



OVERVIEW

In Ontario, the Early Years and Child Care Division of the Ministry of Education is responsible for child care, kindergarten, and child and family programs.

On August 31, 2015, the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* replaced the former *Day Nurseries Act*, bringing in new child care legislation and accompanying regulations. A number of changes were made to funding, licensing, enforcement, and health and safety regulations.

Child care is delivered by a mixture of non-profit, for-profit, and publicly-operated programs with non-profit services predominating. Publicly-operated programs are delivered by municipal/regional entities known as Consolidated Municipal Service Managers and District Social Services Administration Boards (CMSMs/DSSABs) or service system managers and by First Nations and publicly funded school boards.

Regulated child care programs include full time centres, part time nursery schools, and home child care delivered by providers contracted with licensed home child care agencies.

Ontario is the sole province/territory to provide kindergarten to all four-year-olds. Kindergarten for four- and five-year olds is for a full school-day; attendance is not compulsory. It is delivered by publicly-funded “public” and Catholic, English and French schools and by privately-funded independent schools.

Child and family programs are intended to promote early learning, support parents and caregivers, and provide referrals to specialized services. At the end of 2017, Ontario funded four types of child and family programs: Ontario Early Years Centres, Parenting and Family Literacy Centres, Child Care Resource Centres, and Better Beginnings, Better Futures. These are delivered by over 150 lead agencies, school boards, CMSMs/DSSABs, and First Nations and will have a common mandate, identity, and governance structure under the new EarlyON brand beginning in 2018.

The provincial government sets overall policy, legislation, and regulations for child care. It licenses child care centres, nursery schools and home child care agencies, conducts inspections and investigates complaints about licensed and unlicensed child care. Child care funding is transferred by the provincial government to CMSMs and DSSABs for capital and general operating expenses, fee subsidies, special needs resourcing and wage enhancement grants.

Ontario is the only province/territory in which local government entities (CMSMs/DSSABs) are designated child care and early years service system managers. These play a mandated role in child care including contributing some funding,

local service management (coordination, administration and service planning), and public delivery of child care services. The 47 CMSMs and DDSABs allocate provincial funding to child care services through contractual agreements with non-profit organizations, for-profit operations, and municipalities that provide regulated child care.

The province also transfers funds to 77 First Nations and three transfer payment agencies to support child care and child and family programs in on-reserve Indigenous communities. Indigenous child care is licensed by the province.

In addition to providing full day kindergarten to all children who are 3.8 years of age by September of the Junior Kindergarten year and 4.8 by September of the Senior Kindergarten year (four and five-year-olds), school boards are also required to ensure provision of before-and after-school programs for four and five-year-olds in publicly funded schools where there is sufficient demand as defined by the school board and municipalities.

In September 2017, the province extended the requirement for providing before-and-after-school programming for children aged 6-12 years to all publicly-funded elementary schools for children up to Grade 6 where there is sufficient demand. In addition to licensed child care centres and programs operated by school boards, new regulations allow authorized (but not licensed) recreation and skill-building programs for 6-12 year olds to be eligible as service providers, provided they meet certain requirements. Third party programs (licensed child care centres or authorized recreational or skill building programs) must be operated by a not-for-profit organization or a municipality. For-profit organizations may only be considered if the school board has made reasonable efforts to find a not-for-profit or municipal operator but was unable to do so.

In 2016, the provincial government announced a substantial increase in child care funding to help 100,000 more children aged 0-4 access licensed child care over five years. Under the [Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework \(2017\)](#), the province set out a five-year, seven-point action plan to move towards affordable child care for all families.

The 2017 provincial budget announced expansion funding of \$200 million, which must be spent on increasing access or supporting additional fee subsidies for infants, toddlers and preschool-age children (aged 0-4 years, excluding children eligible to attend Junior Kindergarten).

On June 12, 2017, Ontario entered into the Canada-Ontario Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care with the Government of Canada to receive funds (\$144 million in each of the next three fiscal years) to be spent under the terms set out in the [Canada-Ontario Early Learning and Child Care Agreement](#).

The [2018 Ontario budget](#) announced that in 2020, Ontario would develop no-fee (free) full day child care to all children aged 2.5 years to Junior Kindergarten whose parents so choose together with a provincial wage scale for early childhood educators. The proposed policy change are based on a provincially-commissioned analysis of affordability and associated issues. A summary of this report is available [online](#).

PROVINCIAL CONTEXT

Please note that the following figures are rounded, while totals are based on exact figures and may therefore not equal the sum of the rounded figures shown here.

Number of children 0-12 (2016 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0	131,400
1	136,900
2	136,900
3	138,700
4	142,800
5	147,500
6	150,100
7	149,000
8	164,400
9	160,900
10	155,100
11	146,700
12	145,400
Total	1,905,800

Number of children 0-12 years (aggregated) (2016 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0-2	405,200
3-5	429,000
6-12	1071,600
Total	1905,800

Number of children 0-12 years with employed mothers (2016 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0	76,100
1	83,700
2	83,100
3	88,200
4	84,600
5	92,600
6	97,900
7	97,100
8	113,000
9	108,300
10	105,000
11	98,500
12	102,500
Total	1230,700

Number of children 0-12 with employed mothers (aggregated) (2016 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0-2	242,900
3-5	265,400
6-12	722,300
Total	1230,700

Number of children 0-14 identifying with an Indigenous group (2016)

Age	First Nations	Métis	Inuk (Inuit)	Multiple	Other	Total
0-4	19,930	7,250	370	440	480	28,470
5-9	21,620	7,955	410	560	575	31,120
10-14	20,040	8,570	385	460	500	29,955
Total	61,590	23,775	1,165	1,465	1,555	89,550

Workforce participation of mothers by age of youngest child (2016 rounded estimate)

Age of youngest child	Number of mothers	Participation rate (%)
0-2	247,900	69.4
3-5	196,800	76.6
6-15	574,800	81.9

Living arrangements by age of child by number of parents (2016)

Age	Living with two parents	Living with one parent	Lone mother	Lone father
0-4	582,140	107,025	92,890	14,130
5-9	599,155	147,375	123,695	23,680
10-14	578,265	164,975	136,190	28,790

Language/s spoken most often at home (2016)

Age of child	English	FrenchNon-official language	Multiple	
0-4	544,390	15,695	94,035	42,385
5-9	610,615	18,100	72,045	54,760
10-14	618,455	16,135	65,435	53,685
Total	1,773,465	49,935	231,515	150,825

Median after-tax income among families with children aged 0-5 years (2015) (\$)

Two parent families	Lone parent families	Male lone-parent families	Female lone-parent families
81,566	29,646	30,615	29,540

FAMILY LEAVE AND BENEFITS

ONTARIO LEAVE PROVISIONS

Maternity leave (Termed pregnancy leave in Ontario)

Up to seventeen weeks of job-protected leave (which may begin before the baby is born) is offered to all pregnant employees who have been employed for at least thirteen weeks, with two weeks' notice afforded the employer. The leave must be taken over an uninterrupted period of time. In some cases, the leave may be longer if the baby's due date is delayed.

Parental leave

As of December 3, 2017, both new parents have the right to take unpaid parental leave time off work. Birth mothers who take pregnancy leave are entitled to take up to 61 weeks of parental leave. All other new parents are entitled to take up to 63 weeks of parental leave. Employees may decide to take a shorter leave if they wish.

During this time, employees retain their right to keep their benefit plans and parental/pregnancy leave count towards length of employment, length of service and seniority. Employees cannot be penalized for taking pregnancy/parental leave. Employers are obliged to reinstate employees upon return from leave in the same position, unless the job no longer exists in which case a comparable job can be substituted. Leaves may be taken by both parents consecutively.

Adoption leave

Thirty-seven weeks.

Benefits

Maternity and parental leave provisions in Canada outside Quebec are divided between federal and provincial/territorial governments. Benefits are paid by the federal government under the [Employment Insurance program](#) (EI), while provincial /territorial provisions for job-protected leave are established in each jurisdiction's employment standards legislation.

EI is a contributory program; both employees and employers contribute. Under EI, the federal benefit covers 15 weeks of maternity leave for eligible employees who are birth mothers, up to 12 weeks prior to the expected date of birth, and up to 17 weeks following the date of birth. Until December 3, 2017, there was only one option for parental leave benefits: 35 weeks of paid leave taken over a 12 month period, paid at 55% of average

weekly insurable earnings, up to \$543/week (2017) for either eligible parent, including adoptive parents. This option is now known as the Standard Parental Benefit and will continue to be offered.

However, as of December 3, 2017, the federal government amended the Employment Insurance benefits offering an additional option for the parental leave portion, referred to as the Extended Parental Benefit, that allows 61 weeks of parental leave benefits, that can be taken over an 18 month period, paid at 33% of average weekly earnings up to \$326/week (2017) for either eligible parent including adoptive parents.

Note: For further details about the EI federal benefit, Quebec benefit and leave provisions, and provincial/territorial provisions for job-protected leave, see the FAMILY LEAVES AND BENEFITS section of this publication. Provincial/territorial provisions are up-to-date in this document up to December 31 2017.

KINDERGARTEN

PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR KINDERGARTEN

Ministry of Education
Student Achievement Division
10th Floor, Mowat Block
900 Bay St, Toronto, ON M7A 1L2
Telephone: 416-325-2929 or 1-800-387-5514

[Website](#)

LEGISLATION

Ontario Legislative Assembly. *Education Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2

KINDERGARTEN ENROLMENT

	JK	SK
English language	117,313	123,813
French language	8,314	8,625
Total EN and FR	118,144	132,438

Note: Enrolment figures are based on preliminary 2015-16 data. Includes full day programs in publicly-funded public and Roman Catholic schools/ school authorities and excludes private schools.

AGE ELIGIBILITY

Junior kindergarten: Four-years-old by December 31.
Senior kindergarten: Five-years-old by December 31.

COMPULSORY

Attendance is not compulsory. Most four and five-year-olds attend full day Junior and Senior Kindergarten.

HOURS

Full instructional school day. The length of the instructional program of each school day is not less than five hours a day excluding recesses. Every school year includes a minimum of 194 school days.

CLASS SIZE

Ontario introduced a class size cap for full day kindergarten beginning at 30 children in 2017-2018 and moving to 29 in 2018-2019. A minimum of 90% of kindergarten classes in a school board must meet these caps. The remaining up to 10% may exceed these caps up to 32 students only if one of the following applies: purpose-built accommodation is not available (this will be phased out after five years); a program might be negatively affected (e.g. French immersion); or compliance would increase kindergarten/Grade 1 splits. In addition, school boards must maintain a board-wide class size average for all full day kindergarten classes of not more than 26 students.

TEACHER AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR QUALIFICATIONS

Full day kindergarten classrooms are staffed by an educator team of two: a certified teacher registered with the Ontario College of Teachers (or other provincial/territorial certifying body) and a Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE) registered with the provincial College of Early Childhood Educators. Classes of 15 students or fewer are not required to have an RECE.

A kindergarten teacher must have a teaching certificate that requires an undergraduate degree and two years of teacher education with Primary/Junior specialization. Specific training in early childhood education is not required for a kindergarten teacher.

RECEs are required to have a two year diploma in early childhood education and be registered with the provincial College of Early Childhood Educators.

Note: See REGULATED CHILD CARE section for more information about Registered Early Childhood Educator classification.

CURRICULUM

[The Kindergarten Program 2016](#)

SPENDING ON KINDERGARTEN

Not available

K-12 per pupil spending (2014-2015) \$13,276

REGULATED CHILD CARE

PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILD CARE

Ministry of Education
Early Years and Child Care Division
24th Floor, Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2
Telephone: 416-314-8277 or 1-800-387-5514
[Website](#)

LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS

Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, S.O. 2014, c. 11, Sched. 1

O. Reg. 137/2015: General [<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/150137>]

O. Reg. 138/2015: Funding, Cost Sharing and Financial Assistance [<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/150138>]

UNREGULATED CHILD CARE

Unlicensed home child care

Unregulated child care arrangements, termed “unlicensed home child care” by the Ontario government, are not inspected unless a complaint is made. There are no stipulations regarding where it is provided, so it may or may not be in a provider’s home or home-type residence.

An unlicensed provider may not operate in more than one location however. The *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* includes provisions for compliance orders, protection orders, administrative penalties and prosecution of offences vis-a-vis unregulated child care.

Unlicensed providers must inform parents/guardians in writing that they are unlicensed. If an inspection or investigation is conducted, ministry staff verify compliance with the requirements. Inspections or visits to unregulated child care are made if there is a complaint.

Maximum number of children permitted

An unlicensed child care provider can care for a maximum of five children under the age of 13, as of August 31st, 2017. (Before that date, children 10 and up were not included in the maximum number of children.) No more than two children under the age of two may be cared for at any one time. All the provider's own children under the age of six who are on the premises are included in the total number of children.

If a provider's own four or five-year-old is attending publicly funded full day kindergarten or Grade 1, they are only included in the total number of children during summer vacation. The provider's own child does not need to be included during March break and professional activity days, as long as care is being provided between the hours of 6 a.m. and 7 p.m., there is a maximum of one child younger than age two, and the provider has not been convicted of an offence under the *Day Nurseries Act* or the *Child Care and Early Years Act*.

REGULATED CHILD CARE

Regulated child care is termed "licensed child care". Under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*, "licensed child care" means child care that:

- (a) is provided at a child care centre,
- (b) is home child care, or
- (c) is an in-home service.

Child care centres

Licensed child care centres include full day, part day (nursery school), and before-and after-school programs. Child care centres operate in a variety of locations including schools, community centres, workplaces, places of worship, commercial space such as store fronts and purpose built facilities.

Licensed home child care

Licensed home child care was previously referred to as "private home day care" in provincial legislation. Individual home child care providers are not licensed by the Ministry of Education but are contracted by licensed home child care agencies.

Six children under 13 years are now permitted in each home (previously five). Home providers may care for no more than two children under the age of two. Providers must include their own children under the age of six although the provider's four- and five-year-olds are excluded during the school year if the children are enrolled in full day kindergarten and the care meets the additional criteria set out under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* and Regulations. A transitional regulation is currently in place to exclude counting children in care aged 10 and up.

In-home services

An in-home service refers to child care provided for a child at her/his home, or at another place where residential care is provided for the child, and:

- there is an agreement between a home child care agency and the child care provider that ensures the agency's oversight of the provision of care;
- the home child care agency has been advised of all the children on the premises; and
- the child care meets any other criteria prescribed by the regulations.

Financial assistance is provided for in-home services under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*.

Note: The Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 defines "child" as a person who is younger than 13 years old. However, children with special needs who are in receipt of a service or received financial assistance before August 31, 2017 will be eligible to continue to receive assistance until they reach 18 years of age, provided that they meet other eligibility criteria that are unrelated to age (see Ontario Regulation 138/15).

Before and after-school programs for K-Grade 6 children

School boards are required to ensure provision of before-and after-school programs for four-and five-year-olds in publicly funded schools where there is sufficient demand as defined by the school board and municipalities.

Beginning in September 2017, school boards are required to ensure provision of before-and after-school programs for children 6-12-year-olds in all publicly funded elementary schools serving students to Grade 6 where there is sufficient demand.

Before- and after-school programs for four and five-year-olds must be operated by a school board or delivered by a licensed child care centre.

Before- and after-school programs serving children ages six and older may be operated by a school board or a third party (licensed child care centres or authorized recreational and skill building programs).

Under the *Child Care and Early Years Act*, 2014, authorized recreation and skill building programs are permitted to operate once a day for up to three hours (e.g. after-school). School boards may enter into agreements with authorized recreational and skill building programs to provide after-school care for children six and older.

Third party programs (licensed child care centres or authorized recreational or skill building programs) must be operated by a not-for-profit organization or a municipality. For-profit organizations may only be considered if the school board has made reasonable efforts to find a not-for-profit or municipal operator but was unable to do so.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The Ministry of Education provides funding to CMSMs, DSSABs and First Nations to plan, manage, and coordinate child care for their surrounding region, including Special Needs Resourcing funding to support the inclusion of children with disabilities in licensed child care settings. These include centres, home child care and approved recreation programs at no additional cost to parents/guardians.

Special Needs Resourcing funding is intended to:

- hire or acquire the services of a resource teacher/consultant or supplemental staff where necessary (including salary and benefits) to support the inclusion of children with special needs;
- provide training for staff working with children with special needs in regulated child care settings to support inclusion; and
- purchase or lease specialized/adaptive equipment and supplies to support children with special needs.

The ministry requires CMSMs and DSSABs to spend a minimum of 4.1% of their child care allocation on Special Needs Resourcing. All funding must be spent in accordance with ministry policies and guidelines. The ministry encourages service system managers to collaborate in the planning and provision of services and supports with Special Needs Resourcing service providers, licensees, parents/guardians, schools, and other partners.

Resource teachers/consultants may work with several children in multiple locations and can also provide professional learning experiences to individuals working with children with disabilities in licensed child care settings and approved recreation programs. The type and level of service can vary, depending on each child's needs, the local service model, and available resources.

Resource teachers/consultants typically provide a wide range of services and supports for children with disabilities and their families. These supports may include: providing child care staff with program accommodation and modification strategies and/or professional development; support for individualized support plans; developmental screens, referrals to community agencies; information and resources for parents; and obtaining specialized equipment as required.

While it is recommended that resource teachers/consultants hold, at minimum, a diploma in Early Childhood Education and have additional training/experience/education related to working with children with disabilities, they can be appointed without these qualifications by a centre director if they hold a standard first aid credential including an infant/child CPR certificate. Requirements for resource teachers/consultants directly employed by licensed child care operators are outlined in section 55 of O. Reg. 137/15, *Child Care and Early Years Act*, 2014.

Ontario Regulation 137/15 of the *Child Care and Early Years Act* also requires child care licensees to ensure that an up-to-date individualized support plan is in place for each child with additional needs who receives child care, and that the plan includes:

- a description of how the child care centre or home child care provider will support the child to function and participate in a meaningful, purposeful manner;
- a description of any supports or aids, adaptations or other modifications to the physical, social and learning environment; and
- instructions relating to the child's use of supports/aids.

The plan must be developed in consultation with the child (if appropriate for the child's age), a parent of the child with disabilities, and any regulated health care professional or other person working with the child who would be a helpful collaborator. A centre that includes children with disabilities must be structured so that the program accommodates the individualized support plan of each child and is developmentally appropriate while being inclusive of all children.

CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

[How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years](#) has been Ontario's official framework to guide programming and pedagogy in licensed child care since 2015. Programs are required to be consistent with its foundations and approaches. There are also specific regulations under the *Child Care and Early Years Act* that align with this document. *How Does Learning Happen?* is intended to be used by early years child and family programs as well.

Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT), released in 2007, is an additional resource about learning and development that includes guiding principles and a continuum of development for children from birth to eight years of age. Use of ELECT is not a provincial requirement for licensed child care programs.

INDIGENOUS CHILD CARE

CHILD CARE IN ON-RESERVE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Ontario funds and regulates child care in Indigenous communities on-reserve.

As of April 1, 2016, the province funded 77 First Nations and three transfer payment agencies to support on-reserve child care. This funding is primarily targeted towards fee subsidies, Special Needs Resourcing, Ontario Works Child Care, and health and safety funding in First Nation communities.

There were 57 First Nations communities operating a total of 76 licensed child care centres on-reserve with a licensed capacity of 3,169 spaces as of March 31, 2016.

There were also two licensed home child care agencies with 31 homes providing home child care on-reserve in Indigenous communities.

Ontario cost-shares Ontario Works regulated child care and fee subsidies with First Nations for licensed child care programs on an 80/20 basis. The province pays 100% of other child care expenses. First Nations manage the fee subsidy system in their communities.

Ontario recovers the majority of expenditures on regular fee subsidies from the federal government under the 1965 Indian Welfare Agreement but not Special Needs Resourcing or wage enhancement.

In addition to funding contributions under the 1965 Indian Welfare Agreement, the federal government funds two early years programs that serve distinct community needs. These are:

- First Nation and Inuit Child Care Initiative (FNICCI), which provides child care for parents/caregivers participating in federal job/employment programs.
- Aboriginal Head Start On-Reserve Program (AHSOR), which is intended to provide child development and school readiness programming in a culturally enriching context.

Note: The on-reserve licensed child care data reported above is from the 2015-16 fiscal year.

INDIGENOUS CHILD CARE OFF-RESERVE

Indigenous-led early years and child care programs are available to families off-reserve in a number of locations in Ontario. Examples of organizations providing culturally relevant early learning and child care programs include Friendship Centres and Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities (AHSUNC) providers. Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities is a federal government program.

A list of Ontario AHSUNC sites can be found [online](#).

SPACE STATISTICS

Number of regulated child care spaces

	Total (Full day centres and nursery schools)
Centre-based (March 31, 2016)	
Infants (0-18 months)	11,759
Toddlers (18-30 months)	41,211
Preschool age (2.5-5 years)	104,802
Kindergarten-age (3 years and 8 months-5 years (6-12 years))	85,014 146,500
Total centre-based spaces	389,286
Home child care (enrolment) (April 2015)	16,284
Total number of regulated spaces	405,570

Note: The figure for home child care represents the estimated enrolment as of April 1, 2015 based on a survey of licensed home child care agencies.

Note: Total number of regulated spaces includes licensed capacity of centres and enrolment in licensed home child care.

Number of children receiving services through Special Needs Resourcing Funding in regulated child care

Not available

Children receiving fee subsidies (2016)

78,515

Note: The number of children receiving fee subsidies is the average number of children served monthly between January and December 2015. Previous ECEC in Canada reports have reported this figure as the cumulative total number of children subsidized throughout the year. Thus, the above figure is lower than the numbers reported in previous years but can be used as comparable to subsidy figures in other jurisdictions.

Number of regulated child care programs (2016)

Centre-based (full and part day)	
Total number of child care centres	5,276
Number of school-based child care centres (Included in total centres)	2,782
Home child care (2017)	
Number of home child care agencies	122
Number of regulated child care homes	
Active homes	3,765
Inactive homes	402

Note: The total includes community-based and school-based licensed child care centres, all age groups.

Note: The number of school-based centres includes only centres located in publicly funded schools.

Note: A home child care provider who has a contract/agreement with an agency, and may or may not have children enrolled currently, is considered active. A home child care provider who temporarily does not have a current contract/agreement with the agency and is not accepting children is considered inactive.

Sponsorship of regulated child care (2016)

Full and part time regulated centre-based spaces	
Publicly-operated	5,305
Non-profit	300,012
For-profit	83,969
Regulated home child care	
Non-profit	108
For-profit	14

Note: Publicly-operated spaces are those delivered by CMSMS/DSSABs

Note: Spaces delivered by First Nations are included in the non-profit number.

Note: The figures for non-profit home child care include publicly-operated home child care agencies and homes.

Parent fees

Ontario does not set parent fees and the provincial government did not collect fee information in 2016. In 2017, the province began to collect fee information annually from licensed child care centres and home child care agencies; these data were also collected in 2015.

Based on a provincial government 2015 survey of licensed child care centres and home child care agencies in Ontario, full time daily fees were reported as follows:

Daily fees in licensed child care centres and regulated home child care (2015)

Age	Child care centres median fee/day and range	Home child care median fee/day and range
Infant	\$57 (35-107)	\$42 (31-51)
Toddler	\$48 (32-80)	\$41 (24-50)
Preschool	\$42 (25-66)	\$39 (29-46)
Kindergarten	\$37 (20-56)	\$36 (21-45)
Kindergarten before and after-school	\$23 (15-36)	\$24 (14-34)
Before and after school	\$20 (14-30)	\$22 (11-34)

Source: Licensed Child Care Survey, Ministry of Education, 2015

In 2016, a national survey of child care fees in Canada's large cities included the following Ontario cities:

City	Median monthly infant fee	Median monthly toddler fee	Median Monthly pre-schooler fee
Windsor	\$977	\$608	\$586
London	\$1,128	\$1,075	\$977
Kitchener	\$1,320	\$1,140	\$1,031
Hamilton	\$1,150	\$1,020	\$900
Brampton	\$994	\$1,085	\$955
Mississauga	\$1,330	\$1,111	\$986
Vaughan	\$1,363	\$1,130	\$1,005
Toronto	\$1,649	\$1,375	\$1,150
Markham	\$1,454	\$1,137	\$996
Ottawa	\$990	\$1,074	\$990

Note: These median monthly figures include fees from centre-based child care and home child care.

Note: Despite some differences in data collection and analysis, the 2015 ministry data is generally consistent with the findings from the 2016 national survey of large cities that included a number of Ontario cities.

STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

REGULATED CENTRES

The new *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* came into effect on August 31, 2015, replacing the *Day Nurseries Act* as the legislation governing the provision of child care in Ontario. The Ministry of Education phased in implementation of new regulations; some but not all regulations previously in the *Day Nurseries Act* were rewritten.

The new *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* and its regulations can be found online at: <http://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/14c11>

Maximum centre size:	None	
Maximum staff/child ratios and group size		
Age group	Staff: child ratios	Max. group sizes
Infant: Under 18 months	3:10	10
Toddler: 18 mths to 30 mths	1:5	15
Preschooler: 30 mths to 6 yrs	1:8	24
Kindergarten-age: 44 mths to 68 mths	1:13	26

Primary/junior school-age:		
68 mths to 13 yrs	1:15	30
Junior school-age: 9 yrs to 13 yrs	1:20	20

Requirements in child care centres for children with special needs

Age	Staff: child ratios	Max. number of children	Proportion of qualified employees
Two years or older to younger than six years	1:4	4	1/1
Six years or older to younger than 13 years	1:3	3	1/1

Requirements in child care centres for family age grouping

As of September 1, 2017, a new licensed age group—family age grouping (i.e., mixed age groups) for children 0–12 years was introduced for licensed child care centres.

Age	Staff: child ratios
< 12 months	1:3
12 months < than 24 months	1:4
24 months < than 13 years	1:8

If a licensed toddler or preschool group (a) includes no more than 20% of children from a younger age category, the above requirements set out for toddlers or preschool children apply. If it (b) includes more than 20% children from a younger age category, the requirements set out for the youngest child in the group apply.

In a licensed kindergarten-age group, if 25% of children are three years old or turning four that school year, the group can operate under regulations for kindergarten-age. In a licensed primary/junior group, if no more than 25% are in the kindergarten age category, the group can abide by primary/junior regulations for ratios and maximum group sizes. Finally, in a licensed junior school-age group, up to 25% of children can be between five and nine years of age and be in compliance with the regulations.

Note: Age categories referred to with reference to family age grouping can be found in the table above. Maximum staff/child ratios and group sizes.

Note: The Ministry of Education may give approval for a child care centre to use mixed age grouping for any licensed age group.

The College of Early Childhood Educators

The College of Early Childhood Educators is a self-regulatory body that has the statutory mandate to govern and regulate the profession of early childhood education in Ontario. Individuals with an ECE diploma or equivalent working within the scope of practice in Ontario are required to be members of the college. Registration with the College of Early Childhood Educators requires a two year diploma in early childhood education.

Centre staff qualification requirements

A child care centre supervisor must be either a member in good standing of the College of Early Childhood Educators who a) has at least two years of experience providing licensed child care and b) is approved by a Ministry of Education director or, in the opinion of a Ministry of Education director, is capable of planning and directing the program of a child care centre, being in charge of children, and overseeing staff.

One staff person with each group of children must either be a member in good standing with the College of Early Childhood Educators (i.e. listed as such on the College of Early Childhood Educators' public register) or otherwise be approved by a Ministry of Education director. Staff who work in programs serving children 9-12 years of age may be accepted with a diploma in child and youth work, a diploma or degree in leisure and recreation, or be a member in good standing with the Ontario College of Teachers.

In the case where the group of children is a licensed junior school-age or primary/junior group that includes only children who are junior school-age, staff may also be accepted with a diploma in child and youth work, a diploma or degree in leisure and recreation, or be a member in good standing with the Ontario College of Teachers. Staff with qualifications other than an ECE (e.g. diploma or degree in recreation and leisure or child and youth work or a teacher who is a member of the Ontario College of Teachers) may work in programs serving children 9-12 years.

LICENSED HOME CHILD CARE

Licensed home child care is delivered in the provider's home and is monitored by a licensed home child care agency according to the regulations set out by the Ministry of Education under the *Child Care and Early Years Act* 2014. Neither the provider nor the home is licensed.

Employees carrying out the monitoring on behalf of the agency are referred to as home child care visitors. Their responsibilities include inspecting approved homes according to provincial regulations.

Home visitors must be registered members in good standing with the College of Early Childhood Educators, have a minimum two years of experience working with children, and be approved by a Ministry director. The qualification requirement may be waived if, in the opinion of the director, the home child care visitor is capable of providing support and supervision at a home child care premise.

Model of organization

Agency model

Licensing, monitoring and enforcement

A home visitor is required to support providers and conduct unannounced quarterly visits to every home child care provider, and complete the Ministry Inspection Checklist. A home visitor must also follow up on non-compliances, serious occurrences and complaints.

The agency is responsible for ensuring that provincial requirements for care are met, according to the *Child Care and Early Years Act*.

At least once per year, the Ministry of Education inspects licensed home child care agencies and some home child care locations to ensure the agency is in compliance with the *Child Care and Early Years Act*, 2014 and its regulations.

After August 2016, there is no longer a cap on the number of homes (25) a home child care visitor is allowed to have in a caseload.

Home child care provider qualification requirements

Home child care providers are not required under the CCEYA to have specific training or educational qualifications to enter into an agreement with a licensed home child care agency.

Home child care providers are defined as independent contractors who have an agreement with a licensed home child care agency for the agency's oversight.

In order to enter into an agreement, providers:

- must be at least 18 years old;
- cannot have been convicted of an offence under the CCEYA;
- cannot have been convicted of any of the prescribed offences under the Criminal Code as detailed in the CCEYA (ex., sexual interference, child pornography);
- cannot have had his/her membership revoked under the *Early Childhood Educators Act*, *Ontario College of Teachers Act* or *Social Work and Social Service Work Act*;
- must have undergone health assessment and public health-recommended immunizations; and
- must have valid certification in standard first aid, including infant and child CPR.

The provider and anyone else normally resident in the home child care environment or regularly on the premises when children are present are required to have a Vulnerable Sector (police) Check.

MUNICIPAL ROLE

In Ontario, local government entities play several key roles in child care. Forty-seven local Consolidated Municipal Service Managers and District Social Services Administration Boards (CMSMs and DSSABs), designated as local service system managers by the Ontario government are responsible for planning and managing licensed child care services at the local level.

The Ministry of Education allocates provincial funds to the CMSMs and DSSABs using a formula introduced in 2013. CMSMs/DSSABs determine how to use child care funding within their community.

The allocations to CMSMs/ DSSABs are based on publicly available data largely drawn from Statistics Canada such as child population, Low-Income Cut-Off, cost-of-living indicators, Indigenous population data, French speaking populations and measures related to rural and remote communities. (See the 2016 Child Care Funding Formula Technical Paper at https://efis.fma.csc.gov.on.ca/faab/Memos/CC2016/EYCC4_EN_attach.pdf).

The Ontario Child Care and Child and Family Service Management and Funding Guideline outlines the funding and the accountability requirements of local service system managers: (See the Guideline at <https://efis.fma.csc.gov.on.ca/faab/CCGuidelines.htm>, specifying, for example, the local service planning process mandated by Ontario).

Local service system managers are required to contribute a share of up to 20% of funds to regulated child care. Some CMSMs and DDSABs contribute additional municipal funds beyond the 20% requirement.

TYPES OF FUNDING

Fee subsidies

Fee subsidies are locally managed and administered by municipalities (CMSMs and DDSABs).

All regulated services can receive subsidized children unless the local service system manager stipulates otherwise. Some municipalities set their own criteria that services must meet to receive subsidized children such as minimum quality ratings, meeting identified targets such as a salary scale, or having non-profit incorporation.

Family eligibility for fee subsidies is determined using a provincial income test that takes into account the family's total child care costs and family income; there is no upper income cut-off. (See the [City of Toronto's fee subsidy calculator](#), which is applicable Ontario-wide). The amount a subsidized family is required to pay is determined on a whole family basis, not per child.

Eligibility does not guarantee the parent a subsidy, as the supply of subsidies is linked both to availability of funding and securing a licensed space. There may be long CMSM/ DDSAB waiting lists for fee subsidies.

Child care services must have a service contract with the CMSM/DDSAB (sometimes called a "purchase of service agreement") to receive subsidized children. All types of child care services are eligible for receiving subsidized children unless the CMSM/CDDSAB specifies otherwise.

There are no set subsidy rates that determine how much a given service receives per child; Ontario permits subsidization up to the full cost of the space, as determined by the service. However, some municipalities set maximum subsidies below the full cost of a space, while some pay "actual costs" based on services' budgets.

One-time funding

Capital funding

To support the government's 2016 commitment to create access to licensed child care for 100,000 more children aged 0 to 4-years-old over the next five years, Ontario has committed to spending up to \$1.6 billion in capital funding for child care builds and retrofits to support the creation of licensed child care spaces in schools, the broader public sector, and community locations for children aged 0 to 4 years.

For-profit services are not eligible for capital funding in Ontario.

Recurring funding

Recurring funding in Ontario is primarily designated as "operating funding". This may include funds for general operating expenses, Special Needs Resourcing, funds for salaries and benefits and other operating costs. Municipalities determine how much of the funds transferred to them by the province get allocated to operating funding from their total budget.

In this funding envelope, the only category at this time that has specifications attached by the provincial government is Special Needs Resourcing. Municipalities must spend 4.1% of their allocation for this purpose.

In addition to these provincial funds transferred to CMSMs and DDSABs, in 2015, Ontario introduced a new Wage Enhancement/Home Child Care Enhancement Grant. Under this program, which is administered by municipalities separately from operating funding, all eligible child care staff/caregivers in regulated settings may receive the wage increase, now \$2/hour and \$20/day for home child care providers. All licensed child care centres and home child care agencies including those that opened in the previous year are eligible for Wage Enhancement/Home Child Care Enhancement Grant funding, including non-profit, for-profit, and publicly operated programs.

Directors/supervisors must apply for the grant on behalf of their staff. In 2016, 92% of licensed child care centres applied for this wage enhancement funding and agencies representing 60% of licensed home child care providers applied for the Home Child Care Enhancement Grant.

Note: The wage enhancement funding does not include those RECEs working under the Early ON umbrella of services.

PROVINCIAL ALLOCATIONS FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE (2015-2016)

Fee subsidies	\$739,911,506
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One-time funding

Capital for communities	\$8,274,822
Capital for schools	\$828,645
French language schools	\$4,321,084
Total one-time funding	\$13,424,551

Recurring funding

Operating funding	\$305,597,980
Special Needs Resourcing	\$104,374,241
Total recurring funding	\$409,972,221

Other funding for regulated child care:

Small Water Works, Territory Without Municipal Organization, and Qualifications Upgrade Program	\$6,476,621
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Total regulated child care	\$1,169,784,899
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Note: Re: all operating and Capital for communities funding: The reported expenditures are an estimate of the provincial portion of the CMSM/DSSAB expenditures for the 2015-16 fiscal year.

Note: The capital for schools amount represents school boards actual expenditures per Public Accounts for the 2015-16 fiscal year.

Note: French language schools information is from Official Languages in Education 2015-16 Actuals.

Note: The child care fee subsidies figure is an approximate figure as the amount of fee subsidy funding provided to each CMSM/DSSAB is not possible to determine due to the introduction of flexible reporting under the child care funding formula. The fiscal year figure was obtained by the ministry by taking 75% of CMSM/DSSAB 2015 Financial Statement entitlement and 25% of the 2016 Revised Estimates submissions (which includes both actuals and projections).

Note: Further details about Ontario's spending for regulated child care can be found at https://efis.fma.csc.gov.on.ca/faab/CCMemos_2017.htm
