



Report summary
**Canada country background report –
Quality in early childhood education
and care**

2024



Report summary: Canada country background report

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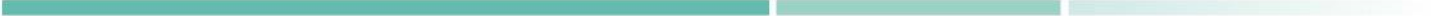
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Author of the full report: Employment and Social Development Canada

Why this study

The 2021 Canada Country Background Report looks at Canadian policies at all levels of government that aim to improve process quality in early childhood education and care (ECEC).

Process quality is a key factor in children’s development. It includes children’s daily social, emotional, physical, and instructional interactions with staff and peers. It may improve the quality of ECEC services more than structural factors such as group size, child to staff ratios or space requirements.

What we did

This report was prepared as part of our participation in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) 2019 policy review project, Quality beyond Regulations in ECEC. This project is an international comparative review of process quality in ECEC. EDSC and the following provinces participated in this project:

- Nova Scotia
- New Brunswick
- Quebec, and
- Alberta

We collected the initial data for the report in 2019 through a policy questionnaire. The data and content for the report was updated in 2020 and early 2021 by working with:

- policy experts from Canada’s 13 provinces and territories
- the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC)
- Canada’s Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Data and Research Expert Panel

The information collected for the reports focuses on:

- early learning curriculum frameworks
- pedagogical practices
- policies, programs, and initiatives to support workforce development

What we found

The report gives information and data on the quality of ECEC in Canada, with a focus on 4 areas:

- history of ECEC quality development
- the policy context of ECEC in Canada as of early 2021
- curriculum and pedagogy
- workforce development

The findings show that:

- federal
- provincial, and
- territorial governments

continue to work to improve ECEC quality through developments in curriculum frameworks and teaching methods, staff training, workforce conditions and quality monitoring.

There is more recognition of the connection between early childhood education and primary education. Efforts to connect ECEC and primary education curriculum (K-3) are increasing.

Challenges remain, and improvements to quality monitoring are needed to better understand and address these challenges.

What it means

The project highlights the need to address data gaps and support quality monitoring in ELCC in Canada.

The results of the policy review will be used to support the Government of Canada's commitment to ensuring that all Canadian families have access to high-quality, affordable, and inclusive early learning and child care.

Contact us

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