

Quality Child Care Is Good for Everyone

You might not have children. Or you might not have children who need child care. But quality child care affects EVERYONE, in every sector of society.

Like education and health care, quality child care is a human right and a public good. And it needs public funding and support.

The good news is that quality early learning and child care generates exceptional returns on investment. Economic studies have calculated the cost-benefit ratio of such investment at between \$1.50 and \$17 gained for every \$1 spent.

In Quebec, for example, a 2008 study by economist Pierre Fortin found that \$1.2 billion spent on child care resulted in \$2.1 billion coming back to the government through taxes—including income tax, payroll and corporate taxes and consumption taxes such as the GST.

From a tax revenue perspective, Quebec's investment in child care paid for itself and more. But investing in child care also has benefits that are harder to define in terms of dollars. These include lower child mortality, lower crime rates, reduced poverty and social inequality (including gender inequality), reductions in substance abuse and mental illness, and reduction in spending needed to address poor health and problems at school.

The benefits for everyone far outweigh the costs.

Everyone benefits from quality early learning and child care.



Benefits for children

Quality early learning and child care plays a crucial role in healthy child development. It improves children's physical and mental health later in life. Healthy, well-adjusted children grow up to be healthy, well-adjusted adults.

Quality early learning and child care lays the foundation for all future learning, so that children are less likely to drop out of school. A 2008 study by Olena Hankivsky found that Canadians pay more than \$1.3 billion a year for social assistance and criminal justice costs related to high school drop-outs. And we lose additional billions related to health care costs, employment insurance costs and lost tax revenues.

Quality early learning and child care facilitates early intervention to address any behavioural, cognitive or developmental issues children may have. Research shows that approximately 15% of Canadian schoolchildren need costly remedial and special education supports. Two years of quality early learning and child care lowers special education placement by 40–60% for children with cognitive risk and 10–30% for children with social or behavioural risk.

AECEA Association of
Early Childhood
Educators of
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Join us in speaking out for qualified early childhood educators and quality care.

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Benefits for the rest of society

Quality early learning and child care helps to build strong families. It helps parents and families link to community resources and find a fulfilling work–life balance.

Quality early learning and child care helps to build strong communities. It helps newcomers integrate into their new neighbourhoods, and fosters appreciation and respect for diversity.

Quality early learning and child care is an important tool for eliminating poverty. Poverty and a poor start in life can lead to poor nutrition, poor health and poor learning outcomes. This can create social tensions and lead to low earnings in adulthood. The negative consequences affect today's children as well as future generations.

The City of Edmonton has identified affordable, high-quality child care as one of six game-changers in its End Poverty in a Generation strategy.

Quality early learning and child care supports businesses. When parents struggle to balance work and family responsibilities, this can result in absenteeism and higher staff turnover. ***UBC's Paul Kershaw*** estimates the resulting cost to Canadian businesses at more than \$4 billion a year.

Quality early learning and child care creates jobs. A recent report found that investments in child care generate 44% more direct and indirect jobs than the closest industry.

Quality early learning and child care increases female labour market participation and contributes to families' financial security. The Alberta Children's Services 2017–2018 annual report notes that “the ability of women to participate in the work force is directly affected by the availability of affordable child care” (p. 14).

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

High-quality early learning and child care helps to close the gender wage gap. The Canadian Labour Congress's ***labour market snapshot*** for the third quarter of 2019 reports that men earn \$4 per hour more than women—even though women have higher levels of education.

Quality child care is everyone's business.

University of Illinois professor emerita Lilian Katz—who literally “wrote the book” on professionalism in early childhood education—explains why quality child care is everyone's business.

“I really believe that each of us must come to care about everyone else's children. We must come to see that the well-being of our own individual children is intimately linked to the well-being of all other people's children. After all, when one of our own children needs life-saving surgery, someone else's child will perform it; when one of our own children is threatened or harmed by violence on the streets, someone else's child will commit it. The good life for our own children can only be secured if it is also secured for all other people's children...”

—“Last Words” on p. 413 of the proceedings of the Lilian Katz symposium, 2000.

What happens to children affects all of us. Investing in quality early learning and child care upholds the rights of children to thrive and prosper.

It's the right thing to do.

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Join AECEA and its partners in advocating for qualified educators and quality child care.

Tell the Alberta government that you value quality early learning and child care.

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