

Survey on Early Learning and Child Care Arrangements - Children with Long-term Conditions and Disabilities, 2023

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This release is available in audio. The video "[Results from the Survey on Early Learning and Child Care Arrangements: Children with Long-term Conditions and Disabilities, American Sign Language](#)," is also available.

Families of children with long-term conditions or disabilities may face unique challenges in finding child care and difficulties within their care arrangements. The first ever Survey on Early Learning and Child Care Arrangements - Children with Long-term Conditions and Disabilities (SELCCA-CLCD) provides insight into the child care experiences of children with long-term conditions or disabilities.

Access to [quality child care](#) is an important concern for many parents in Canada. [Budget 2021](#) included a focus on affordable, accessible and high-quality child care, with specific support outlined for accessible child care spaces.

Among children with long-term conditions or disabilities in child care, almost two-thirds use centre-based child care as their main child care arrangement

In 2023, just over 6 in 10 children with long-term conditions or disabilities aged 0 to 5 years (62%) were in child care. In terms of type of arrangement, the most common type used by children with long-term conditions or disabilities in child care was centre-based child care (69%), followed by care by a relative other than a parent (24%) and home-based child care (12%).

While the SELCCA-CLCD does not allow for comparisons of child care use between children with and without long-term conditions or disabilities, other data sources, such as the Canadian Survey of Early Learning and Child Care (CSELCC), look at child care arrangements for all children aged 5 years and younger. According to the [CSELCC](#), in 2023, 56% of all children aged 0 to 5 years were in child care. [Among all children in care](#), 61% attended centre-based child care, 21% were cared for by a relative other than a parent and 16% were in home-based child care.

Over one-third of children who receive support services or therapies get them in child care

Children with long-term conditions or disabilities may require support services or therapies for their condition. In 2023, 56% of children with long-term conditions or disabilities in child care received at least one support service or therapy in the past three months at their child care arrangement or elsewhere.

Among children who received support services or therapies in the past three months in 2023, over one-third (35%) received at least some of these services within child care. For those who received occupational therapy, 36% received it within their care arrangement, while for those who received speech and language therapy, 30% received it within their care arrangement.

Aside from formal services and therapies, children with long-term conditions or disabilities may require extra support with certain activities while in child care compared with most children of the same age. Overall, 61% of children in child care with long-term conditions or disabilities needed at least one type of extra support at their child care in 2023. The most commonly reported types of extra support needed were for social interactions (32%), managing behaviour (30%), learning (30%) and communicating (29%).



In 2023, the majority of parents reported they agreed that their care arrangement met their child's needs for extra support for social interactions (71%), behaviour (71%), learning (76%) or communicating (65%). Additionally, 18% of children needed support with their medical needs, and most (80%) of those parents agreed that these needs were being met.

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Note to readers

The 2023 Survey on Early Learning and Child Care Arrangements - Children with Long-term Conditions and Disabilities provides the first snapshot of early child care experiences of children with long-term conditions or disabilities. The data were collected from April 4 to June 30, 2023.

The target population was children who may have one or more long-term conditions or disabilities across the provinces of Canada who are younger than 6 years old (as of June 30, 2023). The territories were not included in this survey. Children living in institutions or on reserve were excluded from the target population. Information was obtained from the parent, guardian or person who was knowledgeable about the child's care arrangements. The majority (78%) of respondents were women.

In the survey, multiple screening questions were used to establish if the target child experienced difficulties in daily living or had any long-term conditions or disabilities. Only difficulties or long-term conditions that have lasted or are expected to last for six months or more were considered. This consisted of six questions on difficulties in activities of daily living, one question on the presence of a long-term condition, two questions about limitations due to a health problem, and one question on the presence of different disability types. Respondents must have indicated the child had difficulty in daily living in at least one area, a long-term condition, or a disability, or some form of limitation to be considered within the scope of the survey.

The findings from the 2023 survey include any form of child care, either licensed or unlicensed, for children aged 5 years and younger provided by someone other than a parent. Examples include centre-based facilities, in-home care by a relative or non-relative, as well as before- or after-school programs. Occasional babysitting and kindergarten were not considered child care for purposes of this survey.

Note that the survey does not allow for comparisons of use of child care between children with and without long-term conditions or disabilities.

Survey sampling weights were applied to render the analyses representative of Canadian children aged 5 years and younger living in the provinces. Bootstrap weights were also applied when testing for significant differences ($p < 0.05$) to account for the complex survey design.

Notes on terminology and definitions:

- The term "parents" refers to the parent, guardian or person who was knowledgeable about the child's care arrangements.
- The terms "centre-based care" and "centre" include daycares, preschools and centres de la petite enfance (child care centres).

Information and products released to date can be found on the [Early Learning and Child Care Information Hub](#).

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Available tables: [42-10-0056-01](#) to [42-10-0062-01](#) .

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [5390](#).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).