

# Alberta Child Care Survey 2018

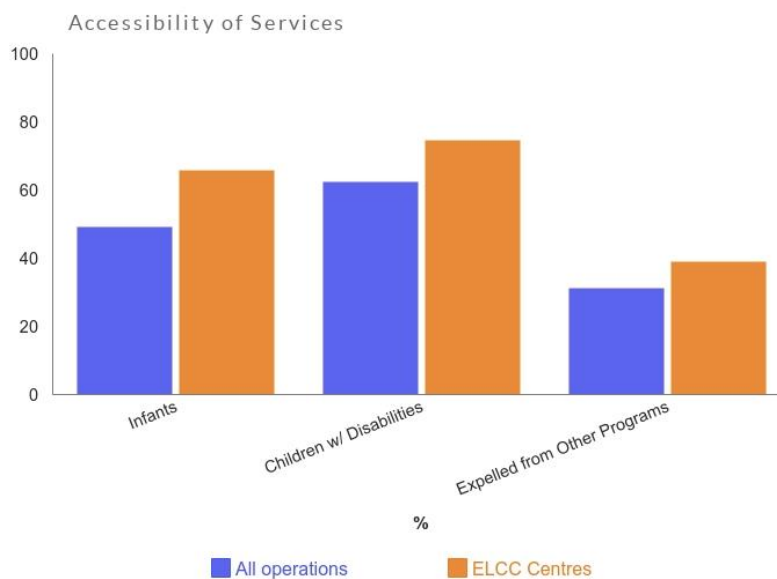
In an effort to learn more about the challenges in the child care sector, Public Interest Alberta coordinated a survey of child care centres, day homes, and after-school care programs. In addition to overall conditions in the child care sector, the survey sought to gain insights into the impact of the Government of Alberta's Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Centres program.

## Key Findings

### 1. Access to child care is insufficient for care of infants and children with special needs, but is significantly better in ELCC Centres than operations outside of the program.

Of all operators surveyed, only 49.23% currently serve infants, 62.54% currently serve children with disabilities, and 31.11% currently serve children who have been expelled from other programs due to behaviour challenges.

However, of ELCC Centre operators surveyed, 65.88% currently serve infants, 74.68% currently serve children with disabilities, and 38.96% currently serve children who have been expelled from programs due to challenging behaviour. This suggests that ELCC Centres are more accessible and better equipped to address diverse needs.



**2. Availability of child care is low, with many centres reporting long wait-lists. ELCC Centres are more likely than other child care programs to have a waiting list.**

Over half of the operators surveyed (59%) have waiting lists. ELCC Centres are more likely to have waiting lists, with 88% of respondents reporting having one.

Child care operators with waiting lists have an average wait time of 12 months for an infant and 10 months for a toddler. Of those centres that have wait-lists, 13.4% of them charge wait list fees, averaging \$52.

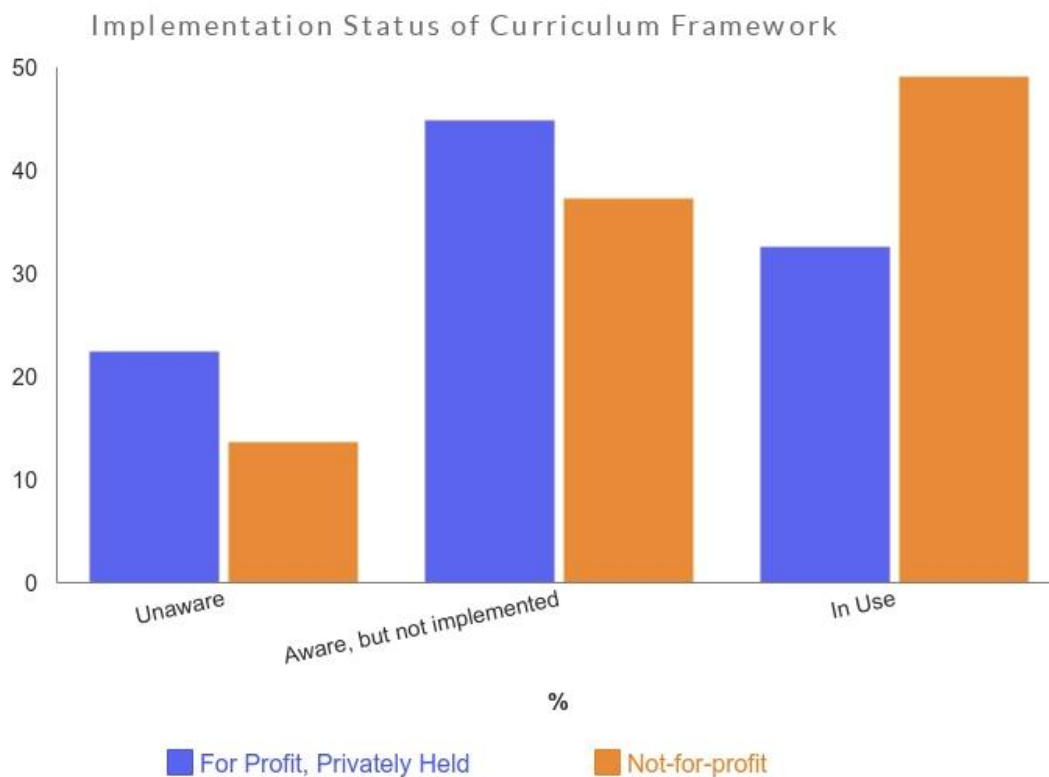
**3. Child care operators have a high proportion of staff with minimal training, although ELCC Centres tend to have more highly-qualified staff.**

More than one-third (37.5%) of workers employed by child care operators surveyed were trained to the minimal level of Child Development Assistant (CDA) (requires a 45-hour course). Child Development Workers (CDW) (requires a one-year certificate) made up the smallest proportion of workers at less than one in five (17.7%). When comparing operator types, For-profit operators have the highest percentage of staff with minimal training (43.6%) and the smallest percentage of Child Development Supervisors (CDS) (38.5%). ELCC Centres had a higher percentage of Child Development Workers than other not-for-profit and for-profit operators, at 21.0% of staff.



#### 4. Early Learning and Child Care Curriculum Framework implementation is low.

Of all child care operators surveyed, only 41.3% are currently using the ELCC curriculum framework. There are more not-for-profit centres implementing the framework than for-profit centres, which more frequently report having been unaware of its existence or having been aware but not implemented it. However, even without a big push from the province, a large proportion of sector is using the curriculum framework (41.3%), suggesting a desire for higher quality.



#### 5. A high proportion of child care operators offer limited professional development opportunities to their staff. ELCC Centres outperform other child care operators in every professional development category.

Post-secondary education courses and paid time to attend conferences or workshops are offered only by a minority of child care operators. 7.94% of all child care operators offer no professional development opportunities whatsoever, including reading material.

In most categories surveyed, non-profit operators offer their staff more professional development opportunities than for-profit operators, with the exception of post-secondary education courses. Significantly more non-profit operators provide staff with paid time to attend workshops or conferences than for-profit operators. Operators that had applied and were approved for the Alberta government's ELCC grant funding offer more professional development opportunities in every category.

<b>Professional Development Opportunities</b>	<b>Not-for-profit ELCC Centres</b>	<b>All Not-for-profit operators</b>	<b>For-profit, privately held operators</b>
On-site workshops	88.37%	75.15%	68.85%
Reading material	82.56%	73.96%	71.74%
Funding to attend workshops or conferences	81.40%	73.37%	63.04%
Paid time to attend workshops or conferences	66.28%	61.54%	36.96%
Post-secondary education courses	40.70%	31.36%	38.41
None of the above	1.16%	3.55%	13.04%

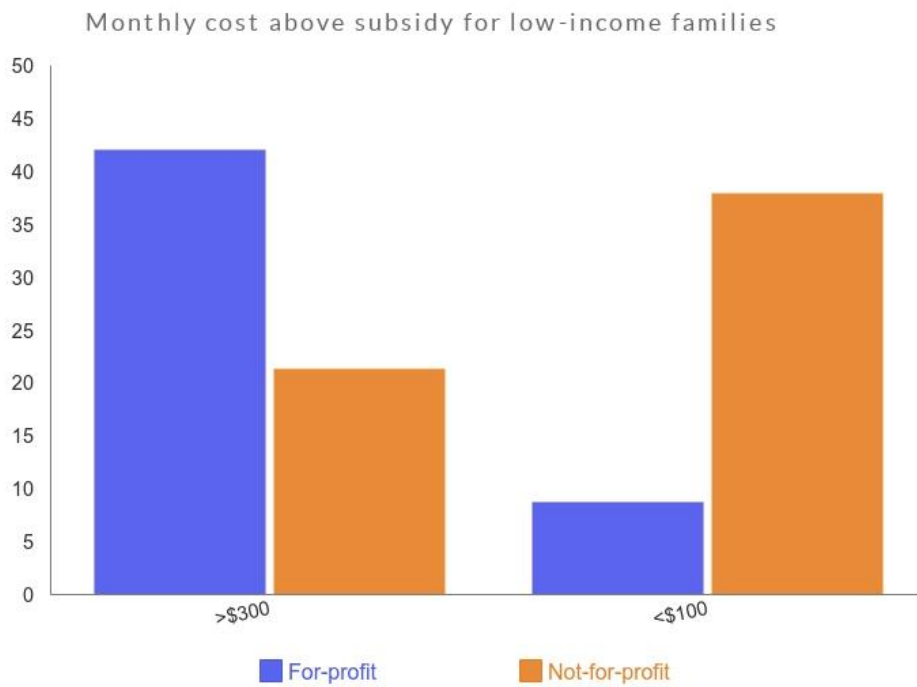
#### **6. Child care operators face significant challenges recruiting, remunerating, training, and retaining quality staff.**

Overall, recruitment of qualified staff was the most serious challenge for child care operators, however some responses differed based on non-profit or for-profit status. For-profit childcare operators had more frequent challenges with affordability of space and qualified staff as well as lack of funding for non-care hours. Not-for-profits, however, faced slightly more frequent challenges with recruitment of qualified staff and staff retention.

	<b>All operators</b>	<b>Not-for-profit</b>	<b>For-profit, privately held</b>
Recruitment of qualified staff	56.19%	59.76%	54.35%
Funding for non-care hours (professional development, planning, documentation)	54.60%	48.52%	60.87%
Affordability of qualified staff	50.79%	45.56%	56.52%
Retention of staff	37.46%	38.46%	36.23%
Affordability of space	35.56%	26.63%	46.38%
Administration	36.19%	35.50%	37.68%

**7. Costs are still high for many low-income families receiving government subsidies.**

30.8% of the operators surveyed report that low-income families are paying over \$300 per month above subsidy for child care. The highest proportion of operators reporting costly childcare for low-income families are for-profit privately held operators at 42.0%.



Monthly cost above subsidy for low-income families	Not-for-profit (n=169)	For-profit, privately held (n=138)
>\$300	21.30%	42.03%
\$250-\$300	5.33%	13.04%
\$200-249	5.92%	9.42%
\$150-\$199	6.51%	6.52%
\$100-\$149	7.69%	8.70%
<\$100	37.87%	8.70%

## Overview of the Participants

1. There were 307 total respondents. 68 respondents were from Edmonton (21.6%), 61 were from Calgary (19.4%), 13 were from Red Deer (4.1%), 11 were from Lethbridge (3.5%), 9 were from St. Albert (2.9%), 7 were from Grande Prairie (2.2%), 7 were from Airdrie (2.2%), and the rest were from smaller cities, towns, and rural areas across the province.
2. Among those surveyed: 18.1% were day home operators, 57.14% were child care centre operators, 28.56% operated pre-schools, 37.14% operated school-age care programs, and 5.71% reported providing other programs.
3. Amongst those surveyed: 53.65% were not-for-profit, 43.81% were for-profit privately held, 1.9% were for-profit publicly traded, and 0.63% were municipally run.
4. 78.41% were licensed and accredited, 15.87% were licensed but not accredited, 4.44% were not licensed or accredited, and 1.27% accredited but not licensed.
5. Among all respondents, 38.73% were in operation for 20 years or more (53.85% not-for-profit and 21.74% for-profit privately held), 25.40% for 0-5 years (17.16% not-for-profit and 34.06% for-profit privately held), 20.32% from 6-10 years, and 15.56% for 11-20 years.