies on membership dues as its primary and most stable source of funding. It generates additional revenue from its annual conference, from workshops and special events, and from partnership arrangements with business services such as Benefex, which provides AECEA associate members with access to a group health benefits plan. (See p. 28 for details.)

Membership revenues alone are expected to contribute more than \$80,000 to AECEA's 2017–18 operating budget, while partnership arrangements will contribute close to \$20,000. Although these revenues are not insubstantial, AECEA could not carry out many of its workforce-related programs without significant government support.

Grants

Association-generated revenue is supplemented by grants from a variety of sources.

As a council member of the Canadian Child Care Federation, AECEA receives funding for expenses incurred in attending annual council meetings and other federation events.

In the past, the Muttart Foundation has contracted with AECEA to undertake research and to help with stakeholder consultations and special projects. The foundation does not provide direct funding for AECEA operations. Rather, it contracts with the association to carry out joint initiatives that meet both organizations' goals.

The Government of Alberta supports AECEA's work through the Ministry of Children's Services. Grants from Children's Services have included the following.

- Between 2007 and 2011, an **educational leadership bursary program*** **grant** of about \$2 million allowed AECEA to help early childhood educators take courses to improve their leadership skills. AECEA supported 339 leaders with bursaries of up to \$10,000 per person over a three-year period. Bursary funds covered tuition, books and course materials. Recipients who lived more than 100 kilometres from their educational institution were also eligible for up to \$500 per year for travel costs.
- In 2008, AECEA applied for and received a **professional development grant** to support child development supervisors in Alberta. (See p. 57 for details.) Since this time, AECEA has disbursed approximately \$150,000 per year across three different funding streams:
 - workshops and conferences
 - post-secondary courses
 - professional learning communities

To meet the growing demand for professional learning support, AECEA received a \$67,500 increase to its grant for 2017–2018.

Professional learning communities

The concept of professional learning communities can be described as “professionals coming together in a group—a community—to learn”[†] from one another and share their ideas and expertise. Group members “share a passion for something they do and...interact regularly to learn to do it better.”[‡] Members’ conversations allow new and different perspectives to emerge and facilitate a deeper understanding of the topic. They foster critical thinking and help to build leadership capacity within the early learning and child care community.

* The program was called the Child Care Bursary Program for a portion of this period.

† School leadership expert Shirley Hord, as cited in Great Schools Partnership, *The Glossary of Educational Reform* (online).

‡ Etienne Wenger, “Quick CoP Start-Up Guide.”

Management Processes

AECEA strives to run an efficient operation and use its resources as effectively as possible. The association has invested in software and technology to streamline and integrate its file management, financial analysis, membership tracking and grant distribution processes.

AECEA's Capacity

Competent Leadership

AECEA is an effective, well-respected and well-managed association. The evidence is the impressive body of work that AECEA has accomplished over the past three decades. As further evidence, AECEA maintains its ability to attract passionate, committed leaders to carry on the association's continuing efforts to professionalize Alberta's child care workforce.

In 2014, six members of the Alberta Leaders Caucus on Early Learning and Child Care put their names forward for nomination to the AECEA board of directors. (For details about the caucus, see p. 100.) The election of these candidates breathed new life into the association. AECEA's former long-serving board members were finally able to step down—after many years of work as dedicated volunteers.

In 2014, AECEA's new board undertook a governance review. It updated bylaws, revamped the association's administration, streamlined operations and introduced data-based planning processes. Using information gathered from AECEA's membership, the board identified priority areas and focused its policy work on professionalizing the early learning and child care workforce.

Effective Administration

Over the course of its history, AECEA has become a flexible, responsive, organization committed to continuous learning and improvement. Each year, AECEA learns more about how to collect data, how to use data in new ways, how to convene stakeholders to discuss issues, how to clarify its messages and how to be more comfortable and effective in meeting with senior government staff and elected officials.

AECEA has implemented strong administrative processes to ensure accountability—to its members and funders and to the public. It has improved its reporting process to ensure that the information it gathers is useful to the association, the workforce and the government.

Here are some examples of AECEA’s recent administrative improvements:

- AECEA acquired a new software system to improve its financial reporting and support the integrity of its data collection.
- AECEA developed processes for member recruitment.
- AECEA launched a new website to establish a public profile and improve communication with its members. The association uses data analytics to monitor website visits and learn what information users are searching for.
- AECEA developed reporting templates for the professional learning grant funding program it administers on behalf of Alberta Children’s Services. The templates streamline the reporting process and facilitate data analysis.
- AECEA developed reporting templates for committee heads to use in their monthly updates to the board.

Financial Constraints

AECEA's administrative expertise is demonstrated by its effective management of large-scale programs and events, including its professional development grant funding program for child development supervisors. (See p. 57 for details.) However, in spite of its many accomplishments, financial constraints often limit what the association can do.

Although AECEA has partners and members across Alberta, financial constraints limit the opportunities for face-to-face interactions to share information, recruit new members and build support for the association. Financial constraints also limit AECEA's geographic reach and make it difficult to connect with members and prospective members in rural and remote areas of the province.

AECEA currently needs additional resources for staffing and product evaluation research. This will make it possible to transfer historical data to its new systems, which use automated processes to track professional learning outcomes. AECEA also needs resources to conduct basic research and feasibility assessments for various workforce-related topics. These include exploring best practice systems for monitoring the professional learning and certification of early childhood educators.

Strengths and Authority

AECEA's strengths include its strong partnership network, its solid reputation for good work, and the passion, commitment and expertise of its staff and volunteers. Over the years, this has allowed the association to accomplish big things with small budgets.

AECEA's authority and profile have grown significantly since 2014. Today, senior staff of Alberta Children's Services regularly call on AECEA's board and its committees to discuss issues related to affordable, accessible, high-quality child care and the needs and challenges of the early learning

and child care workforce. AECEA and the ministry have established a mutually beneficial and respectful relationship.

AECEA's good work on behalf of Alberta's early childhood educators will continue until its mission is accomplished. The association is well positioned to play a key role in professionalizing the child care workforce and building an affordable, accessible, high-quality child care system for Alberta.

AECEA has track record of success.

The Future: Steps Toward a Professional Early Learning and Child Care Workforce

“Regulated” child care includes licensed day care, preschool and out-of-school care programs, licensed “innovative” and “group family child care” programs (as defined in the Child Care Licensing Regulation) and approved family day homes.

A professional early learning and child care workforce is the foundation of an effective, affordable, high-quality early learning and child care system for all Albertans.

Professionalizing the workforce begins with increasing the educational qualifications of early childhood educators. Several interrelated factors must come together to build a solid foundation for success. These include the following:

- legislative amendments to support higher educational standards
- workforce remuneration (including wage enhancements)
- professional learning funding to support educational upgrading and help early childhood educators build specialized skills and knowledge related to their work
- the capacity of post-secondary institutions to graduate more diploma-level students
- the capacity of post-secondary institutions to offer post-diploma programs and bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degree programs in early learning and child care
- quality standards for publicly funded post-secondary early learning and child care programs

- workplace support for early childhood educators (including access to funding and paid release time for upgrading and ongoing professional learning)
- funding to support AECEA and other non-profit organizations that advocate on behalf of the early learning and child care workforce
- public and political recognition of the value of early childhood educators and the important work they do
- increased public investment in early learning and child care

The steps outlined on the following pages constitute AECEA's ten-year framework for building this foundation.

The framework is AECEA's action plan for professionalizing Alberta's early learning and child care workforce. It was developed through discussions with the association's members and stakeholders. Its proposed approach is grounded in research and best practices that have proven effective in other jurisdictions, including Manitoba, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.*

AECEA's ten-year framework is a living document

The framework is responsive to changes in the political and social environment and to new research findings related to Alberta's early learning and child care workforce.

* AECEA's international research focused on countries with mixed market systems, like Alberta's, that include non-profit and for-profit child care.

Framework Steps at a Glance

Step 1: Raise the educational requirements for early childhood educators in Alberta's regulated child care sector. (See p. 69.)

Step 2: Make ongoing professional learning mandatory for all early childhood educators in the regulated system. (See p. 75.)

Step 3: Develop infrastructure to support the new standards for education and ongoing professional learning. (See p. 78.)

Step 4: Address the issue of workforce remuneration. (See p. 83.)

AECEA's ten-year workforce framework is one element of an integrated, high-quality child care system. As such, it includes strategies and actions outside the scope of the association's mandate.

In the following discussion, subheadings indicate actions that are the responsibility of AECEA's partners and other stakeholders within the child care system. In sections where there are no subheadings, responsibility for the specific action is shared across the system.

Step 1: Raise the educational requirements for early childhood educators in Alberta’s regulated child care sector

- 1.1 Amend the Child Care Licensing Act and regulations. Legislate new minimum requirements for higher educational qualifications for early childhood educators in all parts of the regulated system.

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	5,924 (39%)	\$13.85	\$15.29 (\$1.44)	\$15.99 (\$2.14)
Child Development Worker	one-year post-secondary certificate in early learning and child care or equivalent	2,503 (16%)	\$14.90	\$17.60 (\$2.70)	\$18.95 (\$4.05)
Child Development Supervisor	two-year post-secondary diploma in early learning and child care or equivalent	6,771 (45%)	\$16.65	\$21.07 (\$4.42)	\$23.27 (\$6.62)

Table 7. Certification levels (March 2017) and wages (2017) for early childhood educators in Alberta.* The dollar figures in parentheses are hourly wage enhancement top-ups provided by the provincial government.

The level of qualification of early childhood educators is a key predictor of quality in early learning and child care programs.† A significant proportion of the current workforce is poorly educated and underqualified. As shown in Table 7, close to half of the child care providers in regulated programs have only a 54-hour orientation course.

- 1.1.1 Adopt the term **early childhood educators** to acknowledge the education, skills and important role this workforce plays in nurturing healthy children and building a healthy society.

Early childhood educators are not babysitters. Like teachers in the K-to-12 school system, they bring a wealth of knowledge, experience and talent to their profession. They deserve to be acknowledged as educators—not just child care “workers” or “assistants.”

* The March 2017 workforce numbers were provided to AECEA by the Ministry of Children’s Services. The workforce also includes 288 “Not Certified (Unassigned)” child care educators, which brings the total number to about 15,500.

The wage-related data for 2017 is from the Government of Alberta, “Incentives to Work in Child Care.”

† Flanagan and Beach, *Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Commission*, p. 62.

- 1.1.2 Replace the current three-level certification system (child development assistants, child development workers, child development supervisors) with the following classifications. At the same time, raise the minimum education requirement for early childhood educators across the board.

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

- The **early childhood educator I (ECE I)** classification requires a one-year certificate in early childhood education.
 - ECE I is a temporary classification intended to help workforce members transition to the new standard, which requires a two-year diploma in early childhood education.
- The **early childhood educator II (ECE II)** classification requires a two-year diploma in early childhood education.
 - ECE II is the new minimum standard for all early childhood educators in the regulated system.
- The **early childhood educator III (ECE III)** classification requires a two-year diploma in early childhood education plus post-diploma coursework in management and leadership.
 - ECE III is the new minimum standard for early childhood educators who work as program directors.
- The **early childhood educator IV (ECE IV)** level classifies educators who have an undergraduate degree in early learning and child care.
 - There is a need for early childhood educators who have higher levels of education, including master's and doctoral degrees. Further research is needed to

determine if the classification ECE IV is appropriate for early childhood educators with more than a bachelor's degree. A new classification category may be needed.

Education matters. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development notes that “better qualified staff support a higher quality pedagogy that contributes to improved outcomes for children and their families (OECD, 2012).”^{} 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 than staff with lower level qualifications.”[†]*

- 1.2 Legislate and phase in a requirement for all early childhood educators who work in licensed and regulated child care programs to have, at minimum, **a two-year college diploma specifically in early childhood education—that is, certification as an ECE II.**

Research shows that having knowledge and skills specifically related to early childhood education is associated with better outcomes for children.[‡] Only 30% of Alberta’s early childhood education workforce has specific training, compared to 50% of Ontario’s. This is partly because current wages in Alberta do not provide fair compensation for staff investments in education and training.[§]

- 1.3 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 **management and pedagogical leadership training in addition to a two-year diploma** specializing in early learning and child care.

^{*} Muttart Foundation and Rachel Langford, *Advancing the Educational Preparation*, p. 14.

[†] Ibid., p. 24.

[‡] Flanagan and Beach, *Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Commission*, p. 62.

[§] Alberta Federation of Labour, “For Workers.”

*Researchers agree that managers need specialized training in leadership and administration, preferably at the degree level. This training should address topics such as pedagogy, learning quality, curriculum, staff performance, motivation and child development.**

- 1.4 Enforce the new minimum standards for all early childhood educators in the regulated child care system—including sectors that are currently exempt.

In a regulated system, all children should have the benefit of well-qualified staff—regardless of the child care setting. Family day home providers and providers of group family child care programs are currently exempt from Alberta’s requirements for certification.

- 1.5 Develop a timeline for implementing the new education standards. Phase in the new standards gradually—to give people time to upgrade their education to meet the new minimum requirements.
- 1.6 Legislate a requirement for early childhood educators to develop personalized professional learning plans that outline the pathways they will take to advance their education.
 - These learning plans must show how individuals will upgrade their education to meet the new minimum standards. For example, they must show how an early childhood educator plans to move from the interim minimum standard (ECE I certification) to the new, system-wide ECE II requirement and beyond (from a diploma to a degree, from a bachelor’s to a master’s, and so on).

* Muttart Foundation and Rachel Langford, *Advancing the Educational Preparation*, p. 16.

1.7 Eliminate the current provisions that allow educational equivalencies in lieu of specialized education.

1.7.1 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. “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.”† 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.*

1.8 Provide multi-level support to help the existing workforce meet the new educational requirements while continuing to work.

AECEA

1.9.1 Develop templates to help early childhood educators create professional learning plans for upgrading their education to meet the new minimum standards and for pursuing post-secondary education over and above these standards.

Post-secondary sector

1.9.2 Plan, develop, equip and staff flexible, accessible education programs to help early childhood educators attain the new minimum standards. Develop new degree programs and advanced degree programs to meet the needs of students specializing in early learning and child care.

* Flanagan and Beach, *Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Commission*, p. 62, and the Muttart Foundation and Jane Bertrand, *In the Best Interests of Children*, pp. 10, 16.

† Standard 6: National Association for the Education of Young Children (US), cited by Flanagan and Beach, *Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Commission*, p. 62.

Government of Alberta

1.9.3 Provide bursaries and funding support to help early childhood educators pursue higher education.

Quality care can only be delivered by a well-educated, well-trained, well-qualified workforce that stays current with latest research and best practices in the field. Earning the required 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 2017–2018, the average tuition for full-time undergraduate students in Alberta was \$5,269 for studies in education and \$5,247 for studies in the social and behavioural sciences. Using these figures as a guide, it would cost approximately \$5,300 for a child development assistant to upgrade to the new interim minimum certification as an ECE I, and an additional \$5,300 to upgrade to an ECE II level. These costs are prohibitive for staff who don't earn much more than minimum wage.*

1.9.4 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.

Workplaces

1.9.5 Provide paid release time to allow staff to upgrade their education.

* Statistics Canada Table 477-0021, "Weighted Average Tuition."

By way of comparison, Year 1 tuition at Norquest is \$5,250 for 2017–2018. Year 1 tuition at Lethbridge College is \$6,084.

Step 2: Make ongoing professional learning mandatory for all early childhood educators in the regulated system

2.1 Amend the Child Care Licensing Act and regulations. Legislate a requirement for ongoing professional learning for all early childhood educators in all sectors of the regulated system.

2.1.1 Over time, make ongoing professional learning a requirement for wage enhancement funding and for continued certification.

Supporting early childhood educators in ongoing professional learning is “integral to high-quality practice and better outcomes for children and their families.” Unfortunately, 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.

2.2 Legislate a requirement for early childhood educators to develop annual professional learning plans.

- These learning plans must 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.

“There is growing evidence that a comprehensive and well-delivered, high-quality program of ongoing professional development, at an institutional or program level, provides positive benefits for staff and program quality.”†

* AECEA website, “Professional Learning” page.

† Muttart Foundation and Rachel Langford, *Advancing the Educational Preparation*, p 27.

- 2.3 Provide multi-level support to help early childhood educators meet the new mandatory professional learning requirements.

AECEA

- 2.3.1 Develop templates for early childhood educators to use in creating their annual professional learning plans.
- 2.3.2 Continue to administer the professional learning funding program on behalf of the Alberta government.

Government of Alberta

- 2.3.3 Provide adequate funding for ongoing professional learning. Ensure that this funding is accessible to all early childhood educators. Include preschool teachers, early childhood educators in approved family child care programs and early childhood educators who work in licensed and approved on-reserve child care programs; this part of the workforce is excluded from current grant programs.
- 2.3.4 Until 2024, when all early childhood educators will have at least a two-year diploma, require early childhood educators who do not yet have a diploma to use their professional learning funding for post-secondary coursework—not workshops.

Professional learning can take a variety of forms, ranging from post-secondary education to workshops and conferences or participation in professional learning communities. 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.

- 2.3.5 Provide funding to allow workplaces to support their staff in pursuing ongoing professional learning.

AECEA, other non-profit organizations, the post-secondary sector

- 2.3.6 Plan and deliver a variety of professional learning opportunities—including courses, workshops, conferences and other events.

Workplaces

2.3.7 Give staff paid time off for ongoing professional learning.

The inherent structure of early learning and child care requires staff to be on the front line—meeting regulatory requirements for ratio. Because most programs operate with slim financial margins, staff have very little time outside of ratio time spent with children for professional learning opportunities.

- 2.4 Develop a mentorship program to support new graduates and new program managers.
- 2.5 Develop pedagogical leaders who can serve as workplace coaches and mentors to early childhood educators and practicum students. Develop a schedule for the training of pedagogical leaders. Launch the program by training 20 new leaders in the first year. Add 20 new leaders each year until 100 have been trained.

Step 3: Develop infrastructure to support the new standards for education and ongoing professional learning

All the proposals included in this step require significant public investment. In most cases, they also require ongoing core funding.

Overall Framework

- 3.1 Develop a comprehensive workforce strategy for Alberta's early childhood educators.

Post-secondary Infrastructure and Capacity

Post-secondary sector and Government of Alberta

- 3.2 Develop post-secondary courses and degree programs in early childhood education. Develop preparatory programs for early childhood educators who need additional support to help them enter post-secondary programs.
- 3.3 Develop the capacity for post-secondary institutions to offer these programs. Capacity includes facilities, equipment, resources and qualified teaching staff.
- 3.4 Develop flexible face-to-face and technology-based delivery models for early childhood education and professional learning programs.
- 3.5 Establish province-wide standards for post-secondary early childhood education programs so that students at different institutions get comparable levels of educational preparation.
- 3.6 Establish inter-institutional course and program transfer protocols. This will allow students who begin an early childhood education program at one publicly funded post-secondary institution to complete their program at another institution without having to make up courses.

In Alberta, 10 publicly funded post-secondary institutions currently offer a two-year child care diploma; 13 offer one-year certificate programs. Only one offers a bachelor's degree and one other offers an early childhood education post-degree program. No programs for more-advanced training in early learning and child care are available in Alberta, except through distance learning.

As early childhood educators upgrade their qualifications and as new students enter the field, publicly funded 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.

Solid Pedagogy

Post-secondary sector, Government of Alberta, workplaces and other stakeholders

- 3.7 Adopt Alberta's early learning and child care curriculum framework (*Play, Participation, and Possibilities*) in all licensed and regulated child care programs in the province.
 - 3.7.1 Embed the curriculum framework in all publicly funded post-secondary programs for early childhood educators.
 - 3.7.2 Develop an implementation schedule and monitor progress.
 - 3.7.3 Develop validation and performance measures related to the framework.

Alberta's early learning and curriculum framework is a complex and comprehensive document designed to be used by a well-educated workforce. Staff with modest educational qualifications will not have the capacity to follow the framework without additional foundational education and ongoing pedagogical support.

Core Competencies

AECEA and other stakeholders

- 3.8 Identify core **competencies** and **standards of practice** for the early childhood education profession. The latter will deal with early childhood educators' relationships and interactions with children and families, with other professionals and with the community.

Researchers have identified seven areas required for professional competence.*

- 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

* Muttart Foundation and Rachel Langford, *Advancing the Educational Preparation*, pp. 8–13.

Qualified early childhood educators provided quality child care

Quality child care **is not** babysitting. And early childhood educators are not babysitters. They are

- critical thinkers and researchers
- co-constructors of meaning, identity and values
- creators of possibilities and organizers of opportunities
- curious, open-minded, reflective professionals who embrace multiple perspectives and use pedagogical documentation tools to evaluate their work*

3.9 Develop a **code of ethics** for the profession of early childhood education.

3.10 Research the feasibility of enshrining the code of ethics in legislation.

AECEA, other stakeholders and the Government of Alberta

3.11 Introduce certification and credential maintenance requirements for early childhood educators.

AECEA

3.12 Explore the feasibility of establishing a professional self-regulatory college to support early childhood educators and raise the profile of the field.

A professional regulatory body ensures that standards of practice are met. In Ontario, the establishment of a regulatory college was fundamental for increasing wages and career opportunities for the province's early childhood educators. AECEA needs to undertake significant research and analysis before it can recommend whether or not a similar approach might be appropriate for Alberta. A hybrid model that includes both a regulatory college and a professional association is one of many options that needs to be explored.

* Adapted from Peter Moss, "Working with Uncertainty." The author uses the term "democratic" to describe these characteristics.

AECEA

- 3.13 Work toward the establishment of a professional organization for the early learning and child care workforce. Explore the feasibility of requiring all early childhood educators to be members of the association.

Doctors, lawyers, teachers, accountants and other Alberta professionals are required to belong to professional associations that represent their members' interests. Such associations can provide mentorship and professional learning opportunities or act as credentialing or disciplinary bodies.

AECEA needs to undertake new research to explore the feasibility of establishing a professional organization to represent early childhood educators. Until a significant portion of the workforce has attained a more professional level of education, establishing a professional organization may be premature.

System Planning

AECEA and other stakeholders

- 3.14. Gather reliable data on Alberta's early learning and child care workforce and on workforce challenges and needs.

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. *The State of Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2012*, p. 21.

Step 4: Address the issue of workforce remuneration

The development of a highly qualified professional workforce must go hand in hand with appropriate remuneration. But the workforce is only one element of an integrated child care system.

Appropriate remuneration requires far-reaching system-wide change supported by substantial public investment. Over the long term, this means that Alberta’s 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.

As AECEA refines its workforce development strategy, it will explore the feasibility of various funding and remuneration models.

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. Once early childhood educators in the province have attained the new minimum standard of certification as ECE IIs, they should receive wage enhancements greater than the current ceiling of \$6.62 per hour. (See Table 7 on p. 69.) ECE IIIs and ECE IVs should receive more substantial hourly wage enhancements than ECE IIs.

*“Day care workers earn less than zookeepers.” **

- 4.1 Increase public awareness of the importance of quality child care. Public recognition and support are critical for the increased public investment required to build a quality child care system.

Government of Alberta

- 4.2 Increase hourly wage enhancements or develop a new funding model to reflect the new minimum education standards and new certification levels.

*“The key to quality early childhood care and education services lies in providing sufficient funding to pay adequate wages and benefits to staff.” **

* This is a paraphrase of P. Schom-Moffat’s classic line, from his 1984 study of child care wages (cited by Shani Halfon, Canada’s Childcare Workforce, p. 8).

Unless wages in the early childhood education sector are increased, there is no incentive for staff to pursue additional training or certification.

Good wages make it easier to attract and retain qualified staff

Studies show that higher levels of education and higher wages increase the quality and outcomes of child care programs. Higher wages reduce staff turnover and improve child-to-educator relationships. They also serve to attract better qualified, more experienced employees.[†]

AECEA

4.3 Research and explore the feasibility of various workforce funding and remuneration models.

Manitoba and Quebec offer pension plans for early childhood educators. Pension plans can serve as a recruitment incentive, help early learning and child care programs retain qualified staff and provide early childhood educators with a secure retirement.

^{*} Beach and Costigliola (2010), *Child Care Wages and a Quality Child Care System*, as cited in Flanagan and Beach, *Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Commission*, p. 71.

[†] Alberta Federation of Labour, "For Workers."

Work Plan to Support AECEA's Ten-Year Framework for Professionalizing the Early Learning and Child Care Workforce (2017–2027)

AECEA's ten-year workforce framework is one element of an integrated, high-quality child care system. As such, it includes strategies and actions outside the scope of the association's mandate.

In the following table, tasks that are the responsibility of AECEA's partners and stakeholders are shaded in green.

AECEA-specific tasks and outcomes are not shaded.

Milestones are shaded in blue.

Year 1: 2017–2018 and Year 2: 2018–2019

Framework	Completion Date	Action
Step 1 to Step 4	March 2019	<p>Launch community and stakeholder consultations to amend the Child Care Licensing Act and regulations. (AECEA created a multistakeholder Child Care Licensing Review Committee in 2016. Consultations are ongoing.)</p> <p>Develop recommendations. Solicit workforce support for the proposed recommendations.</p> <p>Present AECEA's recommendations for legislative changes to government. AECEA's recommendations include the following.</p> <p>Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Phase in new minimum standards for education and require specialization in early childhood education. – Require that, by 2024, all early childhood educators in the regulated system have at least a one-year certificate in early childhood education. (This is an interim qualification.) – Require that, by 2027, all early childhood educators in the regulated system have at least a two-year diploma in early childhood education. – Require that, by 2027, all early childhood educators who work as program directors or managers have a post-diploma certificate (six to eight credit courses) in organizational management and pedagogical leadership <i>in addition to</i> the standard minimum requirement of a two-year diploma or a degree in early learning and child care.

Framework	Completion Date	Action
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Enforce the new minimum standards for all early childhood educators in all licensed and approved child care programs, including programs that are currently exempt. (Early childhood educators in approved family child care and group family child care programs are currently exempt from Alberta’s requirements for certification.) – Require early childhood educators to develop professional learning plans that outline how they will upgrade their education to meet the new minimum requirements. <p>Classification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Adopt the term early childhood educators (ECEs). Replace the current three-level certification system with the following classifications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ECE I: one-year certificate in early childhood education (This is a temporary classification intended to help workforce members transition to the new minimum standard, which is ECE II classification.) – ECE II: two-year diploma in early childhood education – ECE III: two-year diploma in early childhood education plus post-diploma coursework in management and pedagogical leadership – ECE IV: undergraduate degree in early childhood education <p>Equivalencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Eliminate the educational equivalency process by 2020. Require all early childhood educators in the regulated system to have diplomas or degrees specializing in early learning and child care. <p>Professional learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Phase in mandatory annual professional learning for early childhood educators in the regulated system. – Require early childhood educators to develop annual professional learning plans. – Make ongoing professional learning mandatory for continued certification. <p>Professional Recognition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – As a condition of certification, require early childhood educators to be proficient in the core competencies required for high-quality, effective practice. – As a condition of certification, require early childhood educators to abide by a professional code of ethics.

Framework	Completion Date	Action
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Increase public awareness of the importance of high-quality early learning and child care as a public good. Increase public awareness of the value of early childhood educators and the important work they do. <p>Professional Wages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop a new wage enhancement schedule or develop a new funding model that aligns with the new certification classifications.
Step 1	fall 2017	<p>Present recommendations for educational equivalency bridging to government. (These recommendations were developed by a stakeholder committee that included AECEA representatives.)</p> <p>Request that government adopt the recommendations.</p>
Step 3	April 1, 2017	<p>Develop training to help child care programs adopt Alberta’s early learning and curriculum framework, <i>Play, Participation, and Possibilities</i>.</p>
Step 3	ongoing to 2019	<p>Conduct pilot projects to introduce the curriculum framework.</p> <p>Adopt the implementation plans identified through the pilot projects.</p>
Step 2	ongoing	<p>Advocate for increased funding to support ongoing professional learning for child development supervisors.</p> <p>Advocate for an extension of the grant program to include supervisors in all regulated child care programs, including preschool programs, approved family child care programs, and licensed and approved child care programs on reserve.</p> <p>Advocate for increased funding to support ongoing professional learning for child development assistants and child development workers.</p>
Step 2	January 2018	<p>Develop and submit a proposal for AECEA to manage (on behalf of Alberta Children’s Services) professional learning funding for all certified early childhood educators—child development supervisors, child development workers and child development assistants.</p>
Step 2	ongoing	<p>Continue to consult with the early learning and child care workforce—including preschool staff, approved family day home providers and staff in on-reserve child care programs—to explore how they would like to access professional learning funding and who should oversee and disburse this funding on their behalf.</p>
Step 1 to Step 4	ongoing	<p>Advocate for core funding to support the new infrastructure needed for a high-quality early learning and child care system.</p> <p>Advocate for core funding to support AECEA’s workforce-related research and ongoing operations.</p>

Framework	Completion Date	Action
Step 1 to Step 4	ongoing	<p>Share the ten-year framework with AECEA members and with the early learning and child care workforce.</p> <p>Launch member-engagement and information-sharing consultations across Alberta.</p> <p>Advocate for funding to extend these consultations to more rural and remote parts of the province.</p>
Step 1 to Step 4	ongoing	<p>Consult with front-line early childhood educators to learn more about the workforce and to solicit input on how best to advance the profession.</p> <p>Gather and analyze additional workforce data to support planning and decision-making.</p>
Step 1 to Step 4	ongoing	<p>Continue to develop and refine a workforce development strategy.</p> <p>Continue to research and analyze issues related to the early learning and child care workforce.</p>
Step 2	April 1, 2018	Provide professional learning funding to early childhood educators at all certification levels and in all program areas, including preschool staff, approved family day home providers and staff of licensed and approved on-reserve child care programs.
Step 2	ongoing to 2027	Administer professional learning funding on behalf of the Alberta government.
Step 2	October 2018	Develop a list of approved professional learning offerings for early childhood educators. Restrict professional learning funding to offerings on the approved list.
Step 2	October 2018	<p>Develop standards and guidelines for presenters who deliver AECEA-approved professional learning to early childhood educators who receive AECEA-administered professional learning funding.</p> <p>Develop an application process for presenters.</p>
Step 1 to Step 4	June 2018	Earmark government funding for infrastructure investment, including bursaries for upgrading, grants for professional learning and support for AECEA and other infrastructure associations.
Step 3	October 2018	<p>Launch the process of developing new post-secondary education programs in early childhood education.</p> <p>Continue to develop and refine the curriculum framework.</p>
Step 3	March 31, 2019	Work with publicly funded post-secondary institutions and with the early learning and child care community to support the development of 20 new pedagogical leaders.

Framework	Completion Date	Action
Step 3	March 31, 2019	Work with the early learning and child care community to ensure that at least 20% of regulated child care programs have adopted the curriculum framework. Work with publicly funded post-secondary institutions to ensure that the curriculum framework has been embedded in their early learning and child care programs.
Step 1	March 31, 2019	Develop templates to help early childhood educators develop bridging plans for acquiring two-year early childhood educator diplomas, post-diploma certificates and degrees.
Step 1 to Step 4	March 31, 2019	Work with the government and other stakeholders to launch a public awareness campaign about the importance of early childhood educators in the delivery of high-quality child care.
Step 3	March 31, 2020	Work with the government and other stakeholders to develop a comprehensive workforce strategy for Alberta's early childhood educators.

Year 3: 2019–2020

Framework	Completion Date	Action
Step 2	April 1, 2019	Implement standards and guidelines for workshop and conference presenters who deliver AECEA-approved professional learning to early childhood educators who receive AECEA-administered professional learning funding.
Step 4	April 1, 2019	Launch a campaign to increase public awareness about the importance of quality child care delivered by qualified early childhood educators.
Step 2	March 31, 2020	Establish a professional learning advisory committee to plan strategy, evaluate processes, design performance measures and implement a professional learning program that complies with the proposed new legislative requirements.
Step 1	March 31, 2020	Milestones All early childhood educators in the regulated system have bridging plans that identify how they will meet the new standards for education. Staff begin their journeys to upgrade their education to meet the new standards. Funding and workplace resources are in place to support staff who need to upgrade to meet forthcoming legislative changes. The educational equivalency process has been eliminated.
Step 2	ongoing	On behalf of the Alberta government, administer professional learning funding for all early childhood educators.

Framework	Completion Date	Action
Step 3	March 31, 2020	Continue to work with publicly funded post-secondary institutions and with the early learning and child care community to support the development of an additional 20 new pedagogical leaders, bringing the total to 40.
Step 3	March 31, 2020	Adopt the curriculum framework in Alberta's \$25-a-day early learning and child care centres.
Step 3	March 31, 2020	Continue to work with the early learning and child care community and with the post-secondary sector to ensure that at least 40% of regulated child care programs have adopted the curriculum framework.
Step 2	March 31, 2020	Develop templates for early childhood educators to use in creating annual plans for professional learning.
Step 3	March 31, 2020	Work with members and stakeholders to define competencies, standards of practice and a code of ethics for early childhood educators.
Step 2	ongoing	Work with members and stakeholders to develop a mentorship program for new early childhood educators and new program managers.

Year 4: 2020–2021

Framework	Completion Date	Action
Step 4	March 31, 2021	<p>As part of a comprehensive work force strategy, research the feasibility of establishing provincial salary and benefit guidelines (including a pension plan) for early childhood educators.</p> <p>Investigate the feasibility of moving to a salary grid to replace the current model of wage enhancements.</p> <p>Consult with stakeholders to develop recommendations.</p>
Step 3	March 31, 2021	<p>Research and explore the feasibility of establishing a professional self-regulatory college responsible for setting and maintaining standards for early childhood educators.</p> <p>Research and explore the feasibility of establishing a professional association for early childhood educators.</p> <p>Consult with stakeholders to develop recommendations.</p>

Framework	Completion Date	Action
Step 1 to Step 4	March 31, 2021	<p>Milestones</p> <p>New legislation is in force. New minimum education standards and professional learning requirements are phased in.</p> <p>Early childhood education is recognized as a profession.</p> <p>Society recognizes the importance of high-quality early learning and child care as a public good. Early childhood educators are valued for the important work they do.</p> <p>Investments in the system are in place.</p>
Step 3	March 31, 2021	<p>Milestones</p> <p>Publicly funded post-secondary institutions have the funding and capacity they need to meet the educational needs of Alberta's early learning and child care workforce.</p> <p>Province-wide standards are in place for publicly funded post-secondary early learning and child care programs. Inter-institutional program transfer protocols are in place.</p>
Step 2	March 31, 2021	<p>Milestones</p> <p>All early childhood educators in the regulated system have annual professional learning plans.</p>
Step 3	March 31, 2021	Continue to work with post-secondary institutions and with the early learning and child care community to support the development of an additional 20 new pedagogical leaders, bringing the total to 60.
Step 3	March 31, 2021	Continue to work with the early learning and child care community and with the post-secondary sector to ensure that at least 60% of regulated child care programs have adopted the curriculum framework.
Step 3	March 31, 2021	Launch a mentorship program for new early childhood educators and new program managers.

Year 5: 2021–2022

Framework	Completion Date	Action
Step 4	March 31, 2022	Develop recommendations for sustainable supply-side funding to ensure that early childhood educators earn a living wage with appropriate benefits. Present these recommendations to government.
Step 3	March 31, 2021	Develop recommendations for setting, monitoring and maintaining professional credentials and standards for early childhood educators. Present these recommendations to government.
Step 3	March 31, 2022	Continue to work with publicly funded post-secondary institutions and with the early learning and child care community to support the development of an additional 20 new pedagogical leaders, bringing the total to 80.
Step 3	March 31, 2022	Work with the early learning and child care community and with the post-secondary sector to ensure that at least 80% of regulated child care programs have adopted the curriculum framework.

Year 6: 2022–2023

Framework	Completion Date	Action
Step 3	March 31, 2023	Continue to work with publicly funded post-secondary institutions and with the early learning and child care community to support the development of an additional 20 new pedagogical leaders, bringing the total to 100.
Step 3	March 31, 2023	Work with the early learning and child care community and with the post-secondary sector to ensure that all regulated child care programs have adopted the curriculum framework and use appropriate pedagogical practices.

Year 7: 2023–2024

Framework	Completion Date	Action
Step 1	March 31, 2024	Milestones All early childhood educators in the regulated system have ECE I certification. That is, they have at least a one-year certificate in early childhood education.
Step 4	March 31, 2024	Milestones The compensation system for early childhood educators recognizes their education, experience and value to society.

Year 8: 2024–2025 and Year 9: 2025–2026

Framework	Completion Date	Action
Step 3	March 31, 2026	<p>Milestones</p> <p>Early childhood educators are members of a professional association that represents their interests.</p> <p>Professional standards for early childhood educators are established and monitored by an appropriate regulatory body.</p>

Year 10: 2026–2027

Framework	Completion Date	Action
Step 1 to Step 4	March 31, 2027	<p>Milestones</p> <p>All early childhood educators in the regulated system have ECE II certification. That is, they have at least a two-year diploma in early childhood education.</p> <p>All early childhood educators in the regulated system comply with a professional code of ethics.</p> <p>All early childhood educators in the regulated system have the core competencies they need for effective, high-quality practice.</p> <p>All program directors and managers have ECE III certification, which requires additional training in management and pedagogical leadership. This training can be a post-diploma certificate (six to eight courses) or an undergraduate degree in early learning and child care.</p> <p>Bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs in early childhood education are available at post-secondary institutions across the province.</p> <p>All early childhood educators in the regulated system have opportunities for ongoing professional learning.</p> <p>Early childhood educators are recognized as professionals, with professional wages and benefits.</p>

Appendix 1: Terms and Abbreviations

ACCA (Alberta Child Care Association) is the former name of the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta. Although the name change was formalized in 2016, AECEA is still referred to as ACCA on some of its partner’s websites.

AECEA—pronounced “A-C”—is the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta. AECEA was formerly known as the Alberta Child Care Association (ACCA), and before that, as the Alberta Child Care Network Association (ACCNA).

Children’s Services refers to Alberta’s Ministry of Children’s Services in its current and previous iterations, including Alberta Human Services and Alberta Children and Family Services.

“Early childhood”—as used in this document—refers to the period from birth to the age of 12.* This is the age group served by certified early childhood educators who work in the regulated sector of Alberta’s child care system, which includes licensed day care, preschool and out-of-school care programs and approved family day homes.

Early childhood educators who work in licensed or regulated programs in Alberta must have a valid certificate. The certificated segment of the workforce, as defined in Alberta’s Child Care Regulation, includes the following:

- **child development supervisors**, who have at least a two-year diploma or equivalent education
- **child development workers**, who have at least a one-year certificate or equivalent education

* In the literature, early childhood is often defined as the period from birth to the age of five. Canada’s Council of Ministers of Education applies the term “early learning” to programs for children from birth to the age of eight.

- and **child development assistants**, who have completed an approved fifty-plus-hour course or equivalent education

Early childhood educators who are represented by AECEA include the following:

- preschool, day care and out-of-school care program staff
- program directors
- family day home providers

Early learning and child care describes the work of early childhood educators. In the literature, this term is interchangeable with “early childhood education,” “early childhood education and care,” “early childhood education and child care” and “early childhood development and education.”

Appendix 2: The AECEA Board

AECEA Board Members, 2017–2018

Manna Middleton, Chair

Manna Middleton is an accomplished early childhood educator with 24 years of experience in the field, including 15 years as the director of an early learning and child care program. She has held terms as a member of the Alberta Early Learning and Care Leaders Caucus and as president of the Child Care Directors Association of Southwest Alberta. Manna was the co-chair of the Lethbridge County Early Child Development Mapping Project. She served as an advisory committee member and pilot project participant for Alberta's early learning and child care curriculum framework.

Carol Sullivan, Vice-Chair

With 38 years of experience in the field, Carol Sullivan has logged extensive front-line time with children and their families. Carol holds a master's in family ecology and practice as well as an early childhood development diploma. She has taught in MacEwan University's Early Childhood Development Program, served as a mentor for the Alberta Resource Centre for Quality Enhancement and managed numerous early childhood and family support programs. Carol is currently the early childhood services director at the Terra Centre for Teen Parents.

Dr. Susan Garrow-Oliver, Secretary

Susan Garrow-Oliver has been a leader in Alberta's early childhood education scene for more than 26 years. As an associate professor in Mount Royal University's Child Studies and Social Work department, she has a hands-on role in developing leaders and strengthening the early childhood education profession. Susan's research interests include

leadership, social justice advocacy, ethical practice, critically reflective practice and communities of learning.

Patricia MacDonald, Treasurer

Patricia MacDonald has more than 39 years of front-line and consulting experience in early childhood education, day care, family day homes and child intervention. She has worked in Nova Scotia, Ontario and Alberta. Pat was a participant in Alberta's early learning and child care curriculum framework project. She has been an accreditation consultant and moderation coordinator for the Alberta Association for the Accreditation of Early Learning and Care Services since 2007.

Nicki Dublenko, Director

Nicki Dublenko has been a leader and advocate for an early childhood education profession for more than 15 years. She is the executive director of a provincial day home agency and active in numerous community organizations, including the Alberta Early Learning and Care Leaders Caucus, End Poverty Edmonton, the Alberta Family Child Care Association and the Success by Six Council of Partners. She served as AECEA's board chair from 2014 to 2017. Nicki is currently completing her PhD in early learning and care through the University of Toronto.

Joanne Keilty, Director

Joanne Keilty has worked in early childhood education for more than 37 years. As a long-time instructor in the Early Childhood Education program at Lethbridge College, she was closely involved with group and family child care, kindergarten and out-of-school care programs. Joanne is currently a pedagogical partner of the Alberta Resource Centre for Quality Enhancement. She is passionate in her belief that early childhood educators play a significant role in children's learning, family well-being and thriving communities.

Sunita Khandelwal, Director

Sunita Khandelwal holds a Master of Arts in Early Childhood Studies from Ryerson University, Toronto. She believes that life is a teacher and that learning is a lifelong process. Sunita has studied power dynamics and the impact of individual and group actions upon society. She sees tremendous growth potential for Alberta's early childhood education workforce.

Christina Pickles, Director

Christina Pickles has 20 years of experience as an environmental educator and a deep respect for early childhood educators. For the past three years, Christina has coordinated Alberta's Get Outside and Play Early Childhood Network, which supports outdoor play in early learning and care settings.

Tara Stang, Board-Appointed Special Advisor

Tara Stang is a senior program officer with the Muttart Foundation. As a special advisor to the board, she has sat on AECEA's Professional Learning and Development Committee since 2013. Tara brings 27 years of experience to her work with AECEA. Over the course of her career, she has awarded funding and worked alongside a large number of early learning and child care organizations in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Tara has also served on the board of the National Alliance for Children and Youth.

Jennifer Usher, Director

Jennifer Usher is the coordinator of the Medicine Hat and District Child Care Association, a non-profit organization that supports child care programs in southeast Alberta. She also operates a program that teaches sign language—through games, art, songs and rhymes—in a number of child care centres, out-of-school care centres and preschools. Jennifer believes that capable, knowledgeable early childhood educators play a

key role in delivering the high-quality care that all children deserve. She brings 19 years of early childhood education experience to the AECEA board.

Board Chairs*

AECEA is grateful to the scores of board members who served the association over the years. These people are too numerous to list by name, but their contribution is valued and celebrated as their legacy lives on.

2004 to 2008	Dr. Sherrill Brown, Leduc
2008 to 2012	Margaret Golberg, Edmonton
2012 to 2014	Rosetta Sanders, Medicine Hat
2014 to 2017	Nicki Dublenko, Edmonton
2017 to date	Manna Middleton, Picture Butte

* The board chairs listed here are the individuals who signed AECEA's annual returns for the reported years. Other individuals also served as board chairs during this period.

Appendix 3: AECEA's Stakeholders

The Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta works closely with a host of provincial and national organizations that share an interest in early learning and child care and the workforce on which the sector is founded. A selected list of AECEA stakeholders follows.

Alberta Association for the Accreditation of Early Learning and Care Services (AELCS)

AELCS works on behalf of the Alberta government to provide accreditation services for licensed day care centres, approved family day home agencies and licensed out-of-school care programs in the province. Alberta's voluntary accreditation process promotes excellence and supports continuous quality improvement in the province's early learning and child care programs. Accredited programs qualify for government funding, including staff wage enhancements that support the recruitment and retention of qualified early childhood educators.

Alberta Federation of Labour (AFL)

As the voice of about 175,000 unionized workers, the Alberta Federation of Labour speaks out on a broad range of social and workplace-related issues. The federation's Fair Start campaign, launched in March 2016, calls on the Alberta government to take action on early childhood education and care. Campaign specifics include a pension plan, increased educational and professional learning opportunities and fair remuneration for workers in the sector.

Alberta Early Learning and Care Leaders Caucus (ALC)

Established in 2010, the Alberta Leaders Caucus project is funded and supported by the Canadian Child Care Federation. Members of the caucus are knowledgeable community leaders who engage in public policy-level discussions related to the funding, delivery and support of

early learning and child care in Alberta. Caucus discussions focus on strengthening workforce capacity and improving child care quality.

The Alberta Leaders Caucus recognizes that a well-educated, well-supported and appropriately remunerated workforce is an important foundation for high-quality child care environments and experiences that shape children's learning and support families' needs. The ALC advocates on behalf of all early childhood educators in Alberta. It contributes to the development of an integrated early learning and child care system that includes a comprehensive workforce strategy. Together with various provincial and federal partners, it meets with, educates and negotiates with elected officials and senior staff in Alberta's Ministry of Children's Services and Ministry of the Status of Women.

In 2015, with support from the Muttart Foundation, the Alberta Leaders Caucus launched an annual Leaders Day to discuss and develop strategies for professionalizing the early childhood workforce. AECEA took over the Leaders Day program in 2017. (See p. 56 for details.)

Alberta Resource Centre for Quality Enhancement (ARCQE)

ARCQE is a technical support agency established to facilitate the accreditation of child care services and nurture the growth of Parent Link centres in Alberta. Established in 2004, ARCQE provides information, training and facilitation related to early learning pedagogy and early child development.

ARCQE works closely with AECEA to improve quality and build capacity in the early learning and child care sector. The two organizations share office space and other resources.

Alberta Workers' Health Centre

Established in 1983, the Alberta Workers' Health Centre works in partnership with individuals and organizations to create healthy

workplaces. It provides innovative, engaging programs and services that help staff address workplace-related health and safety concerns.

Canadian Child Care Federation (CCCCF)

The Canadian Child Care Federation is a national, non-profit network of provincial and territorial early learning and child care organizations and their members. Founded in 1987, the federation champions best practice in early childhood education and serves as a resource for educators, service providers, parents, policy-makers, media, business, government and community leaders. Working in partnership with its affiliates, the CCCC supports its members through advocacy, research and knowledge dissemination.

The Canadian Child Care Federation is committed to the following principles:

- “the importance of **quality early learning and child care** as an essential Canadian value and a right worth protecting and enhancing
- the importance of **quality delivery of early learning and child care** as...[a crucial element] in the healthy development of our children
- the importance of **competent, well-trained professionals** who deliver quality early learning and child care with passion and pride”*

AECEA has a seat on the CCCC’s member council and helps to provide leadership and direction for the federation. As a CCCC council member, AECEA has the opportunity to

- connect with federal, provincial and municipal work being undertaken on behalf of the early learning and child care workforce
- learn from other jurisdictions

* Emphasis added. See “About CCCC” on the Canadian Child Care Federation website.

- liaise with organizations such as Child Care Now, which also advocates on behalf of early childhood educators
- participate in national policy discussions to build a shared system framework for early learning and child care in Canada
- have a voice on the federal front
 - In September and November of 2017, AECEA board members met with representatives of the federal Ministry of Families, Children and Social Development.

CCCCF's Member Council

As of December 2017, the Canadian Child Care Federation had 8,000 members. Thirteen affiliate organizations—including AECEA—have seats on the federation's member council.

Alberta Family Child Care Association

Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta

Association of Early Childhood Educators of Newfoundland and Labrador

Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario

BC Aboriginal Child Care Society

BC Family Child Care Association

Certification Council of Early Childhood Educators of Nova Scotia

Early Childhood Care and Education New Brunswick

Early Childhood Development Association of PEI

Early Childhood Educators of BC

Manitoba Child Care Association

Nova Scotia Child Care Association

Saskatchewan Early Childhood Association

Child Care Now

Child Care Now* works with other organizations to advocate for a publicly funded, inclusive, quality child care system. It organizes activities, initiates campaigns and develops briefs and proposals for federal, provincial and territorial government action.

Child Care Now believes that all three orders of government—federal, provincial and territorial—have a responsibility to work together to ensure that child care is universal, affordable, inclusive and high quality.

“Quality child care starts with highly-skilled staff, with only a few children for every adult. It means plenty of interesting, stimulating activities and materials—balanced with quiet play and rest time—all in a safe environment.”†

First 2000 Days Early Childhood Development Network

The First 2000 Days network is an inter-organizational catalyst that facilitates collective action toward improving Alberta’s early childhood development system. The network’s system-wide approach recognizes the importance of supporting early childhood development along a spectrum that includes support for children and for the early childhood workforce that cares for children. An effective, integrated early child development system fosters continuous quality improvement at all levels—from individual caregivers to programs and services, organizations and the system as a whole.

GRIT: Getting Ready for Inclusion Today

The Getting Ready for Inclusion Today program is funded by Alberta Education. Program staff work alongside families and community partners to deliver early childhood education programs for preschool-

* Until 2017, Child Care Now was known as the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada.

† Child Care Now, “Priorities.”

aged children who have severe developmental disabilities. GRIT's ASaP (Access, Support and Participation) Continuum Project uses a five-part teaching framework that helps early childhood educators use evidence-based professional practices in their work.

The Muttart Foundation

The Muttart Foundation is a private philanthropic foundation established in 1953 by Edmonton business leaders Merrill and Gladys Muttart. The foundation provides capacity-building funding and support to strengthen Canada's charitable sector and improve the early education and care of young children. It also acts as a neutral convener that brings thought leaders together to discuss social issues and develop innovative solutions.

Since 2007, the foundation has sponsored various studies and facilitated stakeholder consultations aimed at advancing an integrated, comprehensive system of early learning and child care in Alberta. The foundation's consultations have considered the system as a whole, a provincial early learning and child care framework and, most recently, the educational preparation and professional learning of Alberta's early learning and child care workforce. As part of this work, the foundation commissioned several discussion papers and reports, including research on possible alternative remuneration models for early childhood educators.*

The Muttart Foundation continues to

- engage in policy-related discussions of early learning and child care in Alberta, Saskatchewan and across Canada
- support organizations that provide infrastructure for the early learning and child care system

* A list of Muttart Foundation–sponsored studies and reports is included in the bibliography. See p. 129.

- support processes that help organizations and individuals contribute to the development of public policy related to early childhood education and child care
- gather data on the early learning and child care workforce in order to help stakeholders make informed policy decisions
- explore the capacity of post-secondary institutions to prepare larger numbers of qualified early childhood educators
- support research and community engagement that helps AECEA and other non-profit organizations play an effective role in the development of public policy related to early learning and child care
- provide bursaries and training program funding to help registered charitable organizations build organizational capacity through ongoing professional learning for staff and key volunteers

Post-Secondary Institutions

Post-secondary institutions play a key role in developing a professional workforce of early childhood educators. AECEA works closely with post-secondary early learning and child care programs across the province. AECEA's partnerships with these programs provide the association with access to meeting space, facilitation services and research information. AECEA's partnerships also make it possible for the association to connect with students who will work in the child care sector once they graduate.

Provincial and Regional Directors Associations

AECEA's partnerships with regional and provincial directors associations provide a grassroots connection to early childhood educators across Alberta. This connection allows AECEA to connect policy-level discussions and advocacy with the delivery, funding and training needs of front-line staff.

AECEA provincial and regional partners include the following organizations:

- Alberta Family Child Care Association
- Child Care Association for Resources to Administrators (CAFRA), Edmonton and area
- Child Care Directors Association of Southwest Alberta
- Greenfield School Age Day Care Association
- Medicine Hat and District Child Care Association
- School Age Care Directors Association of Alberta (SACDA)
- Southern Alberta Preschool Teachers Association (SAPTA)
- Supports to Early Learning and Child Care Programs, Grande Prairie

Public Interest Alberta (PIA)

Founded in 2004, Public Interest Alberta is a province-wide non-profit organization that sponsors research, education and advocacy on issues of public importance. PIA believes that governments are responsible for advancing the collective interests of their citizens, and that high-quality early learning and child care should be a priority.

In its 2016–2017 annual report, PIA recognizes that developing a well-trained child care workforce “is the most important factor in determining quality of care.”* PIA calls on governments to

- invest in phasing in higher training standards for early childhood professionals
- support the existing workforce in meet these higher standards

* *Public Interest Alberta Annual Report 2016–2017*, p. 4.

- ensure that wages rise to a level that supports workers with higher skills

Public Interest Alberta and AECEA work together on issues of importance to early childhood educators and share data related to child care and the child care workforce.

School Age Directors Association of Alberta (SACDA)

SACDA is a non-profit society whose members are primarily from the Calgary area. The association provides professionals who work in school-age care programs with a province-wide network of community based support. It also advocates for greater availability of affordable, high-quality school-age care.

Bibliography

Alberta Children's Services. *Annual Report 2016–17*.

_____. *Business Plan 2017–20*.

_____. *What We Heard: Alberta's Consultation on the Creation of Child Care Spaces*. September 2006.

Alberta Federation of Labour. "For Families." Blog entry posted by Ethan Clarke, March 24, 2016. fairstartalberta.ca/forfamilies.

_____. "For Kids." Blog entry posted by Ethan Clarke, March 26, 2016. fairstartalberta.ca/forkids.

_____. "For Women." Blog entry posted by Ethan Clarke, March 25, 2016. fairstartalberta.ca/forwomen.

_____. "For Workers." Blog entry posted by Ethan Clarke, March 23, 2016. fairstartalberta.ca/forworkers.

Alberta School of Dog Grooming. "Canine Stylist Technician." albertaschoolofdoggrooming.com/for-students/canine-stylist-technician/.

Alberta Treasury Board and Finance. *Population Projection: Alberta and Census Divisions, 2017–2041*. June 30, 2017.

Alis. 2015 Alis Salary Survey and Occupational Profiles for "Early Childhood Educator," "Educational Assistant," "Elementary School and Kindergarten Teachers," and "School Principals and Administrators of Elementary and Secondary Education." (2015 data is no longer accessible online.)

_____. 2017 Alis Salary Survey and Occupational Profiles for "Early Childhood Educator," "Educational Assistant" and "Elementary School Teacher." alis.alberta.ca/occinfo/occupations-in-alberta.

Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario. "Professional Pay and Decent Work." aeceo.ca/professional_pay_decent_work_for_all.

Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario. "I'm More than 'Just' an ECE": Decent Work from the Perspective of Ontario's Early Childhood Workforce. d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/aeceo/pages/930/attachments/original/1477442125/MoreThanJustanECE_Sept16.pdf?1477442125.

Canadian Child Care Federation. "About CCCF." cccf-fcsge.ca/about/.

_____. "An Early Learning and Child Care Framework for Canada's Children: #TogetherWeCan." Brochure. www.cccf-fcsge.ca/wp-content/uploads/CCCF_Framework-ENG.pdf.

_____. "Quality Early Learning and Child Care: A Parent's Guide." Brochure. www.cccf-fcsge.ca/wp-content/uploads/ParentingEng.pdf.

Child Care Now (formerly, the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada).

“About Us.” timeforchildcare.ca/about-us/.

_____. “Priorities.” timeforchildcare.ca/priorities/.

_____. “Shared Framework for Building an Early Childhood Education and Care System for All.” Toronto: Author, no date.
timeforchildcare.ca/2016/01/20/new-shared-framework-for-building-an-early-childhood-education-and-care-system-for-all/.

Childcare Resource and Research Unit. “Fact or Fiction? Seven Persistent Myths about Child Care.” *Child Care Briefing Notes*. Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit, University of Toronto, November 4.

_____. “Finding Quality Child Care: A Guide for Parents in Canada—Alberta.” www.findingqualitychildcare.ca/alberta.

_____. “Factors that Set the Stage for Quality.” www.findingqualitychildcare.ca/high-quality-child-care/factors-that-set-the-stage-for-quality.

_____. “Is Child Care a Good Public Investment? Summary.” *Child Care Briefing Notes*. Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit, University of Toronto, November 2003. First published in 1998.

_____. “What Is Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care.” www.findingqualitychildcare.ca/high-quality-child-care/what-is-quality.

_____. “Why Quality Matters.” www.findingqualitychildcare.ca/high-quality-child-care/why-quality-matters.

Cleveland, Gordon, and Michael Krashinsky, “Financing Early Learning and Child Care in Canada.” No date. 1–9. www.childcarepolicy.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/WinnipegPaper.pdf.

Coughlin, Anne Marie, and Lorrie Baird. “Pedagogical Leadership.” Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013. edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/Baird_Coughlin.pdf.

Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. *CMEC Early Learning and Development Framework*. 2014.

Drolet, Marie, Sharanjit Uppal, and Sebastian LaRochelle-Côté. *The Canada–U.S. Gap in Women’s Labour Market Participation*. Statistics Canada Catalogue No. 75-006-X. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, August 17, 2016.

Early Childhood Learning Knowledge Centre. *Why is High-Quality Child Care Essential? The Link Between Quality Child Care and Early Learning*. Lessons in Learning. Canadian Council on Learning.

End Poverty Edmonton. *End Poverty in a Generation: A Road Map to Guide Our Journey*. May 2016. epyeg.squarespace.com/s/EPE-Road-Map-lxgl.PDF.

_____. *End Poverty in a Generation: A Strategy*. December 2015. epyeg.squarespace.com/s/EPE_Strategy_Dec2015_WEB_v5.pdf.

- European Commission Working Group on Early Childhood Education and Care. *Proposal for Key Principles of a Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care*. October 2014. ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/policy/strategic-framework/archive/documents/ecec-quality-framework_en.pdf.
- Ferns, Carolyn, and Martha Friendly. *The State of Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2012*. Toronto: Moving Childcare Forward Project (a joint initiative of the Childcare Resource and Research Unit, the Centre for Work, Families and Well-Being at the University of Guelph and the Department of Sociology at the University of Manitoba), 2014. movingchildcareforward.ca.
- First 2000 Days Early Childhood Development Network. www.2000days.ca.
- Flanagan, Kathleen, and Jane Beach. *Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Commission: Final Report*. January 2016. gov.mb.ca/fs/childcare/childcare_news/pubs/final_report.pdf.
- Friendly, Martha. "Early Learning and Child Care: How Does Canada Measure Up?" *Child Care Briefing Notes*. [International comparisons using data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's 2006 study *Starting Strong II*.] Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 2006.
- Friendly, Martha, and Jane Beach. "Elements of a High Quality Early Learning and Child Care System." Working document. Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit, Quality by Design Project, 2005. www.childcarequality.ca/wdocs/QbD_Elements.pdf.
- Friendly, Martha, Gillian Doherty, and Jane Beach. "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, University of Toronto, 2006 .
- Friendly, Martha, Bethany Grady, Lyndsay Macdonald, and Barry Forer. *Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2014*. Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 2015. childcarecanada.org/publications/ecec-canada/16/03/early-childhood-education-and-care-canada-2014.
- Great Schools Partnership. "Professional Learning Community" in the online *Glossary of Education Reform*. edglossary.org/professional-learning-community/.
- GRIT (Getting Ready For Inclusion Today). "ASaP: Access, Support and Participation." www.gritprogram.com/asap/.
- Government of Alberta. *Alberta Child Care Accreditation Standards*. 2017.
- _____. *2016 Alberta Labour Force Profiles: Women*. March 2017.
- _____. *2017 Alberta Labour Force Profiles: Women*. February 2018.
- _____. *2017 Alberta Wage and Salary Survey: Average Wages by Industry and Economic Region*.

- _____. *2017 Alberta Wage and Salary Survey: Methodology Report*. (Prepared for Alberta Labour.)
- _____. *2017 Alberta Wage and Salary Survey: Survey Overview*.
- _____. *Alberta's Labour Market Highlights, 2016*.
- _____. *Budget 2017: Working to Make Life Better—Fiscal Plan*.
- _____. *Children's Services Annual Report 2016–17*.
- _____. "Economic Dashboard." economicdashboard.alberta.ca/.
- _____. *Employment and Wages for Alberta Workers with a Post-Secondary Education*. October 2016.
- _____. *Human Services Annual Report 2015–16*.
- _____. "Incentives to Work in Child Care." humanservices.alberta.ca/family-community/work-in-child-care.html.
- _____. *Industry Profiles 2017: Educational Services Industry*. 2017.
- _____. "More Families to Get \$25-a-day, Quality Child Care." News release. December 19, 2017. www.alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=511855C346B7E-EFA9-8F76-7291CA2EB0BA03BB.
- _____. *Together We Raise Tomorrow : An Alberta Approach to Early Childhood Development*. 2013. open.alberta.ca/dataset/87cc63d4-b5ac-43d1-ae9e-8b225c29727d/resource/8b966ceb-4e72-4588-bf7a-949fe9e6b63d/download/6881618-2013-Together-We-Raise-Tomorrow-Approach-Early-Childhood-Development-2013-06.pdf.
- _____. *Together We Raise Tomorrow : Alberta's Poverty Reduction Strategy Discussion Paper*. June 2013. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/11df4303-b795-4c7d-a2bf-5dc1c70fdf24/resource/28faa2ba-8242-4f10-af69-94e8be659a73/download/6881615-2013-Together-We-Raise-Tomorrow-Albertas-Poverty-Reduction-Strategy-2013-06.pdf>.
- Government of Canada. *Job Bank*. "Explore Careers: Wage Report for Early Childhood Educators and Assistants." Based on Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey data for 2015–2016, updated on September 25, 2017. www.jobbank.gc.ca/LMI_report_bynoc.do?noc=4214&reportOption=wage.
- _____. "Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework." June 10, 2017. canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/early-learning-child-care/reports/2017-multilateral-framework.html.
- Halfon, Shani. *Canada's Childcare Workforce*. October 2014. movingchildcareforward.ca.

- Halfon, Shani, and Lyndsay Macdonald. "From Vision to Action: ECEs Role in the Canadian Child Care Movement." *eceLINK* (Winter 2014–15): 13–16. [eceLINK is the quarterly journal of the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario.] d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/aeceo/pages/753/attachments/original/1430416439/FromVisionToAction.pdf?1430416439.
- Hellriegel, Don, John W. Slocum, and Richard W. Woodman. *Organizational Behavior*. St. Paul: West Publishing Company, 1992.
- Langford, Tom. *Alberta's Day Care Controversy. From 1908 to 2009—and Beyond*. Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2011.
- Lutha, Vijay. "Leadership." businessdictionary.com/definition/leadership.html.
- Macdonald, David, and Martha Friendly. *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. *Play, Participation, and Possibilities: An Early Learning and Child Care Curriculum Framework for Alberta*. 2014. childcareframework.com.
- McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership. "A Critical Intersection: Administrative and Pedagogical Leadership." Blog entry by Jill Bella, April 18, 2016. mccormickcenter.nl.edu/a-critical-intersection-administrative-and-pedagogical.
- Milotay, Nora. "Governance of Competent Systems in the EUK: From Potential to Reality." Keynote presentation to the ISSA [International Step by Step Association] 2017 conference, *Local Responses, Global Advances: Towards Competent Early Childhood Systems*, in Ghent, Belgium, October 4–6, 2017. issa2017.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/ISSA-conference-2017-keynote-Nora-Milotay-Governance-of-competent-systems.pdf.
- _____. "Proposal for a Quality Framework on Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)." June 2015 conference presentation. European Commission. www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/agency-projects/IECE/3.%20Nora%20Milotay%20-%20%20European%20Commission.pdf.
- Moss, Peter. "Working with Uncertainty: Developing a Workforce for a Democratic, Inclusive and Integrated Early Childhood Service." June 15, 2007, 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 conference "Set Sail for Quality on an Ocean of Caring," Halifax, 2007.
- Moyser, Melissa. *Women and Paid Work*. Statistics Canada Catalogue No. 89-503-X. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, 2017.

The Muttart Foundation. “Advancing the Educational Preparation and Professional Development of Alberta’s Early Learning and Care Workforce: A Record of Stakeholder Discussions – Family Day Home Regional Discussion.” October 2015. muttart.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Family-Day-Home-Final-Report-May-12-20151.pdf.

_____. “Advancing the Educational Preparation and Professional Development of Alberta’s Early Learning and Care Workforce: What We Heard – A Report on Spring 2015 Consultations with Early Learning and Care Stakeholders.” September 2015. muttart.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/FINAL-Alberta-ECEC-workforce-consultations-summary-discussion-paper.pdf.

_____. *Toward a Provincial Framework for Early Learning and Care in Alberta: What We Heard – A Report on Fall 2012 Consultations with Early Learning and Care Stakeholders*. January 2013.

_____. *Toward a Provincial Framework for Early Learning and Care in Alberta: A Draft Framework Design for Discussion*. March 2013.

The Muttart Foundation and Jane Bertrand (George Brown College). *In the Best Interests of Children and Families: A Discussion of Early Childhood Education and Care in Alberta*. November 2010. muttart.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/A-Discussion-of-Early-Childhood-Education-and-Care-in-Alberta-112010.pdf.

The Muttart Foundation and Martha Friendly (Childcare Resource and Research Unit). *Engaging Alberta Municipal Level Governments in Support of Early Learning and Care*. December 2016. muttart.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Engaging-Alberta-Municipal-Level-Governments-122016.pdf.

The Muttart Foundation and Rachel Langford (Ryerson University). *Advancing the Educational Preparation and Professional Development of Alberta’s Early Learning and Care Workforce*. October 2014. muttart.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Alberta-Full-Report-102015.pdf.

Peeters, Jan. “Competence Requirements in Early Childhood Education and Care: A Study for the European Commission Directorate General for Education and Culture.” May 24, 2012, presentation to the VIDA conference, Copenhagen. edu.au.dk/fileadmin/edu/Forskningsprojekter/VIDA/Peeters_Staff_Competence_Requirements_in_Early_Childhood_Education_and_Care.pdf.

_____. “From Stories of Actors of Change to Competent ECEC Systems.” Keynote presentation to the ISSA [International Step by Step Association] 2017 conference, *Local Responses, Global Advances: Towards Competent Early Childhood Systems*, in Ghent, Belgium, October 4–6, 2017. issa2017.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/ISSA-conference-2017-keynote-Jan-Peeters-VBJK.pdf.

- Peeters, Jan, and Brecht Peleman. "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, 2017. Accessed via www.researchgate.net.
- Petersson, Bengt, Rodrigo Mariscal, and Kotaro Ishi. *Women Are Key for Future Growth: Evidence from Canada*. IMG Working Paper, WP/17/166. July 2017. www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2017/07/19/Women-Are-Key-for-Future-Growth-Evidence-from-Canada-45047.
- Public Interest Alberta. *2016 Child Care Survey*. d3n8a8pro7vnmx.cloudfront.net/publicinterestalberta/pages/80/attachments/original/1481601374/2016-Child-Care-Survey-Summary-Final.pdf?1481601374.
- _____. *Public Interest Alberta Annual Report 2016–2017*.
- Statistics Canada. *Canada Year Book 2012*. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, 2012.
- _____. "Census Families by Number of Children at Home, by Province and Territory (2011 Census) (Alberta)." 2011 Census of Population and Statistics Canada catalogue no. 98-312-XCB.
- _____. "Labour Force Survey Estimates (LFS), by Family Type and Family Age Composition (Annual)." CANSIM Table 282-0211.
- _____. "Weighted Average Tuition Fees for Full-Time Canadian Undergraduate Students, by Field of Study, Alberta." CANSIM Table 477-0021.
- van Kuelen, Anke, Ana del Barrio Saiz, Erna Reiling, Josette Hoex, and Carla Bienemann. *High Five Quality Scan: Tool for Reflection and Evaluation*. Based on the European Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care. (English translation.) ISSA [International Step by Step Association] et al., 2017. www.issa.nl/sites/default/files/print_pdf/B5-High%20Five%20Quality%20Scan%20Tool%20EN-screen.pdf.
- van Kuelen, Anke, and Ankie Vandekerckhove. *Five Steps to Quality: Training Package for Early Childhood Training Providers – European Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care*. ISSA [International Step by Step Association], Bureau Mutant, and VBJK, 2016. www.issa.nl/sites/default/files/print_pdf/5%20Steps%20to%20Quality%20-%20Training%20Package%20-%20final%20version.pdf.
- Wenger, Etienne. "Quick CoP Start-Up Guide," 2002. wenger-trayner.com/quick-cop-start-up-guide/.
- Young, Eóin, and Lisa Quinn. *Making Research Evidence Matter: A Guide to Policy Advocacy in Transition Countries*. Berlin: International Centre for Policy Advocacy, 2012. advocacyguide.icpolicyadvocacy.org.