



Report summary

**Use of child care by families with
multiple children**



2024



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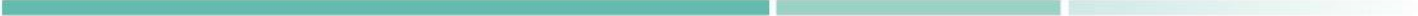
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Official title of the full report: Use of child care by families with multiple children

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Why this study

The goals of this study are:

- to characterize the use of child care arrangements by parents with two or more children
- to identify predictors of different combinations of arrangements for these parents
- to describe how the use of child care for multiple children may influence child care expense claims

In short, this study provides a better understanding of the arrangements families have for their children.

What we did

The study uses data from the 2017 General Social Survey (GSS), Family Cycle. The target sample included:

- all non-institutionalized persons aged 15 and older
- living in the 10 provinces of Canada, and
- parents of at least 2 children from 0 to 12 years of age


The eligible sample size was 2,023. This sample may not be representative of the Canadian population of parents with more than one child. However, it provided information on the child care arrangements for families with multiple children.

The data was collected from February to November 2017 via computer-assisted telephone interview. The participants responded to questions concerning:

- the use of child care in the last year
- how often do they use child care
- the main type of child care arrangements
- the number and ages of their children, and
- school attendance for children of 3 to 6 years old

The type of child care settings included:

- care by a relative in the children's home
- care by a nanny
- care in a home daycare

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- in a daycare or preschool centre, and
 - others (including no child care)

Analyses predicted the likelihood of using:

- no regular child care (including no child care or only irregular/occasional)
- regular child care for only one child
- regular care for two or more children in the same type of child care, and
- combination of two or more different types of child care arrangements

What we found

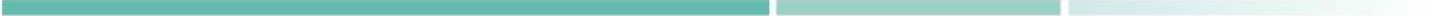
Having children in different age groups was the main factor when deciding child care arrangements. The results indicated:

- fewer than 10% of Canadian families with multiple children rely on multiple different child care arrangements
- most parents with multiple children under 13 years do not use regular child care. Using no regular child care was also more likely among respondents living in rural areas
- the strongest predictor of using multiple different arrangements was having children in different age groups (for example, at least one child 0 to 4 and one child 5 to 12)
- families with 3 or more children as well as families with a mix of children in school and not in school were more likely to use multiple different types of child care
- when age-appropriate, around 20% of families like to use the same type of arrangement for all children. Members of visible minority population groups were more likely to use the same type of arrangement for all children

Results were also provided for the use of the child care tax credit. 36% of those residing in Quebec claimed child care expenses on their taxes, compared to 19% of those living in the rest of Canada. While parents in Quebec were more likely than their counterparts in the rest of Canada to claim child care expenses, parents in Quebec claimed, on average, lower amounts (\$4,256 versus \$6,985).

What it means

This study shows that the use of multiple child care arrangements is more common among families with 3 or more children. It also provides an important understanding of how parents with children as well as families with a mix of children of different ages cope with differing child care demands. While varying child care requirements affect a minority of Canadians, there are still key differences that help predict when different child care services are used. From a policy perspective, these findings suggest that a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to supporting child care is



not sufficient to address all needs. These data provide important information that can assist in designing a child care system for all Canadians.

Contact us

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