



Early Years Study 3: Making decisions, Taking action

Early Childhood Education Report Review
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Early Childhood Education Defined

- Programs for young children based on an explicit curriculum delivered by qualified educators and designed to support children's development and learning.
- Settings may include child care centres, nursery schools, preschools, headstart, pre- or junior kindergarten and kindergarten.
- Attendance is regular and children may participate on their own or with a parent or caregiver.



ECE Report built on 8 key policy elements in *Starting Strong II*

- 1) Systematic and integrated approach to ECEC policy
- 2) Strong and equal partnership with the education system
- 3) Universal approach to access with particular attention to children in need of special support
- 4) Substantial public investment in services and infrastructure
- 5) Participatory approach to quality improvement and assurance
- 6) Appropriate training and working conditions for staff in all forms of provision
- 7) Systematic attention to data collection and monitoring
- 8) Stable framework and long term agenda for research and evaluation



OECD policy elements adapted to Canadian context

- **5 Categories/equally weighted**
- **19 Benchmarks**
 - Limited by the availability of consistent data across jurisdictions
 - Availability of similar information in future to allow for across time comparisons
- **Thresholds**
 - Influenced by those established by UNICEF (2008) and UNESCO (2010) to support international comparisons
 - Adapted to Canada – was reached or was in development, in at least one jurisdiction



Category 1 - Governance

OECD recommends:

- A central vision for policy and a lead ministry devoted to putting the vision into reality
- A unified approach to bridging early education and elementary education
- **The report asks:** *Is the oversight of early education split between multiple departments, or does it have coherent direction backed by policies with goals, timelines and sound service delivery?*



Oversight and policy

I. Integrated Governance	Possible score
ECE under common department/ministry	0.5
Common ECE supervisory unit	0.5
Common ECE policy framework	1
Common local authority for ECE management and administration	1



Category 2 – Funding

OECD recommends:

- An efficient means of funding a universal early education and care service prior to elementary school
- Substantial government investment in quality and infrastructure of ECEC
- OECD recommended a minimum investment of 1% of GDP
- European Commission Network on Childcare (ECEC) recommendation \$8000 (USD) per child per year in full-day early education programs
- **Report asks: *Is funding adequate to support program quality and provide reasonable access?***



Funding to improve access and quality

II. Funding	Possible score
At least two-thirds of child care funding goes to program operations	1
Mandated salary and fee scale	1
At least 3% of budget devoted to ECE	1



Category 3 - Access

OECD recommends:

- Universal access to early education and care with attention given to appropriateness and equality
- **Report asks:** *Are there enough programs to meet demand? Are barriers to participation addressed?*



Equitable access

Access	Possible score
Full-day kindergarten offered	1
50% of 2-4-year-olds regularly attend an ECE program	1
Funding is conditional on including children with special needs	1



Category 4 – Learning Environment

OECD recommends:

- Devise ECEC regulatory standards and a participatory process to ensure quality
- Involve stakeholders: parents, families and professionals
- High quality training and strategies to recruit and retain a well-qualified, diverse workforce
- *“Ensure a satisfying, respected and financially viable career in this field” (pg. 158)*
- **Report asks:** *Is quality supported by curricula, program standards and trained, adequate & respected staffing?*



Quality in the early learning environment

Learning environment	Possible score
Early childhood curriculum/framework	0.5
Alignment of EC framework with kindergarten	0.5
Programs for 2–4–year–olds require 2/3 staff with ECE qualifications	0.5
Kindergarten educators require ECE qualifications	0.5
Salaries of ECES are 2/3 of teacher salary	0.5
ECE professional certification/professional development required	0.5



Category 5 – Accountability

OECD recommends:

Systematic procedure to collect and provide consistent and comparable information on newborns to 6 year olds

- Eradicating the lack of data for children under the age of 3
- Strengthen the essential elements of national research
- Develop a range of instruments and procedures sensitive to the complex dynamics of early childhood environments (e.g. cost benefit analysis, information dissemination, etc.)
- **Report asks: *Is there constant quality improvement supported by data collection and the monitoring and reporting of child outcomes? Is research supported and the findings incorporated into practice?***



More attention to monitoring

V. Accountability	Possible score
Annual progress reports posted (2008 or later)	1
Program standards for ECE programs (including kindergarten)	1
EDI or population measures for preschool learning collected and reported	1
Total score	15

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