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The Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2017) sets parameters to work towards a shared vision of high-quality, accessible, flexible, inclusive and **affordable** child care in Canada. As part of this vision, Budget 2021 specified two goals related to child care fees and expenses: (1) a 50% reduction in average fees for regulated early learning and child care (ELCC) in all provinces outside Quebec, to be delivered before or by the end of 2022, and (2) an average fee of \$10 a day by 2026 for all regulated child care spaces in Canada.

Several national surveys have collected information to understand the amount paid (or charged) for child care by type of child care (e.g., child care centre, family child care home) and province or territory of residence. This information can be reported by providers (that is, what was **charged** for child care) or by parents (what was **paid** for child care).

In early 2022, the Canadian Survey on the Provision of Child Care Services was conducted by Statistics Canada. This survey included questions on the daily fee (including subsidies) charged by child care providers in Canada. Providers reported charging between \$20 and \$58 per day depending on the province or territory, type of provider (centre-based, licensed home-based, unlicensed home-based), and child age group. These estimates are available on the Statistics Canada website (Statistics Canada, 2023), but reflect early 2022 and therefore are from before the full implementation of the Canada-wide system for child care. Information is also available from provincial and territorial administrative sources (Beach et al., 2023), or from other survey data (Macdonald & Friendly, 2022).

Although several national surveys have collected information on child care expenses from the parent perspective, information on the amount parents pay out of pocket per child has been limited. The most recently published national estimates are from the General Social Survey – Family (Sinha, 2014) and suggested that in 2011, the monthly per-child expense of full-time care for children aged 4 and younger ranged from \$152 in Quebec to \$677 in Ontario. One in eight parents living outside Quebec reported no expense for full-time care for their child aged 4 and younger. More recent information is necessary given the rapidly changing landscape for child care in Canada.

The Survey on Early Learning and Child Care Arrangements (SELCCA) reflects the most recent source of data from which to examine child care expenses as reported by parents, with the latest survey conducted in January to February 2022. The SELCCA collects data on the ELCC arrangements used for children aged 0 to 5 years (Statistics Canada, 2022). Respondents (usually parents or legal guardians) report how much they usually pay (in dollars per day, week or month) directly to the child care provider (net of subsidies) for each type of child care arrangement (e.g., daycare centre, family child care home) used by the target child in the past three months.¹ The survey also collects complementary information on the number of hours and number of days per week the child usually spends in each type of arrangement, as well as the child's main child care arrangement (if using more than one). National, provincial and territorial information is now available to describe the mean and median parental expenses for child care for children ages 0 to 5 in 2019, 2020 and 2022 (Table 42-10-0053-01).

1. Reported expenses were extrapolated to report values daily, monthly and annually.

On average, parents paid \$7,790 per year for the main full-time child care arrangement for their 0- to 5-year-old child in 2022²

The amount parents paid for their child's main child care arrangement varied by age of child, hours in care and type of child care arrangement. In early 2022, parents reported paying an average of \$7,790 per year for the main full-time (30 or more hours per week) child care arrangement for their 0- to 5-year-old (\$9,616 excluding Quebec).³ When considering children who were in any number of hours of care per week (including part-time care), parents paid an average of \$6,565 in 2022 (\$7,294 excluding Quebec). This equates to an average of \$649 per month for full-time care (\$547 per month when including part-time child care), or \$31 per day (\$29 per day when including part-time child care).

Parents paid more for a 0- to 3-year-old's main child care arrangement than a 4- to 5-year-old's main child care arrangement. In early 2022, parents paid an average of \$8,146 per year for their 0- to 3-year-old's main full-time child care arrangement (\$679 monthly, \$32 daily) compared with an average of \$6,880 for 4- to 5-year-olds in full-time child care (\$573 monthly, \$27 daily).

Parents paid the most for care by a non-relative in the child's home

The amount that parents paid for their child's main child care arrangement varied by type of arrangement. In early 2022, for a 0- to 5-year-old child whose main child care arrangement was full-time **centre-based child care**, parents paid an average of \$7,957 per year (\$663 per month, \$31 per day). For a child whose main child care arrangement was a **family child care home**, parents paid an average of \$7,042 per year for a 0- to 5-year-old child attending full time (\$587 per month, \$29 per day) in early 2022. For a 0- to 5-year-old child whose main child care arrangement was full-time **care by a non-relative in the child's home** (i.e., a nanny), parents paid an average of \$26,669^E per year (\$2,222^E per month, \$106^E per day) in early 2022. Lastly, on average, for a child whose main child care arrangement was full-time care by a relative other than a parent, parents paid an average of \$3,517 per year (\$293 per month, \$15 per day) in early 2022. The average expense for care by a relative was likely lower because many parents reported no expenses for this type of care (59% of children whose main type of child care was full-time care by a relative had no parental child care expenses for this type of care in 2022).

Limitations

The SELCCA has several limitations in terms of reporting estimates of parental child care expenses. First, it is unknown whether the type of child care attended by the child is licensed or unlicensed in 2022 (and was parent-reported in 2019 and 2020), nor is it possible to ascertain whether the specific child care provider is part of the Canada-wide ELCC system (i.e., "opted in" to the program). The estimates presented reflect only the amount parents paid for their child's main child care type. For children who attended more than one type of child care (16% of children aged 0 to 5 attending child care), these estimates do not reflect parents' total child care expenses for that child. Lastly, these estimates do not

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2. All estimates include reported expenses of zero dollars. Any cases missing either the time frame of expenses reported (i.e., daily, weekly, monthly) or the dollar value were excluded (about 2%). Cases missing the time frame but with a reported expense of zero were included.
 3. To provide national estimates, the estimates presented in this report generally include Quebec. However, Quebec has had its own ELCC system since 1997 with a reduced parental contribution. Estimates for Canada without Quebec are available on the Early Learning and Child Care Information Hub.

consider the effect of any tax credits (such as the Ontario Child Care Tax Credit or the Child Care Expense Deduction) on parents' child care expenses.

Conclusion

These results provide recent estimates of how much parents report paying for their 0- to 5-year-old child's main child care arrangement in early 2022. On average, parents paid between \$3,517 (for care by a family member other than a parent) and \$26,669 (for care by a non-relative in the child's home) per year for full-time child care for their 0- to 5-year-old child. Estimates varied greatly depending on the type of care, the age of the child and whether the child was attending child care full time. The time frame is before the full implementation of the Canada-wide system of child care by the provinces and territories; information reflects January to February 2022.⁴ More information is available on the Early Learning and Child Care Information Hub, including estimates for 2019, 2020 and 2022 at the national level, as well as for the provinces and territories. Information is available for three age groups of children—0- to 5-year-olds, 0- to 3-year-olds and 4- to 5-year-olds—and for all types of child care, as well as by main type of child care arrangement.

4. The Canada-wide ELCC agreements signed between the provinces and territories and the Government of Canada were signed from July 7, 2021 (British Columbia) to March 28, 2022 (Ontario), with each agreement including an action plan that applies to the period from 2021 to 2023.

Table 1
Mean parental child care expenses for child's main child care arrangement, children aged 0 to 5 years, Canada, January and February 2022¹

	Annual		Monthly		Daily	
	Total (any number of hours per week in main type of care)	Full-time (30 or more hours per week in main type of care)	Total (any number of hours per week in main type of care)	Full-time (30 or more hours per week in main type of care)	Total (any number of hours per week in main type of care)	Full-time (30 or more hours per week in main type of care)
dollars (\$)						
0- to 5-year-olds						
All child care types	6,565	7,790	547	649	29	31
Daycare centre, preschool or child care centre (including centre de la petite enfance)	7,497	7,957	625	663	32	31
Care by a relative other than a parent	2,286	3,517	191	293	11	15
Care by a non-relative in the child's home	19,825	26,669 ^E	1,652	2,222 ^E	94	106 ^E
Family child care home	6,474	7,042	539	587	30	29
Before- or after-school program	3,787	...	316	...	15	...
Other child care arrangement	3,690 ^E	F	307 ^E	F	20 ^E	F
0- to 3-year-olds						
All child care types	7,081	8,146	590	679	32	32
Daycare centre, preschool or child care centre (including centre de la petite enfance)	7,906	8,409	659	701	34	33
Care by a relative other than a parent	2,152	3,212	179	268	11	13
Care by a non-relative in the child's home	20,360 ^E	26,539 ^E	1,697 ^E	2,212 ^E	99 ^E	110 ^E
Family child care home	6,792	7,317	566	610	31	30
Before- or after-school program
Other child care arrangement	F	F	F	F	F	F
4- to 5-year-olds						
All child care types	5,668	6,880	472	573	24	27
Daycare centre, preschool or child care centre (including centre de la petite enfance)	6,669	6,906	556	575	28	27
Care by a relative other than a parent	2,572	4,350 ^E	214	362 ^E	12	19 ^E
Care by a non-relative in the child's home	18,735 ^E	F	1,561 ^E	F	82 ^E	F
Family child care home	5,434	5,826	453	485	27	24
Before- or after-school program	3,831	...	319	...	15	...
Other child care arrangement	F	F	F	F	F	F

... not applicable

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

1. Does not include the territories.

Source: Statistics Canada, Survey on Early Learning and Child Care Arrangements, 2022.

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