

Saskatchewan



PROVINCIAL CONTEXT

Number of children 0-12 yrs (2003 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0	11,900
1	11,800
2	10,400
3	11,100
4	11,600
5	12,400
6	12,200
7	13,200
8	11,200
9	14,100
10	13,500
11	14,000
12	12,900
Total	160,300

Number of children 0-12 years (2003 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0-2	34,100
3-5	35,100
6-12	91,100
Total	160,300

Children 0-12 yrs with mothers in the paid labour force (2003 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0	6,900
1	7,200
2	6,500
3	6,700
4	7,500
5	8,000
6	8,100
7	8,800
8	7,500
9	9,700
10	9,800
11	10,100
12	9,600
Total	106,400

Number of children 0-12 years with mothers in the paid labour force (2003 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0-2	20,600
3-5	22,200
6-12	63,600
Total	106,400

Children 0-14 yrs identifying with an Aboriginal group (2001)

Age	North American					Total
	Indian	Metis	Inuit	Multiple	Other	
0-4	12,000	4,420	15	155	195	16,785
5-9	12,190	5,310	25	120	240	17,885
10-14	11,385	5,115	45	90	230	16,865
Total	35,575	14,845	85	365	665	51,535

Children 0-14 yrs with disabilities (2001)

Age	Number of children with disabilities	Rate of children with disabilities (%)
0-4	850	1.7
5-9	1,860	3.2
10-14	2,780	4.3
Total	5,480	3.2

Note: Total may not add up due to rounding.

Number of children by marital status of families (2001)

Age	Children in couple families	Children in lone parent families	(with lone mothers)	(with lone fathers)
0-4	46,605	13,230	11,680	1,550
5-9	52,950	15,015	12,845	2,170
10-14	59,915	15,315	12,565	2,750
Total	159,470	43,560	37,090	6,470

Number of children by mother tongue (2001)

Age	English	French	Non-official language
0-4	56,680	250	3,720
5-9	64,460	445	4,145
10-14	71,290	495	4,585
Total	192,430	1,190	12,450

Number and percentage of children living below the LICO (2002)

Age	Number	Percent (%)
0-2	7,100	21.5
3-5	9,200	26.8
6-12	17,000	18.2
Total	33,300	20.7

Workforce participation of mothers by age of youngest child (2003 rounded estimate)

Age of youngest child	Number of mothers	Participation rate (%)
0-2	19,200	66.9
3-5	13,700	77.4
6-15	47,700	85.6

FAMILY-RELATED LEAVE

Maternity leave

Eighteen weeks

Parental leave

Birth mothers may take 34 weeks immediately following maternity leave. The other parent may also take up to 37 weeks. These parental leaves may be taken consecutively.

Adoption leave

Primary caregiver may take 18 weeks of adoption leave, followed by 34 weeks of parental leave. Other parent may take up to 37 weeks which may be taken consecutively.

Births and EI maternity and parental claims (2003)

Number of births	11,754
Birth rate per 1,000 population	11.8
Number of initial maternity claims allowed	5,510
Average length of maternity claims	14.6 weeks
Number of parental claims	5,920
Average length of parental claim	23 weeks
Number of adoptive parent claims	60
Average length of adoptive claim	28.5 weeks

Note: Maternity, parental and adoption leaves are determined by provincial and territorial legislation. The federal government pays for up to 15 weeks for maternity leave and 35 weeks for parental and adoptive leave for eligible parents at 55% of earned income to a maximum of \$413/week. See federal ECEC programs for more information.

KINDERGARTEN

LEGISLATION

Saskatchewan. Legislative Assembly. *Education Act*. 1995. E-02. Amended 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002.

Under the *Education Act*, 1995, independent schools must be registered with the Department of Learning in order to operate legally. *The Independent Schools Regulations* set out the criteria with which independent schools are required to comply.

Saskatchewan funds and delivers denominational education. Both “public” and Catholic school boards are publicly funded.

PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR KINDERGARTEN

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KINDERGARTEN SERVICES

KINDERGARTEN

Kindergarten is delivered in public schools under boards and private schools (as defined in the *Education Act*). Part-day kindergarten is provided for five year olds. The *Education Act* requires at least 80 full school day equivalents. Schedules and total time vary by school division.

Kindergarten is not compulsory (although more than 90% attend) nor is it an entitlement; provision is determined by school divisions.

PRE-KINDERGARTEN

Pre-kindergarten may be provided part-day for children “at risk” in targeted communities that meet specified eligibility criteria determined by the school division (i.e. family and environmental risk, existing delays, behavioural challenges, isolation, low socio-economic status, high rate of single parents). Schools in these communities may be designated “community schools” and, if they choose to have pre-K, receive provincial funds.

Identified three and four year old children in community schools are referred by public health nurses, school board offices or Social Services. The family may also make a request because of inability to afford other options or the child may meet criteria for special education. The parents must make a commitment to participate in the program, which is offered for a minimum of 12 hours per week, usually 3 hours/day for four days/week.

In 2003/04 there were more than 100 pre-kindergartens for three and four year old children (two years before grade one).

AGE ELIGIBILITY

There is no provincial kindergarten eligibility age; it varies by school division. (For Grade 1, a child must be six years old by December 31st). In most school divisions, children must be five years old by December 31st the year in which they begin kindergarten.

CLASS SIZE

There is no provincial class size limit in kindergartens. The average/mean kindergarten class size is not known.

In pre-kindergartens, there is a staff:child ratio of 1:8 with a group size of 16 (one teacher and one assistant).

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Children's Services Policy Framework (2002) outlines policy and procedures for Early Childhood Education for children with disabilities within the school system. Children who are three years of age or older and meet the criteria for designation are eligible for early entrance programs. Funding is provided to school divisions to support programming needs.

During the 2003/04 school year, funding was provided for more than 500 children between the ages of three and five years who were designated as special needs. Approximately 300 of these children were three and four year olds. Personal Program Plans for these children may take the form of involvement with a community pre-school program, child care centre or early kindergarten entrance.

There were 200 designated special needs children of kindergarten age; each designated child has a Personal Program Plan.

ENROLMENT (2003/04)

Number of children enrolled in kindergarten (the year before Grade 1): 11,229

Kindergarten enrolment includes children from all public and private schools

Number of children enrolled in pre-kindergarten (two years before Grade 1): 1,500 (estimate)*

* *Pre-kindergarten enrolment is estimated based on 100 programs with a maximum 16 children, not all programs at capacity. Saskatchewan Learning did not collect enrolment figures for pre-kindergarten in 2003/04 but plans to collect enrolment figures in 2004/05.*

KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS

Qualification requirements: Saskatchewan teacher certification. Teacher certification requires a minimum of four years post-secondary education and either a Bachelor of Education or other recognized degree, plus 48 semester hours of teacher education that includes a practicum. There are no ECE requirements.

There are no requirements for ongoing education or professional development.

Responsibility for certification: The Certifying Official appointed by the Minister of Learning

Representation: The Saskatchewan Teachers Federation (STF). (The STF is not a trade union, but an integrated organization that represents teachers both in matters of professional standards and professional development as well as in collective bargaining and related teacher welfare matters).

Average salary (2003/04): The average yearly salary of teachers who identified themselves as kindergarten teachers was \$49,981.

Number of kindergarten teachers in 2003/04: 996 distinct kindergarten teachers (not FTEs). (Some kindergarten teachers also teach other grades).

CLASSROOM ASSISTANTS

Title: Teacher Assistant

Qualifications: None required

There is no provincial policy regarding assistants although many school divisions provide Teacher Assistants when a class reaches a certain size.

Roles vary according to the needs of individual classes, such as class size and the number of children with special needs.

In some school divisions non-teaching personnel including classroom assistants are unionized while in others they are not. The Canadian Union of Public Employees represents the majority of unionized assistants.

Average wage: Information not available

CURRICULUM

There is a provincial kindergarten curriculum, *Children First* (1994). The approach is “learning through play” in a developmentally appropriate environment. Note: A K-3 early childhood education strategy is being developed in 2004/05 to support developmentally appropriate practice in K-3 classrooms.

In pre-kindergarten, schools are expected to develop a program based on the kindergarten curriculum and guidelines established by the Department.

MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

Monitoring of kindergarten programs is determined by the local school division.

SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR KINDERGARTEN

The province provides 44% of funding through provincial grants. Boards generate 55% of funding from property tax base through locally determined levies.¹

Parents may pay fees for swimming classes, field trips, etc. This varies from school to school.

There is no public funding of private schools.

PUBLIC SPENDING ON KINDERGARTEN (2003/04)

Average spending per child on kindergarten

Rural: \$2,429

Regina/Saskatoon: \$2,330

Total spending on kindergarten

Information not available

Spending on pre-kindergarten

School divisions receive block funding of \$48,346 for a pre-kindergarten class of up to 16 three and four year olds. Funding covers the cost of half-time teacher, half-time teacher associate and programming costs. Based on 16 children per class, the funding can be calculated as \$3,022 per child.

Additional funding of \$14,540 in the initial year for start-up costs.

Total provincial spending on pre-kindergarten in 2003/04: \$4.5 million

SPECIAL FEATURES

See pre-K programs for children “at risk”. Four of the pre-kindergarten programs are funded through the federal Early Childhood Development Initiative.

From 1999-2001, the Task Force on the Role of the School undertook a public dialogue focusing on the changing role of schools. The Task Force recommended a new vision called SchoolPLUS which focuses on the school as the centre of its community and the hub of services and supports for the neighbourhood it serves.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN KINDERGARTEN

Two community schools serving vulnerable children are piloting full-day every-day kindergarten. Saskatchewan Learning is undertaking a province-wide needs assessment that includes questions about full-day kindergarten.

¹ Canadian School Board Association. *Education Governance in Canada: Trends and Implications*. Last updated 1999.

REGULATED CHILD CARE

LEGISLATION

Saskatchewan. Legislative Assembly. *The Child Care Act*. Bill 8, 1990 as amended by the Statutes of Saskatchewan, 2000.

Saskatchewan. Legislative Assembly. *The Child Care Regulations*. 2001.

PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILD CARE

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CHILD CARE SERVICES

UNREGULATED CHILD CARE

Unregulated family child care

Maximum number of children permitted: Eight, including the caregiver's own children under 13 years. Of the eight, five may be younger than six years; of these five, only two may be younger than 30 months.

Nursery schools

Part-time preschools that operate less than three hours/day or three days/week are not regulated.

School-aged (in a school)

Programs solely for school-aged children that are located in schools are not regulated.

REGULATED CHILD CARE

Child care centres

Child care centres provide care to children in group settings. Centres must have a license from the Child Day Care Branch and may care for up to 90 children from six weeks to and including 12 years. Child care centres include non-profit services, governed by parent boards of directors, and for-profit services that have parent advisory committees (there are currently no for-profit child care centres in Saskatchewan).

School-age child care

Care outside of school hours for children under 13 in a mixed-age centre, family child care home or in a program solely for school-age children that is not located in a school.

Family child care homes

Family child care homes are operated by individually licensed family child care providers in their principal place of residence. A person providing these services may care for up to eight children depending on the children's ages (five children younger than six years; of these five, only two may be younger than 30 months).

Group family child care homes

Group family child care homes are operated by individuals in a residence and are licensed for up to 12 children. The caregiver must have an assistant adult caregiver in attendance when the numbers or ages of children permitted in family child care homes are exceeded (more than eight children, more than five preschool, or more than three infants).

Teen student support family child care homes

Teen student support homes are family child care homes formally associated with a high school, providing child care services to children of parents attending the high school. Teen student support family child care homes are licensed to care for up to six children, depending on their ages.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The Child Care Inclusion Program provides three types of grants to child care facilities to include children with special needs. First, individual inclusion grants are available to licensed centres and family child care homes to include children experiencing a delay or a condition of risk that may result in a delay. For this a referral is needed but not necessarily a diagnosis, and the child must attend the program a minimum of 20 hours per month. The amount of the grant varies from \$200 to \$300 per month depending on the need within three defined levels. This grant is an entitlement for eligible children.

Second, an enhanced accessibility grant of up to \$1,500/month may be paid to assist with the additional cost of including a child with exceptionally high needs. For this grant, the child must have a diagnosis and require significant additional support, and the parents must be enrolled in an education program or employed.

There may be waiting lists for enhanced accessibility grants if the budget is fully expended.

A third kind of grant for the centres are training and resource grants of \$100 (\$200 for exceptional needs) per child with special needs as well as a grant of up to \$600 (\$1,200 for exceptional needs) for adapted equipment required to meet the needs of the child.

Inclusion grants are approved for a one year period and then are reviewed; enhanced accessibility grants are approved for a maximum of six months, after which time the facility must reapply for funding.

Funding for inclusive child care is intended to support the centre as a whole and not to provide a worker allocated to a specific child. Parents of children with special needs pay for the space but not the additional supports.

ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE

Saskatchewan does not regulate child care programs on-reserve.

The First Nations/Inuit Child Care Initiative has resulted in the development of approximately 45 on-reserve child care centres.

Approximately 15% of all regulated child care programs not on-reserve have an Aboriginal program component.

SPACE STATISTICS (2003/04) (MARCH 2004)

Number of regulated child care spaces	
<i>Centre-based spaces</i>	
Infants	452
Toddlers	1,129
Preschool	3,085
School-age	874
Total centre-based spaces	5,540
<i>Family child care</i>	2,370
Total regulated spaces	7,910
Children with special needs in regulated child care	360
<i>Note: This includes an unspecified number of children in four centres receiving pilot funding of \$75 per licensed space.</i>	
Children receiving subsidies	3,716

Number of centres and homes

Number of child care centres	153
Full-day	153
Part-day	0
Number of family child care providers	291

Sponsorship of regulated full-time centre spaces

Non-profit	5,540
For-profit	0

Openings and closings (2003/04)

New child care centre licenses issued	16
Number of child care centre closures	1
Number of new licenses issued to individual family child care providers	51
Number of family child care providers who ceased providing care	37

STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

REGULATED CENTRES

Maximum centre size	90 spaces
<i>Maximum of 12 infant spaces</i>	

Maximum staff:child ratios and group sizes

Age	Staff:child ratios	Max. group size
Infants	1:3	6
Toddlers	1:5	10
Preschool (30 mos-6 yrs)	1:10	20
School-age (grade 1-12 yrs)	1:15	30

Staff qualification requirements

Saskatchewan has three levels of certification:
 ECE I – 120-hour child care orientation course or equivalent provided through regional community colleges
 ECE II – One year certificate in child care or equivalent
 ECE III – Two year diploma in child care or equivalent

Centre directors hired after July 2001 must have at least a two year diploma in child care or equivalent (ECE III). Directors appointed to a centre director position prior to July 2001 must meet or exceed the qualifications of an ECE II (one year certificate or equivalent) but must upgrade to a two year diploma if they accept employment with another centre.

Effective January 2002, all staff employed in a centre for at least 65 hours per month had to meet the qualifications of an ECE I (120 hour child care orientation course or equivalent provided through regional community colleges). By January 2005, 30% of staff must have a one year certificate in child care or equivalent. By January 2007, a further 20% of staff must have a two year diploma or equivalent.

Individuals must apply to the Child Day Care Branch for certification. Child Day Care sets out the requirements for classification, and the courses required to achieve equivalency status.

All staff members in each centre must have completed a first-aid and CPR course.

Parent involvement

Non-profit child care centres are administered by parent boards; 51% of the board members must be parents who are using the program. For-profit child care centres are required to have parent advisory committees.

Licensing, monitoring and enforcement

Twenty-two provincial program consultants develop, license, monitor and consult with both centres and family child care homes and conduct two visits annually. A provincial program consultant is not required to have a background in early childhood education.

A facility may be issued a provisional license to remedy any unmet requirements as long as the health and safety of children is not at risk. If the non-compliance is not corrected within the specified period (to a maximum of six months) the license will be revoked. There is no appeal board or formal appeal mechanism but the facility may appeal directly to the Minister of Community Resources and Employment.

REGULATED FAMILY CHILD CARE

Regulation

Individually licensed

Maximum capacity

Family child care homes

Up to eight children (including the provider's own children under 13 years) between six weeks and 12 years. Of the eight children, only five may be younger than six years; of these five, only two may be younger than 30 months.

Group family child care homes

Up to 12 children (including the provider's and assistant's own children under 13 years). Of the 12 children, only 10 may be younger than six years, of these 10 only five may be younger than 30 months and only three younger than 18 months.

Teen student support family child care homes. Up to six children (including the provider's own children under 13 years). Of these six children, no more than four may be younger than six years; of these four, only two may be younger than 30 months.

Provider qualification requirements

Must be 18 years old. All require an orientation session with a program consultant and first-aid/CPR training, plus six hours of professional development workshops each licensing year.

Providers whose homes are licensed after July 2001 must have a 40 hour introductory early childhood education course within the first year of licensing.

Providers in group family child care homes have three years to complete the 120 hour orientation course (ECE I). Assistants require first-aid and CPR training, plus six hours of professional development each licensing year.

Licensing, monitoring and enforcement

Program consultants conduct annual visits to renew licenses in addition to periodic drop-in visits throughout the year.

FUNDING

CHILD CARE FEE SUBSIDY PROGRAM

Fee subsidies are paid directly to service providers on behalf of eligible parents.

There is a two-step eligibility process. To be eligible for consideration, parents must be employed or seeking employment, attending school or a training program, receiving medical treatment, or have a child with special needs. If the parent meets one of these criteria, an income test is applied.

Subsidies are available only in non-profit child care centres or regulated family child care homes. The minimum user fee is 10% of the actual cost of care. Centres and regulated family child care homes may surcharge subsidized parents above the 10% minimum. The average surcharge to a subsidized parent above the subsidy is 30-40% of the fee. The Child Day Care Branch pays the parent portion of the fees of children with special needs whose parents are on social assistance and not involved in a training, employment or rehabilitation program. The funding is paid to the centre or regulated family child care provider on behalf of the parent.

Although the number of subsidies is not capped, the total funding available for subsidies is limited. Centres must be approved to receive subsidies and new centres may be on a waiting list. Subsidies follow the child (provided the child attends a centre that is approved for subsidy).

Parents may be eligible for subsidy for up to four months while actively looking for work. A two-parent family in which both parents are looking for work is not eligible for a subsidy. A parent who does not secure employment within the four months may not reapply for subsidy for the purpose of looking for work for one year unless he/she has been in school or a training program for at least four months.

Funding is provided to parents on social assistance who are involved in an employment, training or rehabilitation program to pay for the parent portion of regulated care, or the community average cost of unregulated care. Payment is made to the parent and is paid for by the Saskatchewan Assistance Program.

Eligibility for child care fee subsidy (2003/04)

	Turning point	Break-even point
1 or 2 parents, 1 infant	\$19,800	\$36,720
1 or 2 parents, 2 children (1 infant, 1 preschool)	21,000	54,960

The turning point is the income level up to which full subsidy is available. Partial subsidy is available up to the break-even point at which income subsidy ceases.

Note: Saskatchewan uses gross income level to determine eligibility; other provinces use net income. The figures, therefore, are not directly comparable across jurisdictions.

Maximum monthly subsidy by age of child (2003/04)

	Regulated centre	Regulated family child care homes
Infants	\$355	\$295
Toddlers	310	290
Preschool	255	255
School-age	*210	*210

**Increases to \$255/month for the summer months.*

PUBLIC FUNDING FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE (2003/04)

One-time funding

Start-up grants

Child care centres	\$600/space
Family child care homes	400/home
Family child care homes (north)	600/home
Group family child care homes	600/home
Group family child care homes (north)	900/home
School-age	300/space

Tuition reimbursement

\$70 per class, or \$200 per orientation course per centre staff

Recurring funding

Early childhood services grants

Infants	\$258.33/space/month
Toddler	155.00/space/month
Preschool	77.50/space/month
School-age	51.67/space/month

Grants are equivalent to \$775/month per staff as required by child:staff ratios

Teen support services grants

Centres	
- \$325/infant space/month	
- \$290/toddler space/month	
Homes	
-\$350/designated space/month (maximum three spaces)	

Equipment grants

Family child care homes	\$100/space/year
Northern centres	100/space/year

Special needs funding

Individual inclusion

- Grants to assist centres and homes with costs with the additional supervision costs associated with caring for a child with special needs.

Level I program	\$200/month
Level II program	250/month
Level III program	300/month

Enhanced accessibility

- Grants to assist centres and homes with the additional supervision costs associated with the caring for a child with exceptionally high diverse needs whose parents are working or in training – up to \$1,500/month

Training and resource grant

- \$100/child with special needs (\$200 for exceptionally high needs)

Adapted equipment grant

- \$600/year (\$1,200 in exceptional circumstances)

PROVINCIAL ALLOCATIONS FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE (2003/04)

Fee subsidies *\$10,505,000

One-time funding

Start-up grants	\$313,100
Special needs equipment grant	10,000

Recurring funding

Centre operating grant	\$5,767,700
Family child care home equipment grant	164,000
Northern equipment grant	39,800
Inclusive child care grants	1,513,930
Teen/infant centre grants	830,480
Preschool support programs	494,990
(See HISTORY, 1997 for details)	
Total	\$19,639,000

*The subsidy funding includes \$124,000 for regulated child care facilities for the parent portion of children with special needs whose parents are on social assistance and not involved in an employment, training or rehabilitation program.

Other funding

Community Solutions	\$1,139,990
Early Childhood Training	**\$9,000

Funding from the Social Assistance Program is paid directly to parents on social assistance who are involved in an employment, training or rehabilitation program. \$1,000,000 for the parent portion of regulated care and \$800,000 for unregulated care.

** This fund reimburses 1/3 of the cost of a completed course in early childhood education.

SALARIES

Mean gross hourly wage for centre-based child care staff (2003/04)

Directors	\$16.23
Supervisors	12.15
ECE III (2-year diploma)	11.58
Child care worker	10.29

Source: September 2003 survey of licensed child care centers conducted by the Department of Community Resources and Employment.

Family child care

Information not available

FEES

Average monthly parent fees for full-time centre-based care (2003/04)

Infants (Age 0-17 mos)	\$513
Toddlers (Age 18 mos-3 yrs)	443
Preschool (Age 3-5.11 yrs)	409
School-age	288

Source: September 2003 survey conducted by the Department of Community Resources and Employment.

Average monthly fee in family child care (2003/04)

Infants (Age 0-17 mos)	\$486
Toddlers (Age 18 mos-3 yrs)	476
Preschool (Age 2.5-5 yrs)	417
School-age	289

Source: September 2003 survey conducted by the Department of Community Resources and Employment.

ADMINISTRATION

The Child Day Care Program (Employment and Income Assistance Division), Department of Community Resources and Employment administers the legislation and is responsible for initiating child care services, consultation, standards and training. Monitoring, licensing, and consultation are provided through two regional offices and five sub-offices.

MUNICIPAL AND OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROLES

Saskatchewan legislation provides for child care centres administered by municipalities. As of 2003, there was only one centre licensed under this provision.

CHILD CARE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

A government-appointed Early Learning and Care Advisory Board advises on early learning and child care issues and may assist in the establishment of long-term program directions.

In 2003/04 the government announced Child Care Saskatchewan, a plan to develop 1,200 new regulated child care spaces over four years to support labour market attachment, taking advantage of federal Early Learning and Child Care funding.

RELATED SERVICES

Kids First

Established in 2001, this five year initiative to provide early childhood supports targeted to “high risk” families and their children is the responsibility of the Early Childhood Development Unit overseen by the departments of Health, Social Services, Learning, Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs. Unit staff assist targeted communities with the development and implementation of the program. The initiative contains several program elements including early childhood education, child care and parent support, home visiting to identified families, and prenatal outreach and screening to assist in Fetal Alcohol Syndrome prevention.

Kids First is funded through the intergovernmental Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI). \$8.4 million of the \$10 million 2001 ECDI funding was allocated to Kids First. In its initial year, nine targeted communities in the province received funding.

Community Solutions Program

The Community Solutions Program provides funding to community organizations for projects that promote and support inclusion of children and families with special needs, that support labour force attachment, that are workplace sponsored or that meet the needs of rural or northern communities. Projects must have an attachment to a regulated child care service.

HISTORY OF CHILD CARE AND OTHER ECEC SERVICES

1975 New child care regulations were passed under the authority of the *Family Services Act* describing eligibility, the process of licensing, standards of operation and available grants and subsidies. Family day care homes and child care centres that were incorporated, non-profit and parent controlled could be licensed and were eligible for funding.

1980 An interdepartmental government report, *The Day Care Review*, identified affordability, availability and quality as key issues.

Action Child Care, an advocacy group based in Saskatoon, was established.

1980s Period characterized by very little expansion in services or funding and growth of unlicensed centres. (It should be noted that it was possible to operate an unlicensed centre because there was no limit set on the number of children in unregulated child care.)

1990 The *Child Care Act and Regulations* were proclaimed. They required licensing of all centres and establishing training requirements of 130 hours.

1992 The Minister of Social Services appointed a Child Care Advisory Board to advise on current child care issues and to assist in the establishment of long-time program directions; this included eight community participants representing provincial and national child care organizations.

A review of child care in Saskatchewan was completed, resulting in the report *Breaking New Ground in Child Care* which provided a framework for child care reform in Saskatchewan. The review identified these guiding principles for child care:

- parents should be free to choose their preferred child care (licensed or unlicensed);
- affordability should not be a barrier to choice;
- child care should be community-based and provide responsive programming.

1993 Grants were introduced to encourage initiation of work-related child care centres. They were to cover 50% of development and capital costs up to a total of \$10,000.

1995 A number of initiatives in response to the principles for reform identified in the child care review were introduced. An education campaign was introduced to assist parents in selecting and monitoring child care arrangements. Child care resource centres were established throughout the province. Subsidies for infants and toddlers were increased and new child development grant rates were established. Funds were also made available for the development of pilot projects in rural and northern Saskatchewan.

Differential subsidies by age group were introduced.

1996 A child care wage enhancement was announced as part of Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Children. The grant is for trained staff (those who had completed the 130 hour training program) and is based on required staff:child ratios. In 1996, the grant was \$75/staff/month and was increased in each of the three subsequent years. By 1999/2000, the grant was \$262.50/staff/month.

1997 A one time capital grant program for renovations was announced.

Saskatchewan Education introduced a pre-kindergarten prevention and early intervention program for three and four year old children "at risk".

Development of Aboriginal child care continued with the aim of a child care centre on each of Saskatchewan's 72 reserves if it is appropriate (most centres are quite small).

Saskatchewan Education and Saskatchewan Social Services released *La Loche and Prince Albert Preschool Support Pilot Projects: Year Three Report and Program Summary*. It describes the implementation and evaluation of two preschool pilot projects. The projects emphasize self-help, intellectual and social skill development. Medical care, such as immunizations and dental check-ups, were part of the program.

The report states that most children showed gains on observational checklists, particularly in areas of social and intellectual development, as well as improved health and easier transition to kindergarten. In addition, it notes that parents participated more in upgrading programs and that family function and parental self-esteem also improved.

After the pilot period ended, the programs were licensed as child care programs and were provided with full operational funding, as there were no other mechanisms or alternatives to maintain viability.

A child care review identified a need for flexible options for licensed child care for rural Saskatchewan. Extended family day care homes, each accommodating a maximum of 12 children, were piloted in rural communities.

1998 A national study of wages, working conditions and quality, *You Bet I Care!*, found that – based on a sample of full-time centres for children 0-6 years and regulated family child care – Saskatchewan scored 4.1 on the ECERS-R (preschool rooms), 4.2 on the ITERS (infant rooms), and 4.5 on the FDCRS (family child care). The scales range from 1 to 7 (excellent).

1999 A review of the Child Development (special needs) program was completed which resulted in a new direction away from individual assessments and supports to inclusive and mainstream services. The Community Solutions Grant was created to support inclusive services and partnerships, the Enhanced Accessibility Grant was implemented to support access for very high need children of working families, and a Centre Inclusion Grant (block funding) was piloted in four centres with large numbers of children with special needs.

2000 The wage enhancement grant was amalgamated with the centre operating grant to become the Early Childhood Services Grant. The grant was based on the required staff:child ratios and was equivalent to \$680/month/required staff.

2000/01 The *Child Care Act* and accompanying Regulations were amended to allow for group family child care homes to change the funding mechanisms and to increase early childhood training requirements.

2001 \$1.019 million of the \$10 million in Early Childhood Development Initiative funding was allocated to child care for:

- enhanced operating funding to child care centres
- training and equipment grants for family child care
- professional development.

In addition, \$370,000 was allocated to the Early Childhood Intervention Program (ECIP), \$200,000 to Saskatchewan Learning to expand their pre-kindergarten programs and \$100,000 for an initiative to reduce infant mortality. The balance (\$8.4 million) was allocated to Kids First (see RELATED SERVICES).

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CHILD CARE AND OTHER ECEC SERVICES

2002/03 As part of Income Security Redesign and the Building Independence initiatives aimed at moving families off welfare and into the labour force, \$750,000 was committed for the development of 150 new regulated child care spaces. As well, \$500,000 was added to the Early Childhood Services grant to help centres improve wages and benefits for workers. An additional \$450,000 was made available to expand supports for the inclusion of children and families with special needs.

2003/04 \$2.94 million of Kids First funding was spent on regulated child care; in 2004/05 the allocation was \$3.2 million.

2003/04 The government announced Child Care Saskatchewan, a plan to develop 1,200 new regulated child care spaces over four years to support labour market attachment, taking advantage of federal Early Learning and Child Care funding. Investment in 2003/04 included \$1.8 million for the development of 500 new regulated child care spaces, including capital funding to support new developments, a \$200,000 increase in Early Childhood Services grant funding and \$1 million increase in child care subsidies.

Effective June 2003, Early Childhood Services grants, subsidy eligibility levels and subsidy rates were increased.

Saskatchewan has been exploring and testing the use of Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales (ECERS-R) as a licensing tool to measure quality, aid planning for improvement and gauge progress beyond minimum standards, particularly in family child care.

April 1, 2004 The government embarked on the first phase of moving child care from central to regional delivery. The child care consultants began reporting to the five Community and Resources and Employment Regions. In the second phase, scheduled for April 1, 2005, the budgets will flow to the regions.

KEY PROVINCIAL ECEC ORGANIZATIONS

Saskatchewan Early Childhood Association
510 Cynthia Street
Saskatoon, SK S7L 7K7
Telephone: 306-975-0875
Facsimile: 306-975-0879

TEACHERS' ORGANIZATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS

Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation
2317 Arlington Ave.
Saskatoon, SK S7J 2H8
Telephone: 306-373-1660 or 1-800-667-7762
Facsimile: 306-374-1122
Email: stf@stf.sk.ca
Website: www.stf.sk.ca