

Why People Need Child Care

This was life in the 1950s.

Dads worked.

Moms stayed home to look after the kids.

They had no choice.

There were no child care programs they could entrust with the care of their little ones.

But times have changed.

Maybe you think that child care is a private family matter. But that's an illusion. Child care is an essential service for working parents. It's a critical support for women's equity. And our economy can't function without it.

Here are the facts.

In Canada, in 2019, more than 80% of women with children under 5 worked full time or part time. In 1976, by comparison, just 39% of women with children under 16 worked outside the home.

In Alberta in 2016—the latest year for which data is available—working moms represented 63% of moms with children under 3 and 73% of moms with 3- to 5-year-olds. In 2016, 59% of Alberta children under 13 had working mothers. This represents approximately 405,000 children.

Many families can't provide for their children or make ends meet unless both parents work. And many women choose to work—to pursue their careers or to help support their families. Women now contribute 42% of total Canadian household income, compared to 25% in 1976. They need affordable child care to make this possible.

In 2016 Alberta had enough regulated centre-based spaces for just 22% of children under 6, compared to the national average of 28.7%.

We need to do better. And we need to make sure the non-parental care we give our children is quality care.

The research is clear. Early learning and child care can bring a host of benefits for children, for their families and for society as a whole. But the benefits of early learning and child care depend on the quality of the programs and services that are provided.

Poor-quality early learning and child care can in fact cause harm. Child care that does not provide stimulating experiences does not promote active learning. The result is that children may not develop to their full potential. Poor-quality early learning and child care can also be a risk factor for delayed language and cognitive development—particularly for children from low income families.



The COVID-19 crisis has made it clear that “we are at the end of the hoary illusion that childcare is just a private matter. For the same reasons we build public services in other sectors, we need to redesign childcare policy. High quality childcare is at the heart of the 21st century economy and modern family realities.... [W]ithout this political understanding, we will never implement the policy mechanisms and infrastructure that early learning and childcare requires...”

—Susan Prentice, “Pandemic Punctures Childcare Illusion,” March 25, 2020

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.

Check out the videos and publications on www.aecea.ca/quality

Sources:
Desjardin, Dawn, Carrie Freestone, and Naomi Powell. [The Fruits of Her Labour](#). RBC Economics, March 2020.
Doherty, Gillian, Donna S. Lero, Hillel Goelman, Jocelyne Tougas, and Annette LaGrange. [You Bet I Care! Caring and Learning Environments: Quality in Regulated Family Child Care Across Canada](#). Guelph: Centre for Families, Work, and Well-Being, University of Guelph, 2000.
Friendly, Martha, Gillian Doherty, and Beach, Jane. [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, 2006.
Friendly, Martha, Elsie Larsen, Laura Feltham, Bethany Grady, Barry Forer and Michelle Jones. [Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2016](#). 11th edition. Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit, April 2018. Revised May 31, 2018.
Friendly, Martha, and Donna S. Lero. [Social Inclusion through Early Childhood Education and Care](#). Toronto: The Laidlaw Foundation Working Paper Series, 2002.
McCain, Margaret Norrie, and J. Fraser Mustard. [Reversing the Real Brain Drain: Early Years Study Final Report](#). Toronto: Ontario Children's Secretariat, 1999.
Melhuish, Edward, Katharina Erekly-Stevens, Konstantinos Petrogiannis, Anamaria Ariescu, Efthymia Penderi, Konstantina Rentzou, Alice Tawell, Pauline Slot, Martine Broekhuizen and Paul Leseman. [A Review of Research on the Effects of Early Childhood Education and Care \(ECEC\) upon Child Development](#). Curriculum Quality Analysis and Impact Review Project. CARE Project: European Early Childhood Education and Care, 2015..
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. [Engaging Young Children: Lessons from Research about Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care](#). Starting Strong series. Paris: OECD Publishing, 2018.
———. [Starting Strong 2017: Key OECD Indicators on Early Childhood Education and Care](#). Paris: OECD Publishing, 2017.
———. [Starting Strong III: A Quality Toolbox for Early Childhood Education and Care](#). Paris: OECD Publishing, 2012.
Prentice, Susan. “Pandemic Punctures Childcare Illusion.” Winnipeg: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, March 25, 2020.

AECEA Association of
Early Childhood
Educators of
Alberta

Join us in speaking out for qualified early childhood educators and quality care.

www.aecea.ca

info@aecea.ca

780.421.7544