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Child care services in the minority official language in Canada, 2021 and 2022

by Juliane Martini, Neïla Miller and Étienne Lemyre

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Key results

Quebec

- In Quebec, in 2022, 14% of children eligible for instruction in English who had ever attended child care in Canada attended English-language, and 39% attended bilingual child care. This latter proportion was higher in the Montréal census metropolitan area (47%).
- Eligible children in Quebec whose parents both spoke English most often at home were more likely to have attended English-language child care (20%) or bilingual child care (49%) than children whose neither parent spoke English most often at home (7% and 22%, respectively).
- In Quebec, 29% of parents of children eligible for instruction in English who attended French-language child care would have preferred their child to attend English-language child care instead. The unavailability of English-language child care was the main reason they used French-language child care (69%^E).
- Quebec children eligible for instruction in English who attended English-language child care were more likely to go on to attend an English-language elementary school, including French immersion programs (82%), compared with those who attended bilingual (63%) or French-language child care (48%).
- Among all child care facilities in Quebec in 2022, English was spoken with parents or children by 44% of centre-based providers, 15% of licensed home-based child care providers and 21% of unlicensed home-based providers, most often alongside French. English was the sole language spoken in 1% of centre-based child care facilities and by 2% of licensed and unlicensed home-based child care providers.
- Some child care providers in Quebec had spaces available for full-time enrolment. This was the case for 24% of centre-based child care providers, 10% of licensed home-based child care providers and 10% of unlicensed home-based child care providers. These proportions were higher for centre-based (34%) and licensed home-based (20%) facilities where English was spoken with children or with parents, alone or in combination with other languages.
- In Quebec, 16% of child care workers used English at work at least on a regular basis in 2021. Among child care workers who did not use English at work, 28% could conduct a conversation in English.

^E use with caution

Canada outside Quebec

- In Canada outside Quebec, in 2022, 35% of children eligible for instruction in French who attended or had ever attended child care in Canada attended French-language child care, and 12% attended bilingual child care. The proportion of eligible children who attended French-language child care was higher than average in New Brunswick (63%) and in the territory capitals (51%), that is, Whitehorse, Yellowknife and Iqaluit.
- Eligible children in families where both parents (66%) or one parent (57%) spoke French most often at home were about three times more likely to have attended French-language child care than children in families where neither parent spoke French most often at home (20%).
- In Canada outside Quebec, 40% of parents of children eligible for instruction in French who used English-language child care would have preferred their child to attend French-language child care instead. The unavailability of services in French (67%) and the distance to the facility (33%) were the main reasons for using English-language child care.
- In Canada outside Quebec, children eligible for instruction in French who attended French-language child care were more likely to go on to attend a French-language elementary school (93%) than children who attended bilingual (61%) or English-language (30%) child care.
- In child care facilities in Canada outside Quebec in 2022, French was spoken with parents or children by 19% of centre-based providers, 6% of licensed home-based providers and 8% of unlicensed home-based providers, most often alongside English. French was the sole language spoken in 2% of centre-based child care facilities and by 1% of home-based child care providers. In New Brunswick, French was the only language spoken by 23% of child care providers.
- In Canada outside Quebec, child care providers where French was spoken were less likely to have available spaces (41% in centre-based facilities and 24% in licensed home-based providers) compared with the average (46% and 39%, respectively).
- In Canada outside Quebec in 2021, 6% of child care workers used French at least on a regular basis at work. Among child care workers who did not use French at work, 5% could conduct a conversation in the language.

1 Introduction

In Canada, participation in child care is common among preschool-aged children. In fact, in 2023, over half (56%) of children aged 5 years and younger participated in child care.¹ Child care, along with other developmental activities, may represent the first step in a child's educational trajectory outside the home, making early childhood education settings important for language acquisition and language development. This may be particularly important for children in official language minority communities in Canada, that is, English-speaking children in Quebec and French-speaking children outside Quebec. In minority official language contexts, child care environments play a key role in supporting language acquisition, especially where opportunities for exposure to and interaction in the minority language are limited.²

The Government of Canada's [Action Plan for Official Languages 2023–2028](#) commits to investing in the development of early child care services, with a particular emphasis on French-language services in Canada outside Quebec. Central to the action plan is the promotion of an “educational continuum,” which aims to support learners in minority official language settings from early childhood through postsecondary education. Moreover, the Government of Canada is investing in the professional training of child care workers in French-language minority communities.³

From 2001 to 2016, the number of child care workers who primarily used a minority official language at work increased faster than the number of children likely to attend minority official language child care in both Quebec and the rest of Canada, meaning the overall availability of minority official language child care likely improved during that period.^{4,5} In contrast, most children in a minority official language situation⁶ in Quebec and Canada outside Quebec who were or had been in child care did not attend minority official language child care, and the proportion who attended this type of child care decreased from 2006 to 2022.^{7,8} For parents to be able to use child care services in the minority official language, these services must exist and be available. Given this situation, more extensive information on participation in and provision of minority official language child care is needed.

This study uses three distinct data sources to present various aspects of minority official language child care services in Canada. The [2022 Survey on the Official Language Minority Population \(SOLMP\)](#) provides insights into participation in minority official language child care services among children who are eligible for instruction in the minority official language, and on the educational trajectory of these children from child care to elementary school. The [2022 Canadian Survey on the Provision of Child Care Services](#) provides information on the use of official languages within child care facilities. Lastly, the [2021 Census of Population](#) is used to describe the use of official languages by child care workers. For additional information on these sources of data, see the box entitled “Data sources and methods.”

1. Statistics Canada. (2025, October 21). [Child care arrangements, 2025](#). *The Daily*. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/251021/dq251021c-eng.htm>.
2. Maltais, C. (2005). [Relation entre les types de services de garde et le développement du langage chez les enfants du préscolaire](#). *Éducation et francophonie*, 33(2), 207–223. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1079108ar>.
3. Canadian Heritage. (2023, April 26). [Action Plan for Official Languages 2023–2028: Protection – Promotion – Collaboration](#). Government of Canada. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/official-languages-bilingualism/official-languages-action-plan/2023-2028.html>.
4. Frigon, C., & Lemyre, É. (2021). [English-language early childhood and child care services in Quebec, 2001 and 2016](#). *Ethnicity, Language and Immigration Thematic Series*, Catalogue no. 89-657-X. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-657-x/89-657-x2021007-eng.htm>.
5. Frigon, C., & Lemyre, É. (2021). [French-language early childhood and child care services in Canada outside Quebec, 2001 and 2016](#). *Ethnicity, Language and Immigration Thematic Series*, Catalogue no. 89-657-X. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-657-x/89-657-x2021006-eng.htm>.
6. “Children in a minority official language situation” include children who have at least one parent who is part of the official language minority population and those who are eligible for instruction in the minority official language pursuant to Section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.
7. Pépin-Filion, D., Cornelissen, L., & Lemyre, É. (2024). [Situation of English-speaking populations in Quebec and French-speaking populations in Canada outside Quebec: Results of the 2022 Survey on the Official Language Minority Population](#). Statistics Canada. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-657-x/89-657-x2024008-eng.pdf>.
8. In the 2024 report, comparisons with 2006 data cover children who had at least one adult in the official language minority population in their census family in 2021.

Data sources and methods

The 2022 Survey on the Official Language Minority Population

The [Survey on the Official Language Minority Population \(SOLMP\)](#) is a postcensal survey conducted among the English-speaking population in Quebec and the French-speaking population elsewhere in Canada. The survey covers a wealth of topics, including participation in child care by language and the language characteristics of children and their families.

In this study, results are presented for children aged 1 to 17 years who are eligible for instruction in the minority official language pursuant to Section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, that is, eligible for elementary or secondary instruction in English in Quebec⁹ or in French in Canada outside Quebec.¹⁰

This study includes current and past participation in child care in Canada. Therefore, enrolment in a child care facility may be current at the time of the survey or may have been prior to the survey. Complete details on the target population of this survey and its content can be found in the [SOLMP user guide](#).

The 2022 Canadian Survey on the Provision of Child Care Services

The [Canadian Survey on the Provision of Child Care Services \(CSPCCS\)](#) was conducted among child care facilities in Canada, including centre-based child care¹¹ and home-based licensed and unlicensed¹² locations. In 2022, administrators of centre-based child care services were asked to report which languages employees spoke with parents or children, and those in charge of home-based child care services were asked to report which languages they spoke with parents or children when providing services, without specifying how often these languages were used.

To have a reference period similar to that of other data sources presented in this report, the section about this topic is based on the results of the 2022 CSPCCS.¹³

The 2021 Census of Population

The Census of Population has information on workers aged 15 years and older who were employed in the child care sector during the 2021 Census reference week, based on their usual place of work.¹⁴ The census collects information on a variety of workers' characteristics, such as their knowledge of official languages, their use of languages at work, immigrant status and educational attainment.

In this study, workers in the child care sector include those whose occupation was early childhood educators and assistants or home child care providers, according to the 2021 National Occupational Classification, and who worked in child day-care services, based on the 2017 North American Industry Classification System.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

The census and survey data used in this study were collected during the COVID-19 pandemic. Pandemic-related restrictions impacted the child care sector and demand for these services, with child care establishment closures and an increased prevalence of work from home. Although the potential influence of these challenges on the results of this study cannot be dismissed, these issues are not directly addressed in this study.

9. According to section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom*, Quebec children are eligible to attend English-language schools when they have at least one parent who attended an English-language elementary school in Canada, or the child or their siblings attended an English-language elementary or secondary school in Canada.
10. According to section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom*, in Canada outside Quebec, children are eligible to attend French-language schools when they have at least one parent whose mother tongue is French, they have at least one parent who attended a French-language elementary school in Canada, or the child or their siblings attended a French-language elementary or secondary school in Canada.
11. Centre-based child care includes daycare centres, preschools and nurseries offering full-time and part-time child care services, both licensed and unlicensed.
12. Home-based child care services are provided in private residences. They may be operated with or without a licence, accreditation or approval from the authorities responsible for child care services.
13. While more recent data on language use in child care facilities are available in the 2024 CSPCCS, the results are not comparable to those for 2022 because of a change in the wording of the question on language use.
14. In most cases, people's province of residence is the same as their province of work, except in border areas, such as the Ottawa–Gatineau census metropolitan area.

2 Participation in child care services among children who are eligible for instruction in the minority official language

The use of minority official language child care services may be influenced by various factors, such as service availability, proximity, affordability, parental language preferences and other personal or practical considerations. Although eligibility for instruction in the minority official language criteria do not apply to child care services, this study focuses on eligible children to examine the continuity of educational pathways in the official languages from child care to elementary school. First results from the 2022 SOLMP¹⁵ showed that a minority of children in a minority official language situation¹⁶ attended or had previously attended minority language child care in Canada. The situation is similar among children eligible for instruction in the minority official language.¹⁷ In the survey, parents were asked whether the child care attended was an English daycare, a French daycare, a bilingual daycare or a daycare in another language.¹⁸

In Quebec, in 2021, 304,000 children were eligible for instruction in English, accounting for 18.1% of the population younger than 18.¹⁹ In 2022, 76% of children eligible for instruction in English in Quebec attended or had ever attended child care in Canada. Among them, 14% attended English-language child care and 39% attended bilingual child care. Participation in English-language child care was lower than the provincial average in central Quebec²⁰ (7%) and in the city of Québec and the surrounding area²¹ (2%). While almost half (47%) of eligible children in the Montréal census metropolitan area attended or had attended bilingual child care, the proportions were lower than the provincial average in western Quebec²² (30%), central Quebec (23%^E), the city of Québec and the surrounding area (12%), and eastern Quebec²³ (7%).

In Canada outside Quebec, in 2021, 593,000 children younger than 18 were eligible for instruction in French, accounting for 11% of this population.²⁴ In 2022, 61% of children eligible for instruction in French attended or had ever attended child care in Canada. Among them, 35% attended French-language child care, and 12% attended bilingual child care. However, the proportions varied across provinces, as shown in Map 2.1. In New Brunswick,²⁵ about two-thirds (63%) of eligible children attended French-language child care and 21% attended bilingual child care, the highest proportions in Canada outside Quebec. The proportion of eligible children who attended French-language child care was even higher in northern New Brunswick²⁶ (75%) than in the other regions of the province.

Children eligible for instruction in French in the territorial capitals (Whitehorse, Yellowknife and Iqaluit) were more likely to attend or have attended French-language child care (51%) but were less likely to have attended bilingual child care (4%), compared with the Canadian average (outside Quebec). The provinces with the lowest rates of eligible children who attended or had attended French-language child care were Newfoundland and Labrador (16%), Alberta (17%), and British Columbia (13%).

Although results for Ontario are not significantly different from those of Canada outside Quebec overall, there are notable differences within the province. For instance, children eligible for instruction in French were more likely

15. Pépin-Filion, D., Cornelissen, L., & Lemyre, É. (2024). *Situation of English-speaking populations in Quebec and French-speaking populations in Canada outside Quebec: Results of the 2022 Survey on the Official Language Minority Population*. Statistics Canada.

16. "Children in a minority official language situation" include children who have at least one parent who is part of the official language minority population and those who are eligible for instruction in the minority official language pursuant to Section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

17. Eligible children are those aged 1 to 17 years who are eligible for instruction in the minority official language pursuant to Section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

18. An English daycare may provide services in English alone or in combination with other languages. A French daycare may provide services in French alone or in combination with other languages. A bilingual daycare may provide services in both official languages, English and French. A daycare in another language may provide services in a non-official language alone or in combination with other languages. The use of a minority official language can include a variety of situations. The data do not allow for a determination of how often each of these languages was used.

19. Statistics Canada. (2022, November 30). *897,000 children are eligible for instruction in the minority official language in Canada, 2021*. *The Daily*. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/221130/dq221130d-eng.htm>.

20. Central Quebec includes the economic regions of Centre-du-Québec, Lanaudière, Laurentides, Mauricie and Montérégie, outside the Montréal census metropolitan area and the Estrie and Southern Quebec region. Refer to the document entitled "[Survey on the Official Language Minority Population: User guide, 2022](#)" for more details on each region used in the survey. In the User Guide, 'Central Quebec' corresponds to 'Quebec – Rest.'

21. The city of Québec and the surrounding areas include the economic regions of Capitale-Nationale, Chaudière-Appalaches and Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean.

22. Western Quebec includes the economic regions of Outaouais and Abitibi-Témiscamingue.

23. Eastern Quebec includes the economic regions of Bas-Saint-Laurent, Côte-Nord and Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine.

24. Statistics Canada. (2022, November 30). *897,000 children are eligible for instruction in the minority official language in Canada, 2021*. *The Daily*. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/221130/dq221130d-eng.htm>.

25. The official languages of Canada in a minority situation are English in Quebec and French in Canada outside Quebec. However, in some provinces or territories, the languages with official status may differ.

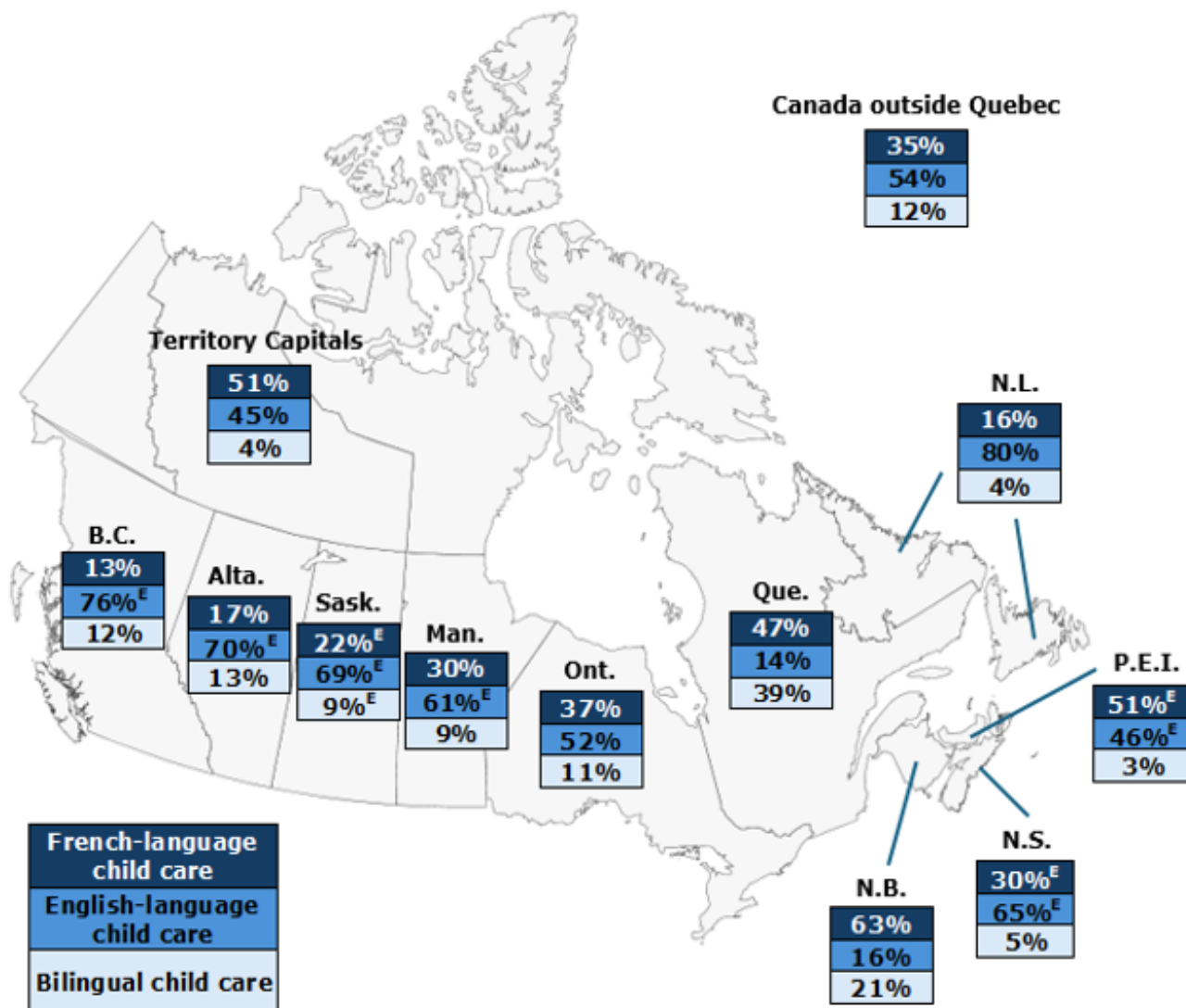
26. Northern New Brunswick includes the census divisions of Victoria, Madawaska, Restigouche and Gloucester, as well as the census subdivisions of Alnwick and Neguac.

to have attended French-language child care in southeastern Ontario²⁷ (56%), northeastern Ontario²⁸ (53%) and the city of Ottawa (49%) than in the city of Toronto (25%) and the rest of Ontario region (26%). Eligible children in northeastern (22%) and southeastern (25%) Ontario were also more likely than average to have attended bilingual child care.²⁹

More results on the participation of eligible children in French-language, English-language or bilingual child care by region are available in the appendix.

Map 2.1

Among children eligible for instruction in the minority official language, proportion who attended French-language, English-language or bilingual child care, provinces and territory capitals, 2022



^E use with caution

Note: Among children aged 1 to 17 who attended or had attended child care in Canada.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2022 Survey on the Official Language Minority Population.

27. Southeastern Ontario includes the census divisions of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, and Prescott and Russell.

28. Northeastern Ontario includes the economic region of Northeast, except the census divisions of Parry Sound and Manitoulin.

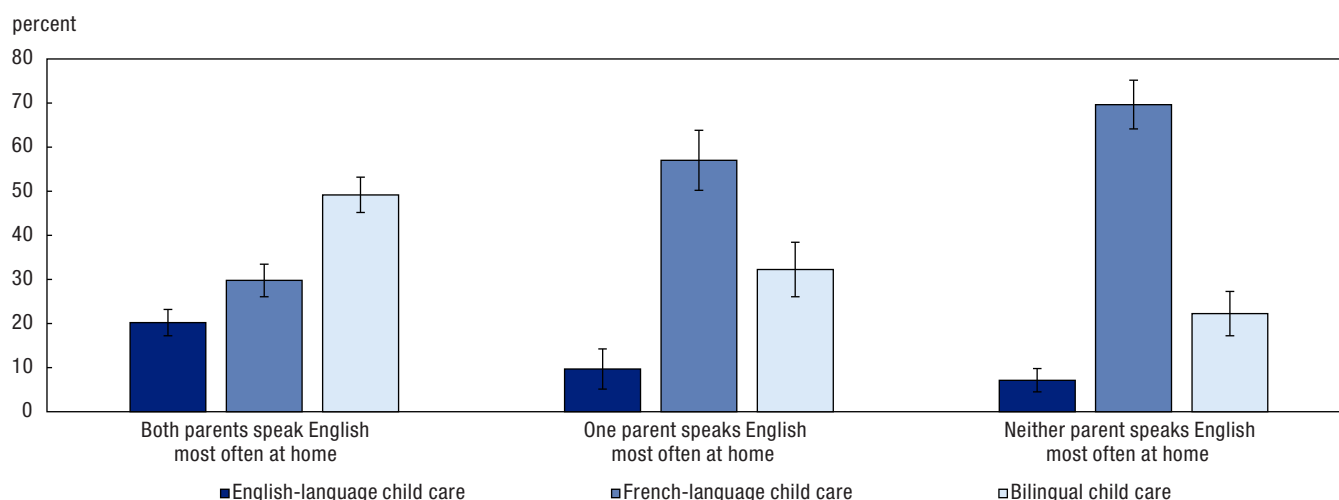
29. Refer to the document entitled "[Survey on the Official Language Minority Population: User guide, 2022](#)" for more details on each region used in the SOLMP.

Parents who speak a minority official language most often at home are more likely to enrol their children in a minority official language school.³⁰ But is there also a relationship between the language parents speak most often at home³¹ and the language of the child care services they use?

In Quebec, children eligible for instruction in English were more likely to attend bilingual child care (49%) or English-language child care (20%) when both parents spoke English most often at home compared to the average (39% and 14%, respectively). In contrast, eligible children were more likely than average (47%) to attend or have attended French-language child care when only one of their parents (57%) or neither parent (70%) spoke English most often at home.

Chart 2.1

Among children eligible for instruction in English, proportion who attended English-language, French-language, or bilingual child care, according to the language spoken most often at home by their parents, Quebec, 2022



Note: Among children aged 1 to 17 who attended or had attended child care in Canada.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2022 Survey on the Official Language Minority Population.

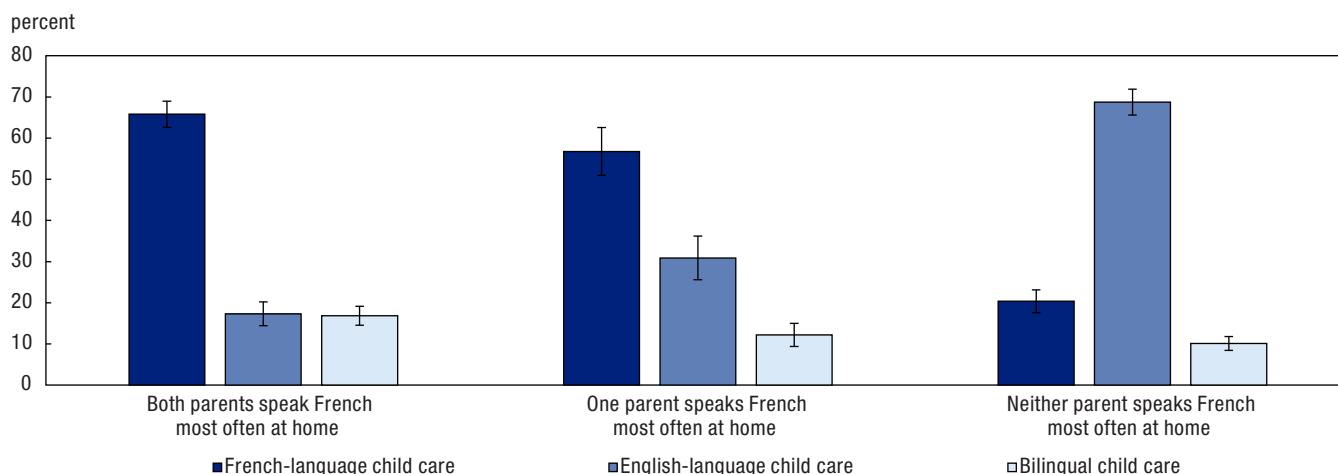
In Canada outside Quebec, children eligible for instruction in French were more likely than average (35%) to attend French-language child care when both their parents (66%) or only one parent (57%) spoke French most often at home. Conversely, over two-thirds of eligible children from families in which neither parent spoke French most often at home attended English-language child care (69%).

30. Lemyre, É. (2024). [The school closest to home: Proximity of French-language elementary schools and enrolment in the Maritime provinces](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75-006-x/2024001/article/00003-eng.htm). *Insights on Canadian Society*, Catalogue no. 75-006-x. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75-006-x/2024001/article/00003-eng.htm>.

31. Information on the language spoken most often at home by both parents was provided in the SOLMP regardless of whether both parents resided with the child at the time of the survey. Therefore, the analysis also includes children who lived in one-parent families and in shared custody arrangements at the time of the survey. In rare instances, information on a parent's language spoken most often at home was not provided in the survey. Children in this situation were excluded from this part of the analysis.

Chart 2.2

Among children eligible for instruction in French, proportion who attended French-language, English-language, or bilingual child care, according to the language spoken most often at home by their parents, Canada outside Quebec, 2022



Note: Among children aged 1 to 17 who attended or had attended child care in Canada.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2022 Survey on the Official Language Minority Population.

Participation in minority official language child care services among the general population

Children eligible for instruction in the minority official language are not the only ones who attended child care services where the minority official language was used. The 2023 [Canadian Survey on Early Learning and Child Care](#) provides information on the languages used in child care services attended by children aged 0 to 5 at the time of the survey, regardless of the linguistic situation of the children and their families.

In Quebec, 18% of children attended a child care service³² where English was used, either alone or with other languages. In Canada outside Quebec, 7% of children attended child care where French was used. The proportion of children who attended child care where the minority official language was used was higher in daycare centres (22% in Quebec and 7% outside Quebec) than in family daycare settings (8%^E in Quebec and 5% outside Quebec).

3 Reasons for using child care service in a minority official language

The concept of choice in child care services comes with significant limitations because it depends on the availability of child care services that meet parents' needs. The language spoken most often at home does not solely explain parents' use of child care in a specific official language. In fact, parents consider multiple factors when making decisions about whether to use a minority official language child care provider.³³ In the SOLMP, parents were asked why their child attended daycare in English or French.³⁴

Among Quebec families in 2022, parents of children eligible for instruction in English were equally likely to use an English-language child care provider because of service availability (42%^E), identity (37%^E), proximity (35%), English being the only language the child knows (30%) and the perceived quality of child care in English (29%).³⁵

32. This includes children who attended a daycare centre, preschool or *centre de la petite enfance*; children cared for by a relative other than a parent or guardian; children cared for at home by a non-relative; children in a family child care home; children in a before- or after-school program; and children in another child care arrangement.

33. Pépin-Filion, D., Cornelissen, L., & Lemyre, É. 2024. [Situation of English-speaking populations in Quebec and French-speaking populations in Canada outside Quebec: Results of the 2022 Survey on the Official Language Minority Population](#). Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-657-x/89-657-x2024008-eng.htm>.

34. In the SOLMP, parents were not asked why their child attended bilingual child care.

35. The difference between these proportions is not statistically significant.

In Quebec, 29% of parents of children eligible for instruction in English who attended French-language child care would have preferred their child to attend English-language child care instead. Among these parents, the main reason for using French-language child care was that the child care service was not available in English (69%³⁶), followed by distance to the facility (23%).

Outside Quebec, in families where parents of children eligible for instruction in French both spoke French most often at home, identity (68%) was a key reason for using French-language child care. In families where only one parent spoke French most often at home, the importance of receiving services in French was the most frequent reason for using French-language child care (78%), along with identity (64%). In contrast, in families where neither parent spoke French most often at home, the most common reason for using French-language child care was the desire for the child to become bilingual (73%).

In Canada outside Quebec, 40% of parents of children eligible for instruction in French who used English-language child care would have preferred their child to attend French-language child care instead. Among these parents, the main reasons for using English-language child care were the unavailability of services in French (67%) and the distance to the facility (33%).

4 Educational pathways after attending child care in the minority official language

Child care services may be the first step in the continuum of education in the minority official language. However, among eligible school-aged children, is participation in minority official language child care associated with enrolment in minority official language elementary schools?

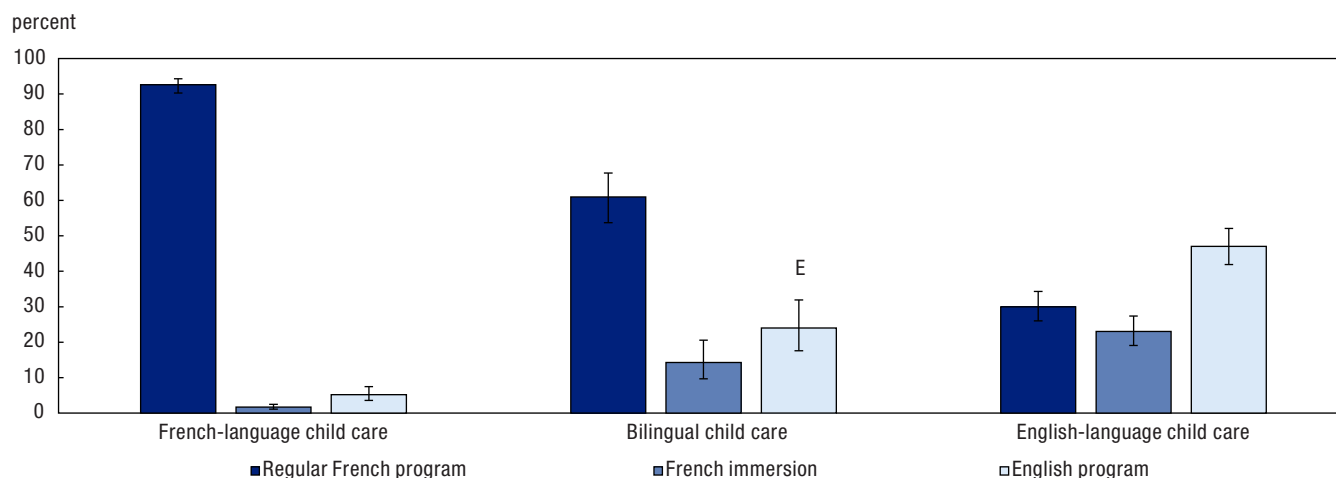
In Quebec, close to 3 in 5 school-aged children eligible for instruction in English who had started elementary school³⁶ attended or had attended an English-language elementary school (58%) in 2022, including French immersion programs. The proportion of eligible children who attended an English-language elementary school was higher among children who had attended English-language child care (82%) than among those who had attended bilingual (63%) or French-language (48%) child care.

In Canada outside Quebec, among school-aged children eligible for instruction in French who had started elementary school, more than half (56%) attended a regular French-language program, 14% attended a French immersion program and nearly one-third (30%) attended an English-language program. The vast majority (93%) of eligible children who attended French-language child care continued their schooling in a regular French program at the elementary level. This proportion was significantly lower among eligible children who attended bilingual child care (61%) or English-language child care (30%).

36. Among children who attended or had attended child care.

Chart 4.1

Type of elementary school program by language of child care service, eligible school-age children who attended or had attended child care, Canada outside Quebec, 2022



^E use with caution

Note: Among children aged 5 to 17 who attended or had attended child care in Canada.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2022 Survey on the Official Language Minority Population.

5 Official languages used by child care providers

The availability of child care services in the minority official language depends on the presence of child care facilities that offer services in that language, among other things. Given this context, the [2022 Canadian Survey on the Provision of Child Care Services](#) collected data on the distribution of centre-based and home-based child care facilities according to the languages spoken with parents or children.³⁷

In Quebec, there were 14,525 child care facilities in 2022, including 3,400 centre-based, 7,634 licensed home-based and 3,490 unlicensed home-based providers.³⁸ English was spoken exclusively or alongside other languages with children or parents by 44% of centre-based providers, 15% of licensed home-based providers and 21% of unlicensed home-based providers. In the vast majority of child care facilities where English was spoken with parents or children, French was also used.³⁹ In fact, French was spoken with children or parents by 99% of centre-based providers and 98% of licensed and unlicensed home-based providers in Quebec. In contrast, 1% of centre-based child care providers and 2% of licensed and unlicensed home-based child care providers offered an environment where English was the only language spoken.

Some child care providers in Quebec had spaces available for full-time enrolment. This was the case for 24% of centre-based child care providers and 10% of licensed home-based child care providers. These proportions were higher in centre-based (34%) and licensed home-based (20%) facilities where English was spoken with children or with parents alone or in combination with other languages.⁴⁰

In Canada outside Quebec, there were 30,841 child care facilities in 2022, including 10,529 centre-based, 7,291 licensed home-based and 13,022 unlicensed home-based providers.⁴¹ French was spoken exclusively or alongside other languages with children or parents by 19% of centre-based providers, 6% of licensed home-based providers and 8% of unlicensed home-based providers. In New Brunswick, these proportions were much higher than in the rest of the country outside Quebec (55% of centre-based, 55% of licensed home-based and 37% of unlicensed home-based providers). Across Canada outside Quebec, English was also spoken with parents or children by almost all providers (98% of centre-based, 98% of licensed home-based and 90% of unlicensed home-based

37. There are a variety of situations where the minority official language may be spoken with parents or children in a child care facility. For example, some facilities offer all their services in the minority official language, while in others, the language is used with children only occasionally, or only during conversations with parents.

38. When data are summed or grouped, the total value may not match the individual values since total and sub-totals are independently rounded.

39. The data do not allow for a determination of how often each of these languages was used.

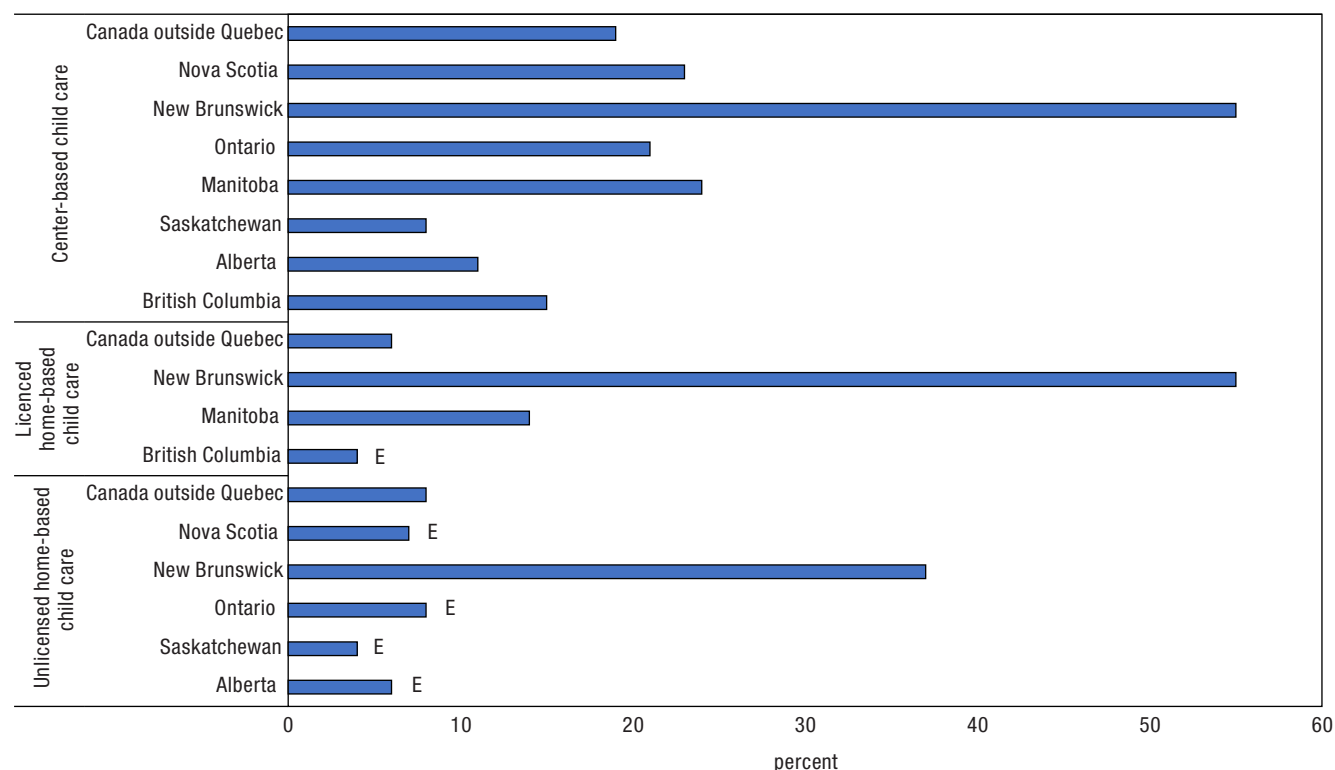
40. Due to small numbers, this proportion is not available for unlicensed home-based child care.

41. When data are summed or grouped, the total value may not match the individual values since total and sub-totals are independently rounded.

providers⁴²). French was the only language spoken in 2% of centre-based child care services, 1% of licensed home-based services and 2% of unlicensed home-based services in Canada outside Quebec. In contrast, these proportions were much higher in New Brunswick (23% of centre-based, 33% of licensed home-based and 20% of unlicensed home-based providers).

Chart 5.1

Proportion of child care facilities where French was spoken with parents or children, alone or in combination with another language, by type of facility, selected provinces and territories, 2022



^E use with caution

Note: Data for some provinces and territories were omitted because they were not available for the reference period, or the sample size was too small to meet data quality standards and confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2022 Canadian Survey on the Provision of Child care Services.

Outside Quebec, there were spaces available for full-time enrolment in 46% of centre-based child care services, 39% of licensed home-based child care services and 21% of unlicensed home-based child care services. The proportions among facilities that offered services in French exclusively or in combination with other languages were 41% for centre-based, 24% for licensed home-based and 20% for unlicensed home-based providers.

6 Languages used by child care workers

Another aspect of the provision of minority official language child care services is the availability of child care workers who use the language in their workplace. Based on results from the 2021 Census of Population, this section presents a comparative analysis of child care workers who reported using the minority official language at work at least on a regular basis, versus those who did not.

In 2021, there were 170,495 child care workers in Canada. Of these, 1 in 10 (10%) reported that they used the minority official language at least regularly at work.

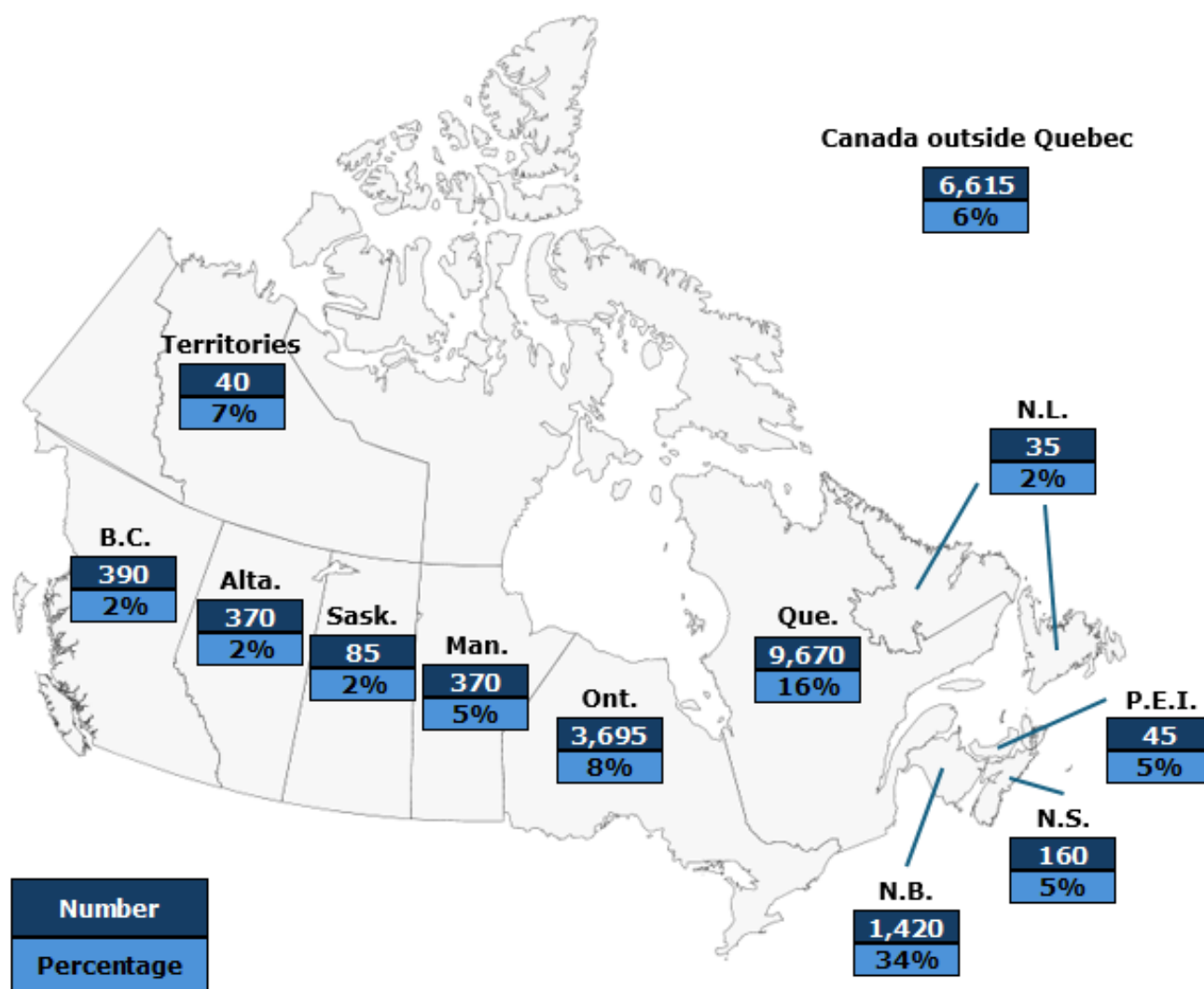
42. In 8% of unlicensed home-based providers neither English nor French were spoken.

In Quebec, 16% of the province's 60,430 child care workers used English at work at least on a regular basis in 2021. More specifically, 7% worked predominantly in English, 3% worked in English and French equally often, and 6% worked predominantly in French and used English as a secondary language. Among Quebec child care workers who did not use English at least on a regular basis at work, 28% could conduct a conversation in English, hinting that they could potentially provide child care services in the minority official language.

Among the 110,060 child care workers in Canada outside Quebec, 6% reported using French at least on a regular basis in their workplace. In particular, 4% worked predominantly in French, 1% worked predominantly in English and used French as a secondary language, and less than half a percent used English and French equally often. The proportion of child care workers who used French at least on a regular basis at work was higher in New Brunswick (34%) than in any other province in Canada outside Quebec.

Map 6.1

Number and proportion of child care workers who used the minority official language at work at least on a regular basis, provinces and territories, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population.

Outside Quebec, 5% of child care workers who did not use French on a regular basis at work could conduct a conversation in French. Among those who did not use it in the workplace, the provinces with the highest proportion of workers who knew French were New Brunswick (17%) and Prince Edward Island (9%).

In several respects, child care workers who used the minority official language at work had similar characteristics to those who did not, in both Quebec and Canada outside Quebec. For instance, only negligible differences were observed in the distribution of workers by gender,⁴³ by place of birth (i.e., whether they were born in Canada or abroad) and by the incidence of part-time work. However, in other respects, child care workers who used the minority official language at work differed from their colleagues who did not.

For example, in Quebec, child care workers aged 15 to 34 years represented 35% of those who used English at least regularly at work and 27% of those who did not. This higher proportion of younger child care workers using English at work may indicate a greater potential for growth in providers able to offer child care services in the minority language. In contrast, workers approaching retirement age (55 to 64) accounted for 13% of those who used English at least regularly at work and 16% of those who did not. These figures may suggest that a larger share of workers who do not provide services in English are nearing retirement.

In Canada outside Quebec, child care workers aged 15 to 34 years accounted for 44% of those who used French at least regularly at work and 39% of those who did not. This difference was not identified among workers aged 55 to 64 years who are approaching retirement age. In line with the previous results, the higher proportion of younger child care workers using the minority language at work may point to a greater potential for growth in providers able to offer child care services in French.

In Quebec, child care workers who used English at work at least regularly were more likely to be immigrants (41%) or to have at least a bachelor's degree (24%) compared with child care workers who did not use English at work (23% were immigrants and 11% held at least a bachelor's degree).

In contrast, in Canada outside Quebec, child care workers who used French at work at least on a regular basis were less likely to be immigrants (28%) or to hold at least a bachelor's degree (16%) compared with those who did not use French at work (33% were immigrants and 25% held at least a bachelor's degree).

7 Conclusion

Building on previous research that examined trends in minority official language child care availability and use,^{44, 45, 46} this study provides additional insights into child care in the minority official language in Quebec and in Canada outside Quebec, from the perspectives of both parents and service providers.

Certain groups of children eligible for instruction in the minority official language were more likely to attend minority official language child care. For example, in Quebec, eligible children whose parents both spoke English most often at home were more likely than average to have attended child care in the minority official language, as were children with at least one parent who primarily spoke French at home in Canada outside Quebec. Outside Quebec, families where neither parent spoke French most often at home often used French-language child care because they wanted their child to become bilingual. When the minority official language is not spoken most often at home, child care can play a key role in fostering knowledge of that language.

Most parents who enrolled their children in a majority language child care setting, despite preferring an official minority language option, did so for practical reasons, primarily the distance to or lack of availability of official minority language services in their area.

Once they entered elementary school, eligible school-age children who had attended minority official language child care were more likely than average to attend a minority official language elementary school. This shows the

43. Most child care workers in Canada are women+ (that is, women, as well as some non-binary people), regardless of languages used at work.

44. Frigon, C., & Lemyre, É. (2021). *English-language early childhood and child care services in Quebec, 2001 and 2016*. *Ethnicity, Language and Immigration Thematic Series*, Catalogue no. 89-657-X. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-657-x/89-657-x2021007-eng.htm>.

45. Frigon, C., & Lemyre, É. (2021). *French-language early childhood and child care services in Canada outside Quebec, 2001 and 2016*. *Ethnicity, Language and Immigration Thematic Series*, Catalogue no. 89-657-X. Retrieved from [French-language early childhood and child care services in Canada outside Quebec, 2001 and 2016](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-657-x/89-657-x2021007-eng.htm).

46. Pépin-Fillion, D., Cornelissen, L., & Lemyre, É. (2024). *Situation of English-speaking populations in Quebec and French-speaking populations in Canada outside Quebec: Results of the 2022 Survey on the Official Language Minority Population*. Statistics Canada. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-657-x/89-657-x2024008-eng.pdf>.

importance of minority official language child care services as the first step in the educational continuum in that language.

In child care facilities, the minority official language is spoken with parents or children in a higher proportion of centre-based child care services than in licensed or unlicensed home-based services. Unlike home-based settings, child care centres generally have several employees, whose language practices may differ, and may offer a more varied range of programs. Across all types of facilities, the minority official language was the only language spoken with parents or children in a small proportion of child care facilities, both in Quebec and in Canada outside Quebec.

In Quebec, centre-based child care providers and home-based licensed child care facilities offering services in English were more likely than average to have spaces available for full-time enrolment. Conversely, in Canada outside Quebec, centre-based child care providers and home-based licensed child care facilities providing services in French were less likely than average to have full-time spaces available.

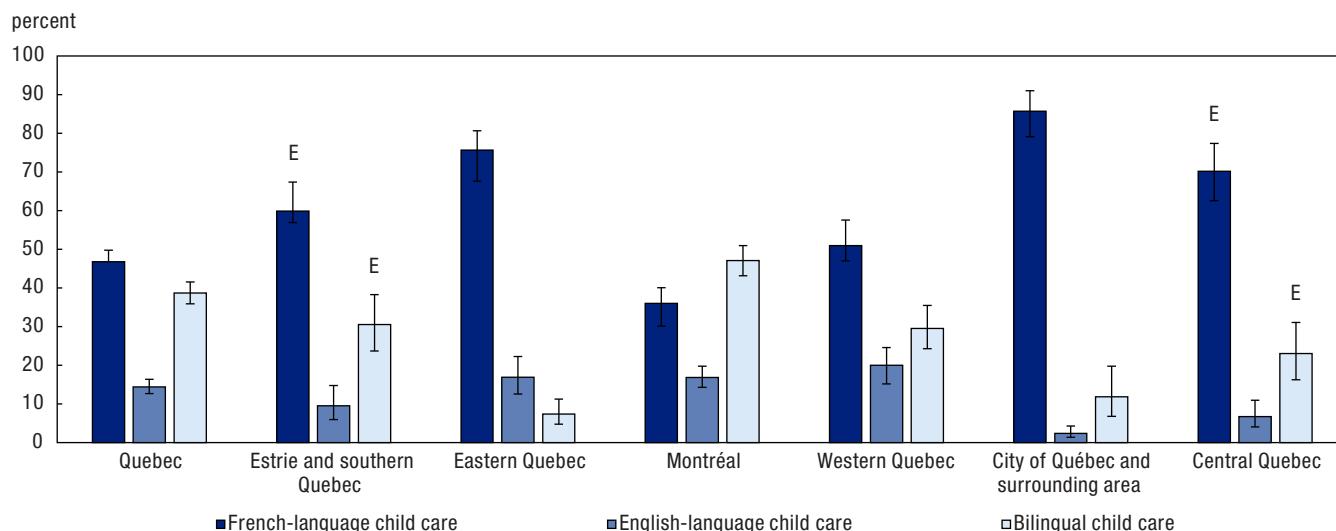
The possibility of using a minority official language child care service is in part constrained by the local availability of the service. Some child care workers have knowledge of the minority official language but did not use it at work, hinting at the potential for more child care facilities to provide services in the minority official language where there is demand for it.

This study presents certain limitations that point to opportunities for further research, particularly given the challenges of reconciling results from multiple data sources. For instance, parents and child care providers may hold different views on what constitutes a minority official language child care setting, especially in establishments where both English and French are used with parents or children. It is also important to acknowledge that some parents whose children are not eligible for instruction in the minority official language may prefer enrolling their children in minority official language child care. Furthermore, because any child can attend minority- official language child care, collecting additional data on the linguistic characteristics of all children in these settings would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the population served. In the SOLMP, data on current and past participation in child care services for children aged 1 to 18 may reflect varying contexts depending on the year; however, the data for children aged 1 to 5 were insufficient for an extensive standalone analysis. Finally, although minority official language child care is available in some areas, access may be constrained by factors such as geographic location, limited capacity for specific age groups or other barriers, which fall outside the scope of this report.

Appendix

Chart A.1

Among children eligible for instruction in English, proportion who attended French-language, English-language, or bilingual child care, Quebec and regions in Quebec, 2022



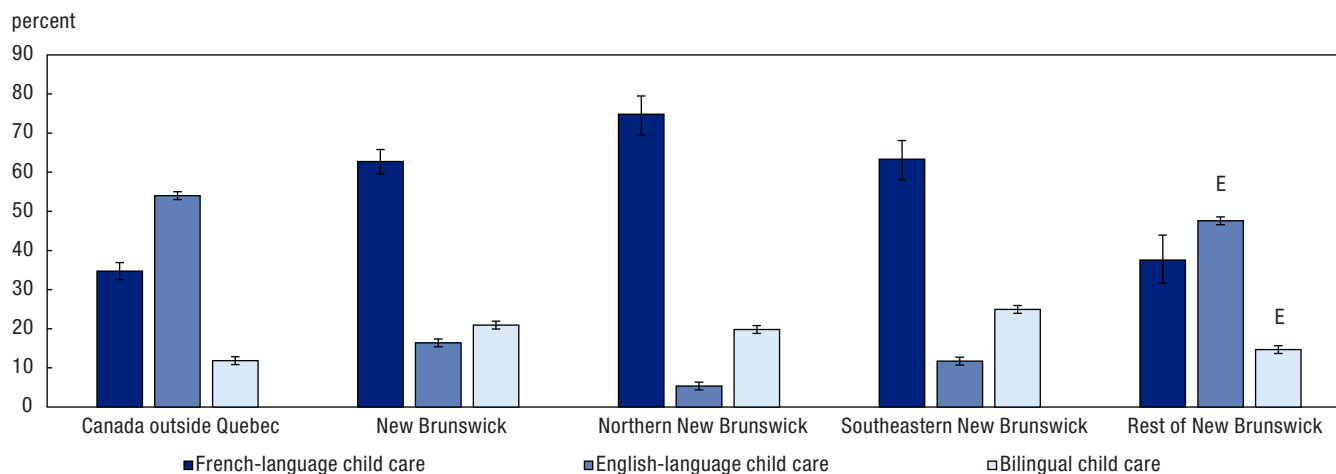
^E use with caution

Note: Among children aged 1 to 17 who attended or had attended child care in Canada.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2022 Survey on the Official Language Minority Population.

Chart A.2

Among children eligible for instruction in French, proportion who attended French-language, English-language or bilingual child care, Canada outside Quebec, New Brunswick and regions in New Brunswick, 2022



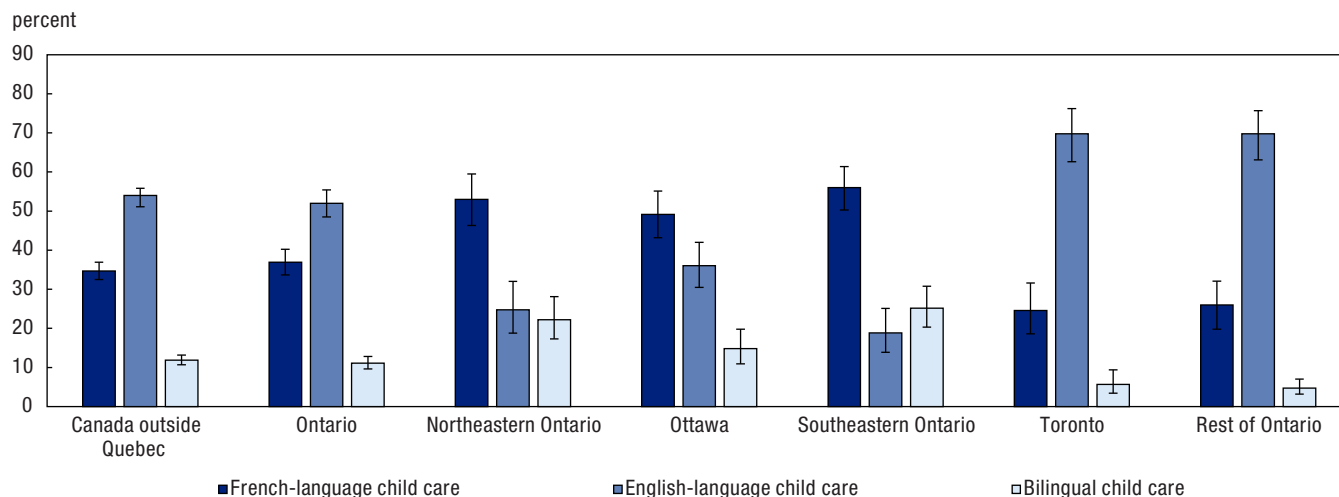
^E use with caution

Note: Among children aged 1 to 17 who attended or had attended child care in Canada.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2022 Survey on the Official Language Minority Population.

Chart A.3

Among children eligible for instruction in French, proportion who attended French-language, English-language or bilingual child care, Canada outside Quebec, Ontario and regions in Ontario, 2022



Note: Among children aged 1 to 17 who attended or had attended child care in Canada.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2022 Survey on the Official Language Minority Population.