

Study: Early learning and child care for children aged 0 to 5 years: A provincial and territorial portrait

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Child care has an economic impact on families because non-parental child care is a necessity for some parents to work or study. In 2019, approximately 60% of children aged 0 to 5 years were participating in a formal or informal type of child care arrangement. According to findings from the Survey on Early Learning and Child Care Arrangements (SELCCA), participation rates vary across Canada.

A new study released today in *Economic Insights* examines the differences in participation rates across the provinces and territories, which regulate early learning and child care. Results suggest that children living in Quebec and Prince Edward Island were more likely to be in a formal or informal child care arrangement than children in the other provinces or territories. By comparison, children living in Nunavut, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and Alberta were less likely to participate in early learning and child care.

Differences in type of child care were also noted between provinces/territories. For example, approximately 43% of children aged 0 to 5 participating in child care in Newfoundland and Labrador were in a daycare centre or preschool, compared with 73% in Yukon. These two regions also had the highest and second lowest rates of participation in care by a relative, at 38% in Newfoundland and Labrador and 19% in Yukon.

More than half (64%) of parents/guardians who had a child in child care reported that they had no difficulty finding some type of early learning and child care arrangement (formal or informal), although 36% did report difficulties. Again, some differences were found between the provinces and territories, ranging from 31% of parents/guardians in Quebec to 52% of parents/guardians in Manitoba who reported that they had difficulties finding child care.

Child care is regulated at the provincial and territorial level and, as such, some differences were noted in terms of child care participation and reported challenges. Differences were particularly notable for Quebec, which has policies on the provision of subsidized child care.

The current report highlights provincial and territorial information on child care use and the challenges and reasons for not using child care. Further analysis of the SELCCA data will help fill additional gaps in child care information such as differences in child care use in population centres compared with rural areas.

Note to readers

On April 10, 2019, results from the 2019 Survey on Early Learning and Child Care Arrangements (SELCCA) were released in *The Daily*. The survey provides a current snapshot of early child care usage in Canada, and can be used to better understand the reasons why families choose to use or not use different types of child care arrangements.

The SELCCA was conducted as part of the Rapid Stats program offered by Statistics Canada's Centre for Social Data Integration and Development to rapidly respond to pressing data needs.



Available tables: [42-10-0004-01](#) to [42-10-0010-01](#) .

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [5287](#).

The research article "[Early Learning and Child Care for Children aged 0 to 5 years: A Provincial/Territorial Portrait](#)" part of *Economic Insights* ([11-626-X](#)), is now available.

For more information, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca).

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