

# **Continuity and Change in OECD Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Regimes: Where Does Canada Fit?**

by

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## Introduction

A remarkable expansion of the welfare state in the area of early childhood education and care (ECEC) is occurring virtually unnoticed to comparative welfare state scholars. Government spending on child care and pre-primary programs for children has increased significantly over the past decade in most OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries as both a percentage of GDP and on a per child basis (See Tables 1 and 2 and Figure 1). That increased spending is reflected in increases in most countries in overall ECEC provision rates (see Table 3), although not all of that expansion is government-delivered or government-funded. Still, a much higher percentage of children are being cared for in formal ECEC programs in the early 2000s than the late 1980s, and governments have committed increasing resources to these programs, along with increased maternity and parental leave rights and benefits (see Table 4).

This expansion is occurring in an era of limited social policy budgets and overall austerity, making it of importance to comparative welfare state scholars. It could signal shifting norms regarding the relationship between states, markets and families on a number of dimensions, including the acceptability of mothers' labour market participation and the role of states (as opposed to markets and/or families) to fund and deliver programs for young children (White, 2008).

The expansion of these programs and services for young children is occurring unevenly, however, and thus presents interesting puzzles for public policy scholars: why do some governments remain reluctant to invest public resources in ECEC programs? Why do some governments choose to invest in ECEC programs at a higher rate than other governments? Why do some governments spend a greater percentage of GDP on child care programs and others on ECE programs (see Table 5)? Why do some governments target those services and others make them universally available, if not compulsory? Why do some governments contract service delivery to private actors (e.g. for-profit and not-for-profit service providers) and others deliver the services through public agencies such as schools and municipalities?

While this paper cannot answer all of these questions, it hopes to contribute to our understanding of overall patterns of ECEC provision, both historically and currently, and Canada's place within those overall patterns of provision. Canada is an important case amongst the OECD countries because it (save for Quebec) remains at the bottom, along with Ireland, in public investment in ECEC services (see Figure 2). It thus represents a "hard" case that can best illuminate the factors that inhibit or promote policy change in these areas.

This paper argues that while gender norms regarding the appropriateness of women's labour market participation remain powerfully persuasive to some societal and government actors in liberal and conservative countries, including Canada, making child care a still-contested policy area, educational norms regarding the importance of early years education are changing in a number of welfare states as a result of globalization and human capital development concerns. Those concerns about creating a skilled workforce are leading many countries to embrace public funding if not public delivery of pre-school services. The changes are most profound in some liberal welfare states, particularly the UK and USA, which perform badly on cross-national educational assessments. But evidence exists that educational norms about the importance and legitimacy of educating younger children are shifting in a number of countries, just as some governments in Europe and East Asia, facing labour market shortages, and, relatedly, demographic concerns, are increasingly turning to child care programs to encourage both women's labour market participation and higher birth rates.

The paper demonstrates, through an examination of the Canadian case, the persuasive power of scientific-based educational norms in contributing to policy changes, outside of these broader forces of change. Canada performs well on cross national student assessments and is thus not facing the same pressures to improve students' educational performance. It is also not facing the same labour market and demographic pressures as some other countries. This study uncovers the importance of science and scientific evidence promoted by a community of experts in overcoming ideological resistance to policy change (Haas, 1989). It focuses on the 1993-2004 period federally under the Liberal governments of Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin. It reveals that new educational norms about the importance of early childhood education to human capital development, promoted by influential actors, convinced the federal Martin government to press for a national "early learning and child care" or ELCC system, even in the face of federal opposition party and some provincial government resistance.

Although focused on Canada, this study has relevance beyond the case and the particular policy sector which is its focus. Analysis of ECEC provision contributes to our theoretical and empirical understanding of the factors that contribute to growth, shrinkage, or stagnation of the contemporary welfare state. This study also speaks to the literature on critical junctures. Governments are facing major choices as whether to spend money at all on ECEC programs and, if so, on what kinds of programs and policy delivery mechanisms. It is of interest to policy researchers as to why governments are making one choice over another. This paper on the Canadian case thus lays the groundwork for future research in this area comparatively across other liberal welfare states.

### The Scope and Substance of ECEC Policy Development and Change

Until the 1960s when women began to enter the labour market in increasing numbers, formal child care services were scarce, other than for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, and often for social welfare reasons, that is, to encourage the employment of women on public assistance (see for e.g. Berry, 1993; Lewis, 1993; Gauthier, 1996; O'Connor, Orloff, and Shaver, 1999). Furthermore, Barnett (1993, p. 520) notes that "Prior to 1960, it was rare for young children to attend formal educational programs and uncommon for them to be cared for outside the home for more than a few hours per day. Few mothers of young children were in the labor force, and many of these were employed only part time..." By the late 1960s and early 1970s, however, a number of countries began to pass child care legislation (see, e.g. Gauthier, 1996, p. 108 for a list of country legislation) and establish or expand public funding child care services and early childhood education services such as kindergartens. Even so, by the end of the 1980s, very few states had large numbers of children ages zero to three in formal child care settings, and liberal welfare states had limited ECE programs for children ages three to compulsory school age, although quite a few continental European countries had extensively developed ECE services, including many non-Nordic countries (for example, Belgium, France, and Italy) (see Table 3), confirming researchers' observation that child care and ECE often developed on separate tracks (e.g. Bennett, 2003). These programs were often offered on a part-time basis (e.g. Germany), but some were full-time (e.g. Belgium, France) (Gornick and Meyers, 2003, pp. 230-231).

Starting in the late 1980s, countries increasingly provided child care and ECE programs, and increasingly on a full-time basis (OECD, 2006, pp. 80-81). The OECD (2006, p. 104) also notes that "In recent years, countries with comparatively low public expenditure on children's services in the past (e.g. Ireland, Korea, Portugal, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, etc.)

have increased spending significantly. In Portugal, for example, the budget for pre-school education has more than doubled since 1996, and has tripled in Korea. In the United Kingdom, according to official projections, government expenditure will have quadrupled in the ten years from 1997-2007, from GBP 1.1 billion in 1996/7 to GBP 4.4 billion by 2007/8.” As Figure 1 reveals, the biggest jumps in spending in many countries (outside of the Nordic countries) occurred in the area of ECE.

At the same time, many countries are moving toward seeing ECE and child care services as fused and thus more effectively delivered under a single administrative auspice. In the early 1980s, most European Community countries placed programs for very young children (zero to three or four) under the Ministry of Health, or Ministry of Social Affairs, while programs for children ages four to the age of compulsory school were placed under Ministries of Education. (Pichault, 1984, Table 1). Most liberal welfare states did so as well (Meyers and Gornick, 2003, p. 387), although in England and Wales, the Ministry of Education and Science has traditionally been in charge of programs from age three (similarly in Italy), and in Belgium and France, Ministries of Education were in charge of programs from age two/two-and-a-half (Pichault, 1984, Table 1). Nordic welfare states, in contrast, and particularly Denmark and Sweden, integrated their ECEC services decades ago under Ministries of welfare (Moss, 2006, pp. 160-161).

In what Moss (2006) calls a “second wave” of integration, a number of disparate countries have integrated their ECEC administrations: the ministry of choice is Education. New Zealand was the first country to transfer child care services from welfare to education in 1986, followed by Spain in 1990, Slovenia in 1993 Sweden in 1996, and England and Scotland in 1998 (but not Northern Ireland or Wales) (Moss, 2006, pp. 161-164). Denmark, Finland and Norway, however, retain responsibility for ECEC services within the welfare system. In the United States, a number of states have created a single administrative ECEC ministry. For example, Georgia in 2004 created the Department of Early Care and Learning; and Massachusetts in 2005 and Washington State in 2006 created a consolidated office for early education and care from their old education and child care offices (OECD, 2006, p. 48). Some other states have integrated responsibility for child care and ECE under a variety of governance models. For example, the state of North Carolina has created an Office of School Readiness, Connecticut has created an early childhood cabinet, and Ohio has created a public-private partnership called the Partnership for Continued Learning (OECD, 2006, p. 435).

In Canada, fewer administrative changes have occurred at the provincial level. Responsibility for child care and education generally still rests with two different ministries, usually the Ministry of Education for kindergarten and either a Ministry of Health and Community and Social Services or Children’s Services for child care. The exceptions are the Northwest Territories and Nunavut where both child care and ECE are placed in the education ministry. In Saskatchewan, child care and ECE are the responsibility of the Ministry of Learning. In Quebec, the education ministry is responsible for school-age child care including kindergarten (Friendly et al., 2007, pp. 195-197). The federal government has no jurisdictional authority over education and thus no administrative apparatus; child care falls under the human resources and skills development department currently, and in the past was housed under health and welfare.

Calling a program “early childhood education”, however, does not necessarily make it so. In another paper (White, 2008), I argue that understanding the scope and substance of policy change requires looking beyond broad policy indicators, such as levels of public spending as a

percentage of GDP, overall provision rates, or changes in administrative authority. Overall levels of provision (that is, what percentage of children are using services) reveals little about the kinds of services in place, the mandate (educational or otherwise) of those services, and so on. As well, a country's overall spending on ECEC may be low compared to other countries but still deliver high quality programs whether because of earlier investments or the particular standards set (e.g. Sweden); similarly, a country's ECEC spending may be high but not be of as high quality because of the kinds of programs on which a government is spending money. For example, New Zealand, Quebec, the UK and USA all devote significant public resources to "educationally based" child care and pre-school programs but they allow that funding to be spent on a variety of care providers in a variety of settings and with varied staff training standards (White, 2008).

Thus, Kamerman (2000) argues that we have to look at a number of other indicators that draw our attention to policy instruments and settings: ownership and agent responsible for delivery (government; private sector – either community-based organization or commercial and if commercial, small-business or corporate); funding strategies (government funding; employer-provided; parent fees; or combination); funding targets (i.e. ECEC services (i.e. supply) or demand (e.g. parent vouchers); age group served (infants and toddlers; preschoolers; primary school-aged); other issues regarding scope and eligibility criteria (e.g. universal or targeted program delivery for the poor, children with working parents, etc.); locus of care (pre-primary school, child care centre, family day care home, in-own-home); primary caregiver (professional; paraprofessional; parent); program philosophy and curriculum framework, if any, and scope (national/regional/local; mandatory or voluntary); quality and effectiveness indicators (e.g. child/staff ratios; indicators such as "school readiness" versus "whole child" social and emotional development, etc.); and accountability measures useful to maintaining quality and other policy goals. On the basis of these indicators, the changes witnessed are a lot less extensive than the broader policy indicators reveal (although that is the subject of another paper (White, 2008)) but are still significant enough as to warrant social scientific investigation.

### Explaining Patterns of ECEC Provision

The literature on ECEC policy, albeit sparse, provides a variety of explanations for the historical patterns of ECEC services provision as well as current policy developments. While some of the early research on comparative ECEC provision merely documented cross-national variation (e.g. Kamerman, 1991), some research has emerged to explore reasons for variation in policy provision (e.g. Jenson, 1990; Gauthier, 1996; Mahon, 1999; White, 2002; Morgan, 2003). That literature is characterized by a lack of explanatory consensus as to past patterns of policy provision, and some disconnect between explanations that speak to ECE policy development and those that speak to child care policy development, as well as historical developments and current patterns of provision. Because of the complexity of the policy area, and the lack (until recently) of easily available comparable policy indicators, much of the research has been case-study focused that provides empirical detail regarding some national models but that loses its ability to generalize beyond cases.<sup>1</sup> Insofar as feminist literature has paid attention to these policies, often

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<sup>1</sup> The comparative ECEC literature that focuses on liberal welfare states includes Baker (1995) and O'Connor, Orloff and Shaver (1999); as well as country studies by Brennan (1998) on Australia; Prochner and Howe (2000) and Timpson (2001) on Canada; May (1997; 2001) on New Zealand; Randall (2000) on the UK; and Michel (1999), Rose (1999), Cohen (2001), and

the research treats women's labour market participation and women's equality as the dependent variable, and welfare state structures, including ECEC provision, as the independent variables affecting the extent to which women can achieve equality (e.g., England, 1996; Michel, 1999; Timpson, 2001; Gornick and Meyers, 2003). At the same time, as Jordan (2006, p. 1110) points out, "a coherent explanation for gendered variation [in social policy provision] has been slow to develop."

The literature has also until very recently ignored or underplayed the significance of educational norms; that is, the degree to which states and societies accept a state role in the provision of early education services (educational services below the age of compulsory school) (although see Olmsted and Weikart, 1989; Beatty, 1995; Valiente, 2002). Instead, the literature has focused on functional explanations that examine countries' workforce needs (Peng, 2002; Jordan, 2006) or the impact of other demographic changes such as fertility levels (Gauthier, 1996; Peng, 2002); cultural factors such as the impact of religion and confessional parties (Van Kersbergen, 1995; Korpi, 2000; Morgan, 2006); agency factors such as the extent of women's political activism and connection to political parties and party politics (Hobson and Lindholm, 1997; Huber and Stephens, 2000); institutional factors such as federalism and/or degree of state centralization or decentralization (Evers, Lewis, and Riedel, 2005; Rauch, 2005); and welfare regime (Esping-Andersen, 1990; 1999) and gender regime patterns (Lewis, 1992; O'Connor, 1993; Orloff, 1993; Sainsbury, 1994, 1996, 1999; Mahon, 2002; Gornick and Meyers, 2004). While a number of these factors are partially explanatory of variation in ECEC provision across countries, they are not sufficient to account fully for that variation, or for the changes documented above.

Jordan (2006), for example, argues that variation in French, German, and Swedish work and family policies reflects the extent to which these countries faced labour shortages and had to rely on women's labour as opposed to immigrant or migrant labour. Thus, "where immigrants were incapable of resolving labor shortages, women became the primary source of reserve labor requiring the state to adopt policies designed to promote women's employment and support dual-earner families" (Jordan, 2006, p. 1110). In other words, the gender regime established had little to do with conservative or egalitarian cultural philosophies and more to do with states' position on immigration. Germany was much more open to migrant labour after WWII, dampening its need for women's paid labour, whereas Sweden and France relied less on migrant labour and more on women's labour. Peng (2002) sees similar concerns about population decline and a shrinking workforce motivating contemporary policy developments in Japan.

Functional explanations do not carry well beyond particular countries studied, however, or for all aspects of ECEC policy. First, Jordan's (2006) argument regarding labour market strategies assumes that governments have only two options in response to labour shortages: hire more women or allow more immigration. In fact, government responses can be more complex. For example, in the United States in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, policy makers needed labour but also feared a "race suicide." As a result, U.S. governments imposed immigration restrictions and some eugenicist measures, such as sterilization of the "feebleminded" (May, 1995). At the same time, they adopted a number of measures designed to improve the lives and health of mainly white women and children; those measures were designed explicitly to

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Stoltzfus (2003) on the USA. More cross-national country surveys include Jenson and Sineau (2001) and Michel and Mahon (2002); and numerous essays in the journal *Social Politics*, including Mahon (1997), Bussemaker (1998), and Bicskei (2006), among others.

*discourage* white women's labor market participation, not encourage it (Skocpol, 1992; Ladd-Taylor, 1994; Mink, 1995; Michel, 1999).

Furthermore, such functional arguments also cannot account for why countries such as Canada and the United States did not introduce child care policies in the 1970s when workforce conditions encouraged women's labour market participation. While one could assume that employers had an interest in facilitating those skilled and unskilled workers' participation, governments did not respond with increased public child care provision.

This explanation also only accounts for child care portion of ECEC spending, and not pre-primary programs. While gender norms regarding women's labour market participation may provide analytic leverage to understand patterns of public provision in some countries for children ages zero to three, they account less well for patterns of public provision for children ages three to compulsory school age. For example, some countries, such as Belgium, France, and Italy, with traditionally lower rates of women's and mothers' labour market participation than social democratic and some liberal welfare states (see Table 6), have nearly universal ECE provision. In other words, these programs have very little relationship to labour market conditions. Barnett and Yarosz (2007, p. 3) also argue with regard to the USA that women's labour market participation rates are not driving increased participation in pre-school programs. They point out that "Over the past half century, preschool participation has increased at the same pace for children whether or not their mothers are employed outside the home. The primary source [of the increase] is increased demand for the education of young children by all parents."

Countries may not be motivated by labour market considerations alone but also demographic concerns such as falling fertility rates. While most contemporary scholarship focuses on how family policies can affect fertility rates (Gauthier, 2007), in her 1996 book, Gauthier argues that "demographic changes have been a major driving force in bringing population and family issues to the political agenda and influencing the development of related policies," although political ideology and country history has determined particular governments' reactions to those concerns (Gauthier, 1996, pp. 2-3). Some governments responded by providing increased cash and in-kind benefits to families to encourage childbearing, others more coercive measures such as restricting access to contraception and abortion, and others nothing at all. Some countries varied their responses over time as well. Child care policies were offered up as part of the solution to declining childbirth rates, along with a host of other measures (Gauthier, 1996, pp. 10-11).

While fear of population decline has been well-documented as a motivating factor in government policy making in a number of country studies, Gauthier's (1996) comparative work demonstrates that the issue of demography is very complex and is complicated by concerns about poverty, social exclusion and labour market issues, making it hard to identify demography as the sufficient causal factor. As well, given that countries respond very differently to those population concerns requires researchers to look beyond demography in order to understand specific patterns of ECEC provision.

Other scholars examine the impact of broad cultural or ideological factors in explaining cross-national variation in ECEC provision. Morgan (2006, p. 2), for example, argues that state provision of ECEC policies and programs depends on societal acceptance "that mothers should work while their children are young and that the state should influence family care arrangements" and political dominance by secular authorities within the state decision making apparatus. She argues that "organized religion has played a critical role in shaping political ideologies about gender roles and the appropriate relationship between the state and the family"

and that “patterns of church-state relations and religious conflict had an enduring impact on early family and educational politics, as well as the way religion would be incorporated into politics” (Morgan, 2006, pp. 2-3). Thus, in Sweden and France, where state authorities usurped the power of religious authorities, they could secularize family policies and play a more active role in delivering those programs. In the Netherlands and the United States, in contrast, social conservative religious groups gained greater influence in politics and thus could ensure that state policy reinforced traditional gender roles. Korpi (2000), in a quantitative analysis of contemporary welfare states, argues as well that countries with strong religious traditions manifest in confessional party dominance tend to adopt more of family-focused social policies than secular conservative parties, which tend to adopt more market-oriented policies, and left parties, which tend to adopt dual-earner reinforcing policies.

Korpi (2000) and Morgan (2006) differ in how they characterize the United States in their analyses. Korpi (2000) sees the USA as a secular political state, like Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, dominated by conservative centrist parties, not confessional parties, and the Netherlands as having stronger confessional party influence. Thus, the Netherlands and the USA seem to have less in common politically than Morgan (2006) suggests, although US politics has certainly been subject to social conservative interest group politics.

The power of social conservative interests does not really provide a satisfactory explanation for variation in ECEC provision, however. Both France and the USA, for example, have had fairly strong religious- and familial-based conservative social movements that advocate for women’s place in the home (e.g. Klaus, 1993; Pedersen, 1993; Michel, 1999). In France, strong religious, pronatalist, and familial conservative organizations were influential politically during much of the pre- and most of the post-WWII period (Cova, 1991; Offen, 1991). While that period marked a great deal of socially conservative legislation, for example, around abortion, it also marked an expansion of social policies to support the family, which provided the basis for program development in the 1960s and beyond (White, 2004). In the United States, socially conservative groups were not dominant in the 1960s and 1970s but have grown in strength politically since the 1980s (Diamond, 1995); yet, ironically again, child care programs in particular have expanded at the same time. As Cohen (2001: 17-18) points out, some of the most significant changes in US child care policymaking in fact were enacted under divided government, that is, under a Republican President and Democratic Congress (e.g. the Child Care Development Block Grant under George H.W. Bush in 1990) and with a Democratic President and Republican Congress (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families-related child care funding in 1996), with little happening in periods of unified Democratic governments (Carter 1977-1980 and Clinton 1993-1994) (Cohen, 2001, p. 286). In turn, the major expansion of child care services in France occurred in the post-1960s period, under mainly center-right governments (White, 2004), with a major slowing of policies under the left-wing Mitterrand government (Jenson and Sineau, 1995).

Furthermore, there are strong exceptions to the argument that confessional party dominance necessarily limits ECEC provision, and strong left party dominance, often tied with feminist organizations promotes ECEC provision (Hobson and Lindholm, 1997). While it is true that the Netherlands, along with Ireland, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, and Austria historically have weak levels of child care provision, and they all have strong confessional and/or conservative centrist party traditions, Belgium, which Korpi (2000) rates as having strong confessional party dominance, and France with its conservative centrist party dominance, have

greater child care and ECE provision, and weaker feminist organizations compared to Sweden or the USA (Duchen, 1986; Gelb, 1989; Hobson and Lindholm, 1997).

Finally, these normative arguments seem to speak more to norms affecting child care provision, rather than ECE provision. As mentioned above, Italy, Belgium, and France have all developed near-universal ECE programs, yet Korpi (2000) characterizes both Italy and Belgium as having strong confessional parties. This suggests that strong educational norms can develop even in religious-dominated polities, and leads us to consider the connections between the development of ECEC programs and public education programs in general.

Of the many political science and sociology texts on the welfare state in recent years, only Lindert (2004) discusses educational spending and the development of mass schooling as a major part of the development of the welfare state. As Lindert (2004, p. 87) argues, educational spending has always been controversial. Despite the fact that “expenditures on public schooling are the most positively productive in the sense of raising national product per capita” there is great unevenness in the money that states commit to public funding. In an historical analysis that covers the 1800-2000 period, Lindert (2004) notes that the pattern of public educational spending was zero or negligible in most industrializing countries of Europe and North America around 1850, and varied from 0.07 per cent of GNP in England and Wales, 0.13 per cent in France, and 0.29 per cent in the Netherlands. The USA and Belgium demonstrated early leadership, spending 0.33 per cent of GNP in the United States, and 0.38 per cent in Belgium. By the late 1800s, Prussia was a leader in tax-based mass public schooling, as was the USA, Upper Canada, Australia, and France. The fact that Germany (particularly Prussia), the USA and Upper Canada were leaders in mass schooling before these other polities raises a puzzle in that, as Lindert (2004, p. 99) points out, these are countries with “extremely opposing philosophies of government’s role.” Lindert (2004, p. 123) argues that “It looks just as odd that relatively laissez-faire Canada and the United States would be leaders in raising local taxes for schools as it looks to see a conservative Junker-dominated state be the pioneer in egalitarian schooling for all.”

Lindert (2004, pp. 24-25) argues that the reasons for countries to become policy leaders in this area were first because of “systematic influence of the spread of voting rights upon primary-school enrollments.” That is, as democracy spread within and between countries, public spending on public school increased as well. Those regions within North America that were “still controlled by a landed elite or by a single religion” remained “educational backwaters”: the U.S. South, Quebec, and the Maritime provinces in Canada (Lindert, 2004, p. 25). In contrast, “Britain was an educational laggard in the nineteenth century largely because educational reform was blocked by suffrage restrictions and by government centralization” (Lindert, 2004, p. 88). While England had high levels of literacy amongst its elite (e.g. clergy, professionals, and commercial classes), that literacy was achieved through private schooling (Lindert, 2004, p. 113). The extension of voting rights in the late 1800s in turn brought with it the extension of public education.

The second factor Lindert examines is revealed especially when one studies the cases of Germany (whose national government remained relatively undemocratic) and North America. Lindert (2004, p. 25) argues decentralization of authority over public schools also played a role in promoting public spending on education. Local authorities’ ability to tax and administer schools allowed for the spread of public education, although unevenly, with landed Junkers (whose influence was largely national) blocking tax-based school financing in their localities, and southern plantation owners in the USA doing the same. Thus, decentralization seems to

have been a force for both the spread and the unevenness of education in both Germany and the USA (Lindert, 2004, p. 25, 115-127). Decentralization also helped mass education expand in France, another leader in mass public education by the late 1880s (Lindert, 2004, pp. 110-113). After Emperor Napoleon II's rejection of a universal primary education plan proposed by his education minister, Victor Duruy, the government passed a law that allowed communes to raise more local taxes and which mandated more girls' schools (Lindert, 2004, p. 111). Communes thus increased local taxation which provided a funding base for education.<sup>2</sup> After France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian war, both educational expenditures and enrolments increased, culminating in the passage of the Laic Laws of the 1880s that saw the abolition of fees for elementary schools and spending on the part of the national government on teachers' salaries, "while the local governments provided and maintained the schools and teachers' lodging" (Lindert, 2004, pp. 112-113). France's decentralization, Lindert argues, thus facilitated the development of education in France early on, but then centralization took over as a driver of mass public schooling by the 1880s. In England, in contrast, the national Parliament erected barriers to prevent local governments from raising local taxes, including a weighted voting scheme that favoured property owners (Lindert, 2004, p. 114).

Two lessons emerge from Lindert's (2004) study: first, the extent to which a state assumes responsibility for public funding and delivery of educational services does not necessarily adhere to typical welfare regime categorization, and may be related to contextual and historically contingent political and economic factors; second, federalism or, more precisely, decentralization can facilitate the development of programs, although centralization at some point is necessary for universalization to occur.

Federalism and decentralization clearly play a role in contemporary ECEC provision, although the causal relationships are difficult to determine. Comparative scholars dispute the impact of federal structures and levels of decentralization on public policies. Treisman (2007) argues that arguments that claim decentralization encourages more effective policies and accountable governments do not hold up under theoretical or empirical scrutiny in his cases examined (mainly Russia, China, and other developing countries). However, in a more historical and case-focused analysis of federal countries in the developed world, Leibfried, and Castles, and Obinger (2005, p. 308) find that "federalism does indeed have inhibitory effects on welfare state development, but that these effects have crucial temporal and contextual limitations...under certain circumstance, federalism may actually serve to encourage the growth of social expenditure." Henderson and White (2004), in an analysis of child care, ECE, and maternity/parental leave provision in developed welfare states examines statistically the impact of a number of political institutional "veto" factors, such as whether a country has a presidential or parliamentary system, whether the legislature is bicameral or unicameral, and whether it is federal or unitary, with the hypothesis that countries with more numerous veto points will have more difficulty getting any kind of legislation passed, particularly legislation that requires increased public expenditure (Huber and Stephens, 2000). They find that an increased number of vetoes – measured as presidential, bicameral, and federal systems – produced less extensive ECE provision over the 1980-2000 period studies and was also true for child care provision by the late 1990s. However, they found that system vetoes were a significant and positive predictor for maternity/parental leave only in 1998, suggesting that for policies already in place, system vetoes

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<sup>2</sup> Lindert (2004, p. 115) notes that local taxing authority and smaller central government role also played a role in school expansion in Italy.

can provide a bulwark against welfare state retrenchment (see also Leibfried, Castles, and Obinger, 2005).

Empirical case studies of specific countries' ECEC provision reinforce the comparativist scholars' claims of the contingent effect of federalism and decentralization. While White (2001) argues federalism appeared to hamper Canadian child care policy development in the late 1990s, by the mid-2000s, federalism proved less restrictive to policy development than did partisan ideological factors (Friendly and White, 2007). In Australia, while early child services are the responsibility of state governments, as in Canada, the Commonwealth government is very much involved in funding and regulating child care services and pre-schools, although the OECD (2006, pp. 267-268) reports that "Australia's complex and multi-layered system of policy development, funding and provision of ECEC may inhibit coordination" (see also OECD, 2006, p. 272).

Some scholars have looked in particular at the relations between central and local governments to explain variation in ECEC provision. Rauch (2005), for example, argues that greater institutional decentralization in Norway but without fiscal autonomy allowed for more veto opportunities amongst municipal players, including NGOs, and accounts for why child care provision for children under age three and rates of full-time provision lag behind other unitary Scandinavian countries: Sweden and Denmark. Local autonomy, with concomitant fiscal capacity, however, is useful in encouraging both expansion and experimentation. Cohen et al. (2004, p. 32) argue that the UK has experienced greater centralization of authority over education services which has prevented local authorities from developing ECEC services themselves, and has fueled a vast but unstable market in ECEC services. Evers, Lewis, and Riedel (2005) note that while the development of ECEC services has been slower in Germany, the subsidiarity model has allowed for steadier growth based on community-based service provision. A similar decentralized approach in Sweden facilitated integration and good relations between schools, pre-schools, and school-age services and more choices for parents, Cohen et al. argue (2004, p. 33; see also Wincott, 2005; Turgeon, 2008).

### Contemporary Policy Change: What Accounts for Changing ECEC Norms?

Clearly country-specific and historically-contingent factors render generalizable explanations of ECEC policy development very difficult to establish. Are generalizable explanations possible with regard to changes in contemporary ECEC provision? Randall (2000, p. 346), for example, argues that "a number of trends and policy developments might have been expected, in combination, to encourage increasing childcare policy convergence. These include: the rising rate both of mothers in paid employment and of single-parent families; shifts in national welfare and labour market policy priorities, resulting from external economic pressures; internal pressures on the welfare system and the influence of market-oriented ideology; developments in EU childcare policy itself; and the impact of feminist thinking and activism." Randall (2000, pp. 346-347) herself concludes, however, that "the overall trend towards convergence has been limited"; rather, "different traditions of state intervention in social provision, specific exigencies of the labour market, and population concerns have all contributed to contrasting policy outcomes" (Randall, 2000, p. 352; see also Henderson and White, 2004).

Still, Table 7 identifies some distinguishable norms in ECEC provision that correspond roughly with Esping-Andersen's (1990) welfare regime categorizations,<sup>3</sup> although with some

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<sup>3</sup> Esping-Andersen (1999, p. 73) defines welfare regimes as "the ways in which welfare production is allocated between state, market and households."

outliers. As of the mid-2000s, variation can be seen first in norms regarding the appropriate age at which children should be attending school on a compulsory basis (ranging from age five in Hungary, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, and the UK, to age six in most other liberal and conservative welfare states, as well as Finland and Iceland, and to age seven in the rest of the Nordic welfare states and Poland); and second, the extent to which the state should be responsible for educating, socializing and funding care for children prior to their entry to compulsory school. Governments in liberal welfare states tend to conceive of public services for children ages zero to four as “care” rather than “education” to be delivered mainly through markets for those other than the neediest. Governments in conservative continental European countries overwhelmingly tend to invest in ECE services – part-time and full-time – for children ages three to compulsory school age, and to deliver those services mainly through public agencies, although some continental European countries are more “liberal” in orientation and rely on markets for child care provision for children ages zero to three. In Nordic countries, a single, public ECEC system cares for children for a much longer period of time before public school begins at age six or seven, and the programs tend to be full-time centre-based services as opposed to school-based ECE services and emphasize a whole package of social pedagogical goals, and not just school readiness (Bennett, 2005).

Yet, it is in the liberal welfare states where some of the greatest growth in public funding (though not necessarily public delivery) is occurring, particularly in ECE provision. Table 5 reveals that the UK and USA stand out as unlikely leaders amongst the liberal welfare states in terms of state expenditure on ECEC programs, Quebec stands out as a leader on child care spending, and the “Rest of Canada” stands out as an unlikely laggard given government spending in other social policy areas. The proportionately higher spending on ECE programs especially in the UK and USA compared to other liberal welfare states does not seem to be congruous with these countries’ spending on primary and secondary education which appears typical of other liberal welfare regimes (Table 5).

The above suggests that variation in ECEC provision needs to be plotted on three (inter-related) dimensions: 1. the degree to which governments are committed to enhancing women’s labour market participation (for a variety of reasons including gender equality and demographic concerns); 2. the degree to which governments are committed to promoting early years schooling either for educational “school readiness” or social pedagogical reasons (Bennett, 2005); and 3. the degree to which governments are committed to funding (and/or delivering) either of these programs publicly. The first commitment leads governments to fund full-day child care services, as in Quebec, where a much higher proportion of spending is on full-day child care services rather than school-based ECE services (Table 5).<sup>4</sup> The second commitment leads governments to fund ECE program development. The third commitment (outside of the scope of this study) relates to the quantity versus quality of program development; it is relevant to this study because

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<sup>4</sup> In his 1997 communiqué announcing Quebec’s new family policy, including a full-day kindergarten program for five-year-olds only and \$5 per day child care for children ages zero to four, then-Premier Lucien Bouchard listed a number of reasons for the program investment, including “the fight against poverty, equal opportunity, the development of the social market economy, transition from welfare to the workforce and increased supports to working parents” (Tougas, 2002, p. 1). Baker, Gruber, and Milligan (2005) have found the policy to have stimulated women’s labour market participation, and although the Quebec government has labeled its program “educational child care” (Québec Ministère de l’Emploi, de la Solidarité Sociale et de la Famille, 1997), the decision not to fund full-day school-based kindergarten services for children younger than age five suggests that labour market supportive full-day care provision, rather than an exclusive concern about pedagogy drove policy makers’ thinking regarding children ages zero to four.

it can account for why program expansion is occurring rapidly in countries such as the UK, USA and New Zealand, where a variety of programs are being labeled “ECE” but are being delivered through a range of providers, including schools, commercial centres, and even family day care providers, and by staff with varied (and often limited) training. In contrast, ECE programs are developing more slowly in Canada where governments are (so far) committed to public delivery as well as funding of ECE programs (White, 2008).

The questions, then, are first, why are governments willing to provide public funding at all for programs which have traditionally been conceived of as private services to be purchased in the market? Second, why do governments make the choice to focus public funding on one program versus another? Third, why is this conceptual blurring between education and care services occurring?<sup>5</sup> The ideational literature suggests the importance of four interrelated factors that contribute to policy change (Haas, 2008) that can usefully be incorporated into our analysis:

### *1. Congruence of new ideas with dominant paradigms*

One important factor has been a paradigm change in the way countries approach the issue of economic productivity. As Jenson and Saint-Martin (2003, p. 93) argue, “All countries are currently engaged in redesigning their welfare architecture and citizenship regimes”<sup>6</sup> to reflect a *social investment* model of welfare state program delivery out of concern that, under globalization, states will not be able to compete without a highly skilled workforce. This social investment model entails investing in human capital development policies that will ensure that all adults are productive participants in a competitive and globalized economy.

A social investment strategy focuses on developing active labour market policies, modernizing social protection policies, and combating social exclusion (Jenson and Saint-Martin, 2003, p. 78). That is, policies and programs should no longer be designed to support the traditional male breadwinner-female caregiver and the long-term unemployed but rather to encourage all adults to participate actively in the labour market. Governments should pay particular attention to and eliminate the factors that prevent adult labour market participation (such as caregiving responsibilities, illiteracy and poor training, poverty, and so on). Child care services provide an important means of ensuring parents’ full time labour market participation, thus reducing social exclusion and labour shortages.

In addition, Dobrowolsky and Jenson (2004; see also Jenson, 2004) argue that children, rather than adult wage-earners, have become the legitimate subjects of a social investment strategy, as opposed to adults who were the subjects of the previous Keynesian social security strategy designed, however imperfectly, to protect people from the vagaries of the market. Children are the core of this social investment strategy from both a population health and human capital development perspective. By investing in ECEC services, governments not only provide the means to allow parents to participate in the labour market, as well as balance work and family life, and stave off poverty and social exclusion, but they also prepare all children for the future so that they can be productive adults themselves (Jenson, 2006, pp. 36-37). As Esping-Andersen et al. (2002, p. 20) articulate the argument, “The quality of childhood matters ever

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<sup>5</sup> Evidence suggests the level of structural and pedagogical integration of child care and ECE services in liberal welfare states remains somewhat shallow, despite integration conceptually (White, 2008).

<sup>6</sup> Jenson and Saint-Martin (2003, p. 93) define a citizenship regime as “the institutional arrangements, rules and understandings that guide and shape concurrent policy decisions and expenditures of states, problem definitions by states and citizens, and claims-making by citizens” and in particular the “responsibility mix” between states, markets, and families regarding social reproduction, and the boundaries of rights inclusion in a political community.

more for subsequent life chances” because “It is in childhood that citizens acquire most of the capital that they, later, will activate in the pursuit of a good life.”

The belief in the need to be competitive in a globalized world of free-flowing capital rests on human capital development arguments that labour markets need to be flexible and able to adapt. That knowledgeable and adaptable workforce is necessary because “the only real asset that most advanced nations hold is the quality and skills of their people” (Esping-Andersen, 2002, p. 28); thus industrialized economies depend more and more on being able to “mobilize the productive potential of those who today are children” (ibid.). If schools fail to create that workforce, then a government needs to adopt strategies and policies to make sure its workforce adapts such as through job retraining. But “Remedial policies once people have reached adulthood are unlikely to be effective unless these adults started out with sufficient cognitive and social skills. A social investment strategy directed at children must [therefore] be a centerpiece of any policy for social inclusion” (Esping-Andersen, 2002, p. 30). While child care advocates have long argued that a child-oriented policy strategy should include programs to support children’s development, learning, and socialization, governments’ focus on investment leads them to gravitate toward more cognitively-oriented “educational” ECE programs.

## *2. Perception of a crisis to disrupt standard operating procedures*

Given the belief in the importance of a highly skilled and highly educated workforce to compete in an increasingly globalized economy, how countries perform on cross-national educational assessments has become increasingly important in swaying policy opinion. Since the introduction of the US Department of Education’s Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and especially since 2000 with the introduction of the OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), cross-national benchmarking in educational performance has been possible. The results of those assessments reveal that Canada and Australia perform consistently above average, indeed, near the top of the international rankings, whereas the USA performs consistently at or below average on both PISA and TIMSS. The results for New Zealand and the UK vary. In the 1999 TIMSS results, New Zealand and England performed similarly to the USA (that is, average) on mathematics achievement of eighth-graders, but while New Zealand and the USA performed similarly average on science achievement, England performed above average and similarly to Australia and Canada (IES, 2008). On PISA assessments, however, New Zealand performs consistently well above average, similar to Australia and Canada, whereas the UK performs poorly (although not as poorly as the USA which ranks at or below average among the participating countries (see Table 8).

We can hypothesize that countries that perform relatively poorly on these international rankings, such as the UK and USA, are more willing to invest public funding in early childhood education as a means to improve student test scores [run regression analysis]. New Zealand’s investment in free ECE services for all families seems to disprove that hypothesis. However, as White (2008) demonstrates, New Zealand was an early leader in ECEC integration and ECE investment. By its own acknowledgement (Statistics New Zealand, 1998, pp. 30-31), New Zealand performed extremely poorly on the 1995 TIMSS assessment, which may have prompted the New Zealand government to invest in ECE, among other reforms.

Further country-by-country research would need to be conducted to establish definitively this causal link. But certainly in the case of Australia and Canada, “PISA complacency” as opposed to “PISA shock” could explain why there is less domestic outcry for early childhood education programs than in the UK and USA. As Coulombe (2007) argues, Canada does well

not just in terms of overall performance results but also on other measures such as educational equality of opportunity. That is, the gap between the performance of students from families with high socio-economic status versus low socioeconomic status was smaller in Canada on the 2003 PISA than in other industrialized countries, which indicates that “the Canadian school system does a relatively good job of improving the skills of students with a low socio-economic background and, therefore, of reducing socio-economic disparities” (Coulombe, 2007, p. 59, citing Bussière et al., 2004). In addition, the percent of students ranked as “poor” performers on the 2003 PISA was lower than every other country save for Finland, all of which suggests that “Canada might well have one of the best public education systems in the world for primary and secondary schooling” (Coulombe, 2007, p. 59). How, then, to explain why the Canadian federal government embarked in the early 2000s on an initiative to establish a national system of early learning and child care (ELCC) and, more importantly, was (briefly) successful?

### *3. Privileged body of knowledge embodied in experts using appropriate policy frames*

Even in countries not facing an educational performance “crisis”, social scientific and scientific evidence increasingly points to ECE programs as a way to overcome economic and social disadvantage and to promote social inclusion to ensure student and adult success. Kamerman and Waldfogel (2005, pp. 192-193) write “Even the Nordic and other countries that began with freestanding ECEC programs or programs under social welfare auspices (Sweden, Scotland, Spain, northern Italy) are now moving toward education auspices, driven by more extensive public support for an educational component in the early childhood program and support for education in general.” A great deal of that support for educationally-focused early years programs is driven by the increasing scientific evidence of the positive effects of ECE programs and services on students’ educational performance in high school (see OECD, 2008, C012.2), as well as individuals’ overall development and economic success. The wealth of evidence on that front is too vast to summarize here, but the 2006 OECD *Starting Strong II* report (annex d) contains a summary of some of the international research that supports the claim that public investment in high quality ECEC programs leads to children’s success, not just in the primary grades of school, but throughout their lives in the form of higher high school graduation rates, improved employment and earnings, better health outcomes, less welfare dependency and juvenile delinquency.

Cost-benefit analyses factor heavily into the persuasiveness of the policy recommendations, with the claim that investment in these programs delivers future positive economic returns (e.g. Cleveland and Krashinsky, 1998; Keating and Hertzman, 1999; Lynch, 2004; Heckman, 2006; Temple and Reynolds, 2007). Cost-benefit considerations are often at the root of whether programs should be delivered in a targeted or universal manner, and whether governments should commit resources broadly to early child development programs writ large such as child health and child nutrition, or specifically early childhood education and care. Jenson and Saint-Martin (2003, p. 87) suggest that if human capital development is a government’s principal concern, then it will focus on targeted programs “to particular populations categories deemed to be at the margins, or at risk of exclusion” such as the National Child Benefit program in Canada, as well as Community Action Program for Children, Aboriginal Head Start, and so on, or Sure Start in the UK. However, as Doherty (2007) and others (e.g. Evans, Hertzman, and Morgan, 2007) argue, it is often difficult for governments to clearly identify which populations are “at risk” and the populations that would benefit most from

these programs can be much larger than and different from traditionally targeted populations such as low-income families.

Critical scholars of evidence-based decision making stress the political nature of scientific evidence and policies adopted on the basis of scientific understandings of the world are in fact politics by other means (e.g. Bunge, 1991). Constructivist approaches to policy analysis thus stress the importance of science that is developed “authoritatively, and then delivered by responsible carriers to politicians” (Haas, 2004, p. 575). Thus, both the content of ideas and their carriers are important. Regarding the content of ideas, Haas (2004, p. 572) argues that “we shouldn’t assume that all organizations are rational and will automatically recognize and adopt what prove to be the appropriate policy responses.” Key, rather, is that the knowledge is seen as “usable knowledge” that is “accurate and politically tractable for its users” (Haas, 2004, p. 574). It must be credible (that is, believed to be true); believed to be legitimate and “developed through a process that minimizes the potential for bias”; and salient, that is, presented in a timely manner. In addition, “It must be capable of mobilizing sufficient political support to produce agreement,” “capable of generating solutions that can be implemented,” and “capable of generating solutions that are instrumental towards solving the problems for which they were designed” (Haas, 2004, p. 575). Primary research that has been vetted through proper peer review becomes a useful tool in policy research.

Not only is content important but so are the carriers. Haas (1989, p. 384, n. 20) and other constructivist scholars stress the importance of an epistemic community: a “community of experts sharing a belief in a common set of cause-and-effect relationships as well as common values to which policies governing these relationships will be applied.” The scientific grounding of some policy areas privileges the voices of experts such as economists, developmental psychologists, doctors, even neuroscientists, as opposed to traditional policy actors such as child care advocates and feminist advocacy groups. Haas (2004, p. 575) argues these experts’ professions carry esteem “and thus command the greatest social legitimacy and deference when providing policy advice.” The weight of scientific or economic authority, the perceived degree of autonomy and independence of experts from politics, and the fit of proposed solutions with human capital development concerns, make ideas carried by an epistemic community more persuasive in overcoming traditional resistance to these programs, particularly in liberal welfare states without a strong tradition of support for public ECEC programs.

#### *4. Institutionalization of that knowledge and expertise in authoritative offices*

Do policy makers make decisions based on scientific evidence? Does evidence-based policy making occur? How much evidence is needed to be persuasive? Can scientific evidence counter entrenched ideological positions? Agency-centred analyses of the mainly US-based ECE policy expansion assert that policy change is largely the result of advocates, namely well-endowed lobbyists and skilled “framers” of the policy debates who are successfully using their organizational resources to persuade policy makers to act (e.g. Fuller, 2007; Imig, 2006; Imig and Meyer, 2007; Kirp, 2007). Other recent research on the US-experience suggests, however, that there may be a disconnect between scientific consensus as to “best practices” and the policies that emerge within a jurisdiction; that organized interests and policy entrepreneurs may not have as great an ability to sway policy makers as other researchers believe; and that governments (executives, legislators, bureaucracies) may play a stronger role in determining the scope and nature of pre-k policies that emerge than the previously-mentioned research suggests (e.g. Haskins, 2005; Phillips and McCartney, 2005; Bushouse, 2007).

As Haas (2004, p. 571) argues from analysis of climate change policy, “science is seldom directly converted to policy. The path from truth to power is a circuitous route at best.” Usable knowledge must find some way through the hallways of power. Haas (2004) thus stresses the need to establish authoritative networks of scientific expertise. The institutional literature stresses in addition the need for the institutionalization of that knowledge in decision making bodies for policy change to be successful (Steinmo, Thelen, and Longstreth, 1992). Thus, while the organizational resources of interest groups are considerable in the USA (see, for e.g. Kirp, 2007), as will be demonstrated below, an epistemic community operating within centralized, executive-dominated Westminster parliamentary system such as Canada has been very effective in transmitting ideas to the highest levels of political office in Canada and has achieved greater (though so far fleeting) policy success than the pre-k network has been in the decentralized and fragmented decision making environment of the USA (Fuller, 2007; Kirp, 2007).

### Testing the Importance of Institutionalizing Expert Knowledge: The Case of Canada

Federal involvement in child care support began with the introduction of the federal Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) in 1966, which provided provinces and territories with cost-shared funds to support the cost of child care for eligible low income families. Federal conditions determined eligibility, which applied to both service providers and parent-users. Governments at the time conceptualized child care purely as part of employment support for low income families, not as an early learning program, although the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada recommended in 1970 that a national child care program should be conceived of more broadly than simply part of social assistance as set up under CAP, and should “be designed for all families who need it and wish to use it” (Canada, Royal Commission on the Status of Women, 1970, p. 270). Furthermore, the Commission highlighted some of the developmental benefits for children of formal programs.<sup>7</sup>

The Canadian federal government began to talk seriously about federal funding for a national child care program in the mid-1980s when the Liberal government under Pierre Trudeau appointed the Ministerial-level Task Force on Child Care (1986). After the Liberals lost the 1984 election, the new Conservative government under Brian Mulroney established a Special Parliamentary Committee on child care, and then tabled Bill C-144, the Canada Child Care Act (Canada, House of Commons, 1988). That legislation died when Prime Minister Mulroney called the 1988 federal election and the Mulroney government did not revisit child care policy again after its re-election. In 1993, the federal Liberal party under Jean Chrétien campaigned to spend \$720 million on child care over three years and to create up to 50,000 new regulated spaces per year for three years, but added two caveats to its election platform promise: spaces would only be created in a year following a year of three per cent economic growth; and the program would be introduced only with the agreement of the provinces (Liberal Party of Canada 1993, pp. 38-40). As a result of slow economic growth, that election promise was not fulfilled.

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<sup>7</sup>The Commission (1970, p. 262) reported noted one of the submitted briefs that argued: “We must realize that it is not necessarily true at all that all children are better off at home with their mothers; in fact, it has often seemed to me that many children would be happier and healthier (mentally) if they could be in the company of other children their own day for some part of the day.” The Commission (1970, p. 261) also noted a (revolutionary) change in thinking amongst developmental psychologists: “...psychologists do not necessarily insist that the adult in charge [of a child] be the natural mother. A mother substitute can fill the role. Perhaps more significant is the further conclusion that additional sympathetic care from several adults may be more beneficial to the child than exclusive attachment to one.” Excellent studies that document the changes in developmental psychology on this issue include Hulbert (2003) and Vinovskis (2005).

Instead, after the 1995 Quebec referendum, the federal government pledged in its 1996 Throne Speech that it would “not use its spending power to create new shared-cost programs in areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction without the consent of a majority of the provinces.” It also stated that “any new program will be designed so that non-participating provinces will be compensated, provided they establish equivalent or comparable initiatives” (Canada, House of Commons, 1996, p. 4).

The federal government thus looked to be getting out of the business of funding national social service delivery, although it agreed in 1997 to the introduction of the National Child Benefit income supplement program. Surprisingly then, in 2000, the Chrétien government negotiated the Federal–Provincial–Territorial Agreement on Early Childhood Development (ECDA). Signed by all provinces except Quebec in September 2000, it provided federal transfer funds in the amount of \$2.2 billion over five years, beginning in 2001-2002 to help provincial and territorial governments improve and expand early childhood development programs and services in four priority areas: healthy pregnancy, birth and infancy; parenting and family supports; early childhood development, learning and care; and community supports (CICS, 2000). Then, in an effort to direct monies more explicitly to child care programs, in March 2003, the Federal Human Resources Minister Jane Stewart reached an agreement with Provincial and Territorial Ministers Responsible for Social Services (except Quebec), called the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care (MFA). The federal government agreed to provide \$900 million over five years, beginning in 2003, to support provincial and territorial government investments in early learning and child care (CICS, 2003).

Beginning with the July 2004 federal election campaign and ending with the defeat of the government in December 2005, the federal Liberal government under Paul Martin negotiated with the provinces to spend an additional \$5 billion over five years to build a national early learning and child care (ELCC) system as Prime Minister Martin had pledged to do in the 2004 election campaign (Liberal Party of Canada, 2004, p. 29). As Friendly and White (2007) argue, “Getting agreement from the provinces to spend the \$5 billion on building a national early learning and child care system became one of the defining issues of the Martin minority government.” Prime Minister Martin expended a great deal of political capital to getting the provinces’ agreement and, indeed, staked his government on achieving the agreements (which were cancelled as soon as the Conservative minority government was elected under Stephen Harper).

Why did the Prime Minister invest so much capital into achieving the agreements? To answer this question, we must consider the entire 1993-2006 period in federal politics and the leadership role that Paul Martin in particular played, first as the federal Liberal Finance Minister, then as a Liberal leadership candidate, and then Prime Minister of Canada.<sup>8</sup> One could argue that Paul Martin was already predisposed to ECEC because of his interest in human capital development, including “education, training, and research and development” (Delacourt, 2003, p. 76). By his own admission, his ministerial ambitions led him toward the Industry ministry, not Finance, Delacourt (2003, p. 82) reports. But as Finance Minister, Martin presided over the dismantling of CAP in 1996, including the targeted shared-cost funds for child care. It thus may be surprising to identify Martin, and not Chrétien, as a child care policy leader, especially given that the ECD and Multilateral Framework Agreements were achieved under Chrétien’s (and Human Resources and Development Canada Minister Jane Stewart’s) leadership.

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<sup>8</sup> This section is based on confidential interviews with people connected to the federal Liberal government.

Individuals close to Martin provide numerous examples, however, of his latent commitment to ECEC. Martin was one of the authors of the 1993 Liberal election platform (Red Book) which contained a “qualified reference to early childhood learning” [reference] and the explicit child care promise. One interviewee stated that it was Chrétien, not Martin, who requested the growth conditions be put in regarding child care expansion out of budgetary concerns, given how poorly the economy was performing. In his 1996 budget speech, amidst the further cuts to federal budgets, and one year after the dismantling of CAP, Martin delivered what one interviewee referred to as “the education speech”: as part of the section on “investing in our future” Martin announced programs to support students, including raising the limits on tuition credits and Registered Education Savings Plan contributions, and broadening eligibility for the federal Child Care Expense Deduction (CCED) to include students and single parents (Martin, 1996, p. 19). Prior to Martin taking over the Liberal leadership in December 2003, he held a series of policy roundtables (about 12-15) covering various policy areas, one of which was ECEC policy. Thus, by the time Martin got to be the party leader, “he was primed” to embrace a national policy, not of “daycare” but as he clarified “early learning and child care.”<sup>9</sup>

Interviewees credit Martin’s “conversion” to science and evidence-based research regarding the economic benefits of high quality ECD programs as “very important, especially at the early stages” in persuading Martin and other policy makers to act. A number of interviewees emphasized that certain credible actors championing scientific ideas were also key to “countering the ideologues of the world”. One interviewee stated that much of the credit for Prime Minister Martin’s conversion to ECEC champion can be given to Dr. Fraser Mustard, as well as “friends of Fraser Mustard” who “harangued” Martin from about the mid-1990s about the importance of the early years from a developmental health perspective. Other interviewees highlighted the importance of leaders connected to the business community such as Margaret McCain, former Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick and wife of entrepreneur Wallace McCain, Allan Taylor, former CEO of the Royal Bank of Canada, who sits on the Board of Directors for CIFAR, and Sydney Jackson, former president of Manulife, and who was a major donor to CIFAR’s population health program.

Liberal MPP John Godfrey, elected in 1993 and chair of the House of Commons subcommittee on children and youth at risk for much of the Chrétien government years (and one of the “friends of Fraser Mustard who “harangued Martin for most of the 1990s” argues his own “conversion” occurred when he was a journalist and editor at the *Financial Post* and came across Mustard’s work as the founding President of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research (CIAR, now CIFAR).<sup>10</sup> CIFAR was established in 1982 to create an international multidisciplinary network of scholars working on complex problems of scientific, economic and social significance. One of its earliest projects was a population health program which ran from 1987-2003 and which explored social determinants of health. CIAR’s human development program, which ran from 1993-2003, stemmed directly from the population health program to look at social factors that affect not just health but also development, including child

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<sup>9</sup> Prime Minister Paul Martin’s exchange with Ottawa Bureau Chief John Geddes, in a *macleans.ca* year-end interview, 17 December 2004 was as follows: Geddes: “Social Development Minister Ken Dryden is expected to deliver big things on early childhood education in 2005. Why are you focusing on nationwide daycare rather than just helping parents, no matter how they choose to raise their young kids?”; Martin: “First of all, this is not daycare, this is early learning and child care. We want to make sure that children are ready to excel as soon as they go to formal school, regardless of income.”

<sup>10</sup> See the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research website: <http://www.ciar.ca/> for details about the organization and its projects.

development. Some of the leading population health and child development researchers in the country were affiliated with CIAR's projects, including Robert Evans, health economist at the University of British Columbia, Clyde Hertzman, public health professor and director of the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) at UBC, Dan Keating, psychology and psychiatry professor, formerly the Atkinson Chair at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto and currently the Director of the Center for Human Growth and Development at University of Michigan, Dan Offord, child psychiatrist and former Director of the Offord Centre at McMaster University, and Richard Tremblay, pediatrics, psychiatry and psychology professor at the University of Montreal and Director of the Centre of Excellence for Early Child Development. All became "friends of Fraser Mustard" and academic champions of the need for early child development programs.

CIFAR's work had enormous influence on policymaking in Canada. The CIAR website ([www.ciar.ca](http://www.ciar.ca)) states that the research from the human development program influenced the National Children's Agenda, which "received a great deal of input from program members, and the program's conceptual framework is central to it." And "Health Canada's Centres of Excellence for Children's Well-Being evidence a similar history of impact from the program's conceptual framework" ([www.ciar.ca](http://www.ciar.ca); see also Health Canada, Childhood and Youth Division, 1999). Healthy child development was also the focus of the federal/provincial/territorial ministers of health in September 1999 (ACPH, 1999). The CIAR website also points out that "The [ECD] First Ministers' Agreement (September 2000) espoused many of the arguments that the program proposed, including the need for ongoing monitoring of child development."

In addition to CIFAR's research work, Dr. Mustard has been personally influential as the co-chair with Margaret McCain of the Government of Ontario's Early Years study (McCain and Mustard, 1999; see also the follow-up report McCain, Mustard and Shanker, 2007). Mustard also coauthored a report with Frances Picherack (2002) for the Government of British Columbia on the state of early child development in the province. Leading members of the business and financial community, including Charles Coffey, executive vice-president, government and community affairs, RBC Financial Group (Coffey, 2003), and David Dodge, former deputy minister of the federal department of finance, and then governor of the Bank of Canada, credit Mustard's CIAR work as "instrumental in expanding the frontiers of our knowledge in this area" (Dodge, 2003, p. 4). Coffey was also the co-chair of the Commission on Early Learning and Child Care for the City of Toronto with Margaret McCain (2002).

John Godfrey was a principal architect of change within the federal Parliament. As a *Financial Post* editor, Godfrey wrote a couple of columns on the work of CIAR and the importance of the early years on children's subsequent development (e.g. Godfrey, 1991, p. 9; 1992, p. S4; see also Mustard and Godfrey, 1992, p. 14). Godfrey also served as Vice-President of CIAR and, as an MP he served as Chair of the National Children's Agenda Caucus Committee, Chair of the National Liberal Caucus Social Policy Committee, and Chair of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Children and Youth at Risk, among other portfolios. His influence on national social policy can be seen by comparing the vision of social Canada he outlines in his book *The Canada We Want* (Godfrey and McLean, 1999) with the National Children's Agenda's mandate (Canada, Federal Backgrounder, 1997) and other documents such as the 1997 Speech from the Throne.

Before being elected in 1993, Godfrey played a small role in writing the 1993 Liberal Red Book (Delacourt, 2003, p. 79), whose major authors included Martin, as well as current CIFAR President and CEO Chaviva M. Hošek, Eddie Goldenberg, and Terrie O'Leary, who later

went on to serve as Canada's representative to the World Bank and to promote her interests in education (Delacourt, 2003, p. 74, 76, 126).<sup>11</sup> Peter Nicholson, former senior policy advisor in the Government of Canada, provincial MPP and Liberal finance critic in Nova Scotia, and then Senior Vice-President with the Bank of Nova Scotia, and Lester Thurow, MIT economist, also weighed in on the platform at the fall 1991 Liberal conference in Alymer, Quebec (Delacourt, 2003, p. 74). The election of the Liberals in 1993 led to the importing of those ideas regarding productivity and human capital development to the highest levels of government.

Godfrey and Nicholson, the latter who became the federal Liberals' "resident brain" and served as the Clifford Clark Visiting Fellow in the Finance Department in 1994-1995 (Delacourt, 2003, p. 86) introduced Martin to Fraser Mustard (Nicholson also served as a director and member of the research council of CIAR). Nicholson then became Special Adviser to the Secretary-General of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2002-2003. When Martin became Prime Minister, Nicholson returned to Canada to become Martin's Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy. The OECD is one of the international organizations paying closest attention to ECEC. It engaged in a cross national review of ECEC programs in the late 1990s and early 2000s (the Starting Strong project) (White, 2008b), and Canada was one of the countries under review in the early 2000s. The OECD completed its country report in 2002 (although its publication was delayed until October 2004) and the report was circulating in Ottawa for a long time prior to its publication. Nicholson and Godfrey brought the report to Martin's attention. Its effect in Ottawa, one interviewee noted, was to act as "one of the 'proof points' to describing the need" in Canada for a national ECEC program.

People in Prime Minister Chrétien's policy shop were also sympathetic to the idea of early child development – after all, the Chrétien Liberals introduced the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program in 1994, implemented the Community Action Program for Children (CAPC) in 1994, and established Aboriginal Head Start in 1995 (Doherty, 2007) – but were cautious about major monetary commitments. The evidence presented to the Prime Minister of the importance of ECD for human capital development and social equity, as well as the benefits for parental labour market participation, convinced the federal government to act, first through the instrument of the ECD agreement and then, under the championing of Jane Stewart, the Multilateral Framework Agreement on child care. Universal early childhood education and care programs were front and centre in the broader policy discussion on early childhood development (see, e.g. National Liberal Caucus Social Policy Committee, 2002).

One interview stated that the human capital development and women's labour market equality rationales resonated most strongly amongst senior policymakers as justification for a national ELCC program, although different people had different reasons for supporting the policies and programs. The interviewee confirmed, though, that a national system of early learning and child care was not conceived of simply as an anti-poverty measure or solely a part of human capital development but rather something broader. In fact, other actors in Ottawa such as Senator Landon Pearson, appointed by the Chrétien government to the Senate in 1994, and who worked with Godfrey on the National Children's Agenda Caucus Committee, championed ECEC as part of a broader children's rights agenda based on Canada's ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The election of Claudette Bradshaw in 1997, who in 1974 founded the Moncton Headstart Early Family Intervention Centres, and who became Minister of Labour and Minister Responsible for Homelessness in the second Chrétien term, also added to the parliamentary "bench strength" on these issues.

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<sup>11</sup> The World Bank maintains an ongoing research program on early child development (White, 2008b).

As one interviewee stated, the scientific research was useful to present when critics tried to reduce ECEC to babysitting. And it worked: Social Development Canada Minister Ken Dryden managed to execute a series of bilateral agreements with all provinces including Quebec to spend an additional \$5 billion over five years (beyond the \$900 million already committed through the MFA) to build a national system of early learning and child care based on the QUAD principles: Quality, Universality, Accessibility, and Developmental[ly-focused] programs. In the earlier MFA agreement signed in 2003, all provinces (except Quebec) had agreed to spend federal funds on regulated programs only and had agreed to report annually to Canadians on “descriptive and expenditure information” using QUAD-based indicators of availability, affordability and quality (CICS 2003). In each of the Agreements-in-Principle (AIPs) signed in 2005, the provinces agreed to provide a general outline along similar lines as the MFA (Mahon, 2006) of how the funds were to be used and to develop a more specific Action Plan for the five-year phase, after which the provincial and federal government would sign a funding agreement. However, as Friendly and White (2007) report, when the federal Liberal government fell at the end of 2005 on a non-confidence motion, only two provinces, Manitoba and Ontario, had finished the process; Quebec and the federal government had already signed a five year funding agreement without an AIP because Quebec’s ELCC program was already much more advanced; and seven AIPs were in various stages of progress.

The 2006 election revealed that the Liberal government succeeded in reframing ELCC policy discourse amongst federal and provincial/territorial governments but it had not won the broader war waged by the federal Conservatives and other critics on what “child care” means. The 2006 federal election campaign sparked a maelstrom of public debate and newspaper commentary regarding the desirability of non-parental care (see Friendly and White, 2007) with the Conservative leader Stephen Harper labeling his popular federal family allowance program “universal child care”. While the federal Liberals pledged to make the ELCC agreements permanent (Liberal Party of Canada, 2006), the Conservatives pledged to end the bilateral ELCC agreements after one year, and to instead introduce a \$1,200 taxable allowance for each child under age six (Conservative Party of Canada 2006, p. 31). The Conservatives followed through on both pledges once they assumed office in February 2006.

The federal Liberal government was also hamstrung by jurisdictional issues surrounding federal funding for explicitly educational programs. In explaining the federal government’s particular attention to “early learning and child care” over “early childhood education,” one interviewee revealed that it was because of jurisdictional concerns. Whereas the federal government had some role in child care financing since the introduction of the Canadian Assistance Plan in 1966, and it has some role in funding for higher education, it has never spent money on children “who have crossed the threshold to primary and secondary school.” In fact, one interviewee stated that the reason the federal government used the language of “early learning” rather than the OECD standard of “early childhood education” was in sensitivity to the fact that the provinces have exclusive authority over primary and secondary education and, unlike other social policy areas, education remains a jurisdictionally watertight compartment. “Learning” is considered a broader term that can encompass non-school-based educational programs. In fact, many provinces were very reluctant to agree to the OECD’s country review of Canada’s ECEC programs, questioning whether the Government of Canada could participate in research in an area of provincial jurisdiction. In the end, only four provinces participated in the OECD country review: British Columbia, Manitoba, Prince Edward Island, and Saskatchewan

(OECD, 2004). In the absence of a national crisis in educational performance, it is likely that these ECE jurisdictional battles will continue.

### Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated that educational norms as well as gender norms are key to explaining past patterns of ECEC provision as well as current trends. Much of the theorizing around ECEC provision has focused on the relationship between state policy provision and gender equality. While that literature considered the impact of preschool program provision as part of a package of ECEC services that either supported or prevented women's labour market participation, it tended not to make ECE services central to the analysis. Yet educational norms are a crucial part of the ECEC policy story. As Beatty (1995, p. 53) notes, deeply entrenched views of the appropriate age at which children should enter school have enormous implications for the breadth and depth of programs the state offers. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, "Americans were ready to accept the idea of privately controlled extrafamilial education for young children but not the extension of public schooling to children under the age of six." Continental Europeans, in contrast, have been more willing to accept state educational socialization of young children (although not "schoolification"). The Nordic countries tend to be concerned with broader developmental and play-based socialization, and certainly have not questioned the role of professionals in delivering ECEC services, unlike liberal and conservative welfare states where one often hears the mantra that parental education and care is best for young children.

Educational norms appear to be shifting in some liberal and continental European states, however, to embrace "schoolification". These norm changes appear to be motivated out of human capital development and student educational performance concerns. Resistance to such educational norm change continues to exist in Canada. In the absence of an educational or skills crisis, and given the jurisdictional complexities of early childhood education, changes will likely occur much more slowly in Canada. But science-based policymaking has been and will be an important factor leading to change. Attention needs to be turned to the provincial level where some provincial governments are contemplating the expansion of school-based kindergarten services to younger age groups and for longer periods of the day (Ferguson, 2007; Kines and Rud, 2008).

**Table 1**  
**Public Expenditure on Pre-school, Per Child, in Selected OECD Countries over Time<sup>a</sup>**

	<b>Expenditure per child on pre-primary education in US\$ (PPP converted) 1998</b>	<b>Expenditure per child on pre-primary education in US\$ (PPP converted) 2003</b>
Norway	7,924 <sup>c</sup>	3,895
Iceland	N/A	6,781
United States	6,347	7,755
Denmark	5,664	4,824
Austria	5,029 <sup>c</sup>	6,205
United Kingdom	4,910 <sup>b</sup>	7,153
Italy	4,730 <sup>c</sup>	6,116
Germany	4,648	4,865
Canada	4,535	4,320 <sup>d</sup>
New Zealand	N/A	4,325
Finland	3,665	4,069
Netherlands	3,630	5,497
France	3,487	4,744
Sweden	3,210	4,091
Japan	3,123	3,766
Poland	2,747	3,269
Slovak Republic	N/A	2,641
Switzerland	2,593 <sup>c</sup>	3,558
Spain	2,586	4,151
Ireland	2,555	N/A
Czech Republic	2,098	2,660
Hungary	1,985 <sup>c</sup>	3,985
Portugal	1,717 <sup>c</sup>	4,489
Belgium	1,601 <sup>b</sup>	4,663
Korea	1,287	2,628
Mexico	865	2,069

N/A = not available

<sup>a</sup> Data on pre-primary programs are limited to “organized centre-based programmes designed to foster learning and emotional and social development in children for 3 to compulsory school age. Day care, play groups and home-based structured and developmental activities may not be included in these data.”

<sup>b</sup> Public and government-dependent private institutions.

<sup>c</sup> Public institutions.

<sup>d</sup> Figure from Friendly et al. (2007, p. 80) and represents spending per child in the province of Ontario only for 2005/2006. Figures across provinces and territories vary quite widely and are often not reported by the provinces and territories in comparable form. See Friendly et al. (2007, pp. 203-204).

Sources: OECD (2001b, p. 190); OECD (2008d, PF10.2)

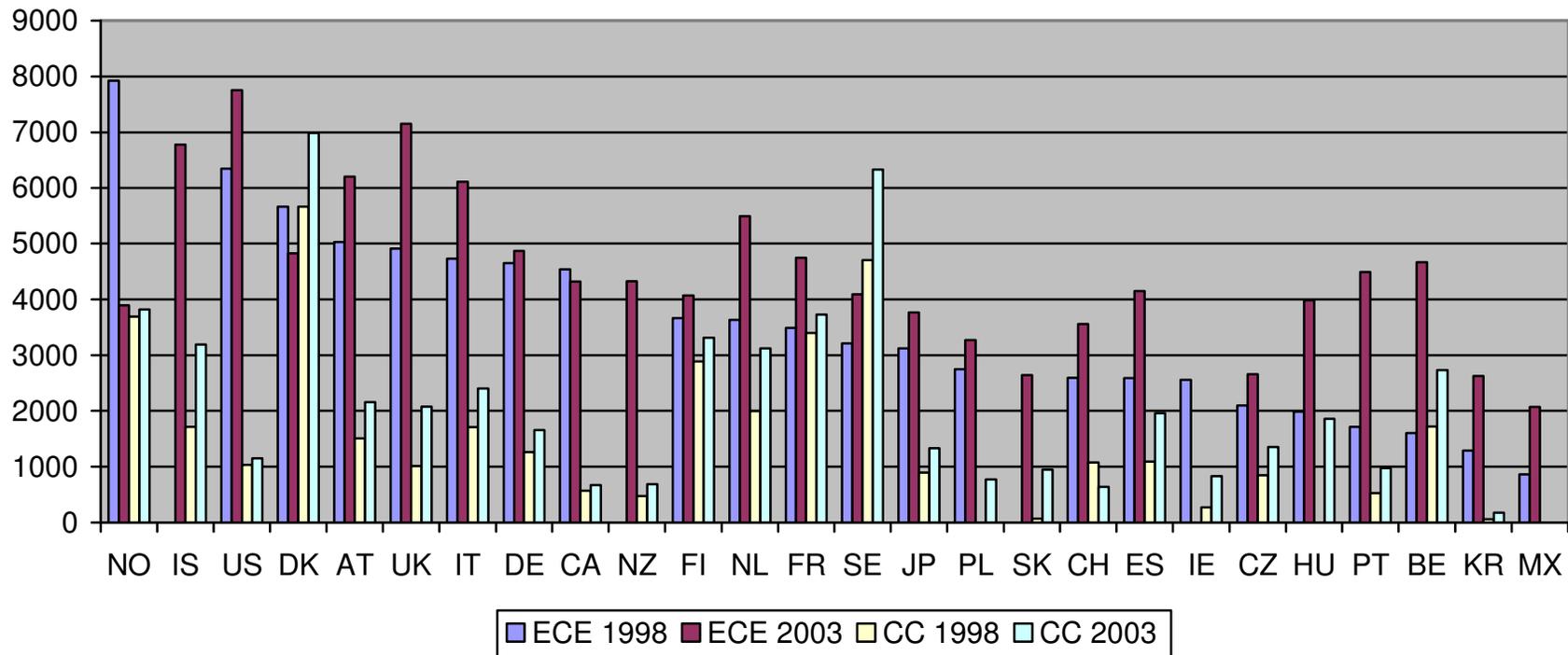
**Table2**  
**Public Expenditure on Child Care, Per Child, in Selected OECD Countries over Time**

	<b>Expenditure on child care support in US\$ (PPP converted) 1998</b>	<b>Expenditure on child care support in US\$ (PPP converted) 2003</b>
Denmark	5668	6986
Sweden	4704	6333
Norway	3691	3820
France	3399	3730
Finland	2888	3311
Luxembourg	2062	2418
Netherlands	1995	3122
Hungary	N/A	1856
Belgium	1718	2734
Iceland	1716	3192
Italy	1711	2404
Austria	1507	2159
Germany	1261	1654
Spain	1094	1958
Switzerland	1076	641
United States	1034	1150
United Kingdom	1012	2079
Japan	893	1333
Czech Republic	847	1351
Poland	N/A	774
Mexico	N/A	612
Canada	570	671
Portugal	526	974
Australia	480	865
New Zealand	474	686
Greece	306	459
Ireland	273	830
Slovak Republic	70	949
Korea	58	174

N/A = not available

Sources: Calculations from OECD Social Expenditure Database: [www.oecd.org/els/social/expenditure](http://www.oecd.org/els/social/expenditure);  
 Stats OECD: [http://stats.oecd.org/wbos/default.aspx?datasetcode=SOCX\\_AGG](http://stats.oecd.org/wbos/default.aspx?datasetcode=SOCX_AGG)

**Figure 1**  
**Public Expenditure per Child on Child Care and Pre-primary Education in US\$ (PPP Converted), 1998 and 2003**



Note: data are missing for some years

Sources: OECD (2001b, p. 190); OECD (2008d, PF10.2); see notes re: data on Tables 1 and 2

**Table 3**  
**Child Care and Early Childhood Education Coverage in Selected Countries over Time \***

Country	Year	# of places per 100 students age <3	# of places per 100 students age 3 to compulsory school
Australia	1987 <sup>a</sup>	5 (ages 0-5)	5 (ages 0-5)
	1999 <sup>b</sup>	15	60
	2003/04 <sup>c</sup>	29	72
Austria	1994/95 <sup>d</sup>	3	75
	1998 <sup>b</sup>	4	68
	2003/04 <sup>c</sup>	7	74
Belgium	1988 <sup>e</sup>	20	95
	2000 <sup>b</sup>	30	97
	2003/04 <sup>c</sup>	34	100
Canada	1987 <sup>a</sup>	4	14
	1996 <sup>f</sup>	18	45 (73 avg ece for ages 4-5)
	2003/04 <sup>c g</sup>	23; Quebec 34 (age 0-3) in licensed care	95 (age 5) N/A (age 4); Quebec: 48 (ages 3-4); 50 (ages 4-5) in licensed care
Czech Republic	2000 <sup>b</sup>	1	85
	2003/04 <sup>c</sup>	3	85
Denmark	1989 <sup>e</sup>	48	85
	1998 <sup>b</sup>	64	91
	2003/04 <sup>c</sup>	62	90
Finland	1994 <sup>d</sup>	21	43
	1998 <sup>b</sup>	22	66
	2003/04 <sup>c</sup>	35	46
France	1988 <sup>e</sup>	20	95+
	1998 <sup>b</sup>	29	99
	2003/04 <sup>c</sup>	28	102
Germany	1990 (former West) <sup>d</sup>	2	78
	1990 (former East) <sup>d</sup>	50	100
	2000 <sup>b</sup>	10	78
	2003/04 <sup>c</sup>	9	80
Greece	1988 <sup>e</sup>	4	65-70
	2000 <sup>b</sup>	3	46
	2003/04 <sup>c</sup>	7	47
Hungary	2003/04 <sup>c</sup>	7	87
Iceland	2003/04 <sup>c</sup>	59	95
Ireland	1988 <sup>e</sup>	2	55
	1998 (proportion of	38	56

	children <5 in paid care) <sup>b</sup>		
	2003/04 <sup>c</sup>	15	68
Italy	1986 <sup>e</sup>	5	85
	1998 <sup>b</sup>	6	95
	2003/04 <sup>c</sup>	6	100
Japan	1987 <sup>a</sup>	21 (ages 0-5)	21 (ages 0-5)
	1998 <sup>b</sup>	13	34
	2003/04 <sup>c</sup>	15	86
Korea	2000 <sup>b</sup>	7	26
	2003/04 <sup>c</sup>	20	61
Luxembourg	1989 <sup>e</sup>	2	55-60
	2003/04 <sup>c</sup>	14	72
Mexico	2003/04 <sup>c</sup>	3	65
Netherlands	1989 <sup>e</sup>	2	50-55
	1998 <sup>b</sup>	6	98
	2003-04 <sup>c</sup>	30	70
New Zealand	1998 <sup>b</sup>	45	90
	2003/04 <sup>c</sup>	32	93
Norway	1987 <sup>a</sup>	8	48
	1997 <sup>b</sup>	40	80
	2003/04 <sup>c</sup>	44	85
Poland	2003/04 <sup>c</sup>	2	36
Portugal	1988 <sup>e</sup>	6	35
	1999 <sup>b</sup>	12	75
	2003/04 <sup>c</sup>	24	78
Slovak Republic	1999 <sup>b</sup>	46	90
	2003/04 <sup>c</sup>	18	72
Spain	1988 <sup>e</sup>	N/A	65-70
	2000 <sup>b</sup>	5	84
	2003-04 <sup>c</sup>	21	99
Sweden	1987 <sup>a</sup>	42	60
	1998 <sup>b</sup>	48	80
	2003/04 <sup>c</sup>	40	87
Switzerland	2003/04 <sup>c</sup>	N/A	45
Turkey	2003/04 <sup>c</sup>	N/A	10.5
UK	1988 <sup>e</sup>	2	35-40
	2000 (England only) <sup>b</sup>	34	60
	2003/04 <sup>c</sup>	26	81
USA	1984/85 <sup>h</sup>	20	70
	1995 <sup>b</sup>	54	70
	2003/04 <sup>c</sup>	36	62

N/A=not available

\* Child care is number of spaces per 100 children under the age of three. Figures include public and private child care centres, family day care homes, and childminders, and may include some preschool programs. Early childhood education is number of spaces per 100 children from starting age (which varies from age 3 to 6) to age of comprehensive schooling, though some figures recorded are for child care as well.

Sources:

<sup>a</sup> OECD (1990, p. 131)

<sup>b</sup> OECD (2001a, p. 144)

<sup>c</sup> OECD (2008a, PF11)

<sup>d</sup> European Commission Network on Childcare (1995, p. 148)

<sup>e</sup> European Commission Childcare Network (1990)

<sup>f</sup> HRDC (1997, p. 12). Figures given are for children of full-time and part-time working parents plus students. ECE figures from OECD (1997)

<sup>g</sup> OECD (2006, pp. 297-300)

<sup>h</sup> Kamerman (1989, p. 94)

**Table 4**  
**Maternity Leave Duration and Benefit Levels in Selected Countries over Time**

Country	Maternity Duration in Weeks 1989	Maternity Benefit Level 1989	Parental Duration in Weeks 1989	Parental Benefit Level 1989	Maternity Duration in Weeks 1999	Maternity Benefit Level 1999	Parental Duration in Weeks 1999	Parental Benefit Level 1999	Maternity Duration in Weeks 2005	Maternity Benefit Level 2005	Parental Duration in Weeks 2005	Parental Benefit Level 2005
Australia	52	0	0	0	0	0	52 (1990)	0	0	0	52	0
Austria	16	100	Up to 1 <sup>st</sup> birthday	Fixed rate	16*	100*	Up to 2 <sup>nd</sup> birthday*	Fixed rate*	16	100	104	21
Belgium	14	80-100	Career interruption leave	0	15	82 for 4 weeks/75 for 11	6 months per parent*	Fixed rate*	15	82 for 4 weeks/75 for 11	12	20
Canada	15	60	0	0	15**	55**	10**	55**	15	55	35	55
Czech Republic	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	28	69	Up to 4 <sup>th</sup> birthday	Fixed rate	28	69	156	10
Denmark	28	90	10	Fixed rate	18	100 for most	20 + 2 for father	100	18	100	32	90
Finland	17.5	80	28	80	18	66	6 months	66	18	65	26	60
France	16	84	Up to 3 <sup>rd</sup> birthday	Fixed rate for 3 <sup>rd</sup> child+	16*	100*	Up to 3 <sup>rd</sup> birthday*	Fixed rate for 2 <sup>nd</sup> child+*	16	100	156	25.8
Germany (former West)	14	100	Until 15 <sup>th</sup> month	Fixed rate	14*	100*	Until 18 <sup>th</sup> month*	Fixed rate*	14	100	104; + 1 more year possible	11
Greece	14	100	Up to 30 <sup>th</sup> month	0	16*	50*	3 months per parent*	0*	17	100	0	0
Hungary	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	24**	100**	N/A	N/A	24	70	80	70
Iceland	13	Fixed rate	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	13	80	13	80
Ireland	14	60	0	0	14*	70*	0*	0*	18 + 8 unpaid	80	0	0
Italy	20	80	Up to 3 <sup>rd</sup> birthday	0	21	80	10 months	30	21	80	12	30
Japan	14	60	0	0	14**	60**	N/A	N/A	14	60	0	0
Korea	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	8.5**	100**	N/A	N/A	12	100	36	17
Luxembourg	16	100	0	0	16*	100*	0*	0*	16	100	26	62
Mexico	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	12**	100**	N/A	N/A	12	100	0	0
Netherlands	16	100	Entitled to hours reduction	0 other than wages	16	100	52	0	16	100	52	0
NZ	0	0	52	0	0	<u>0</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>0</u>

Norway	28	100	Up to 1 <sup>st</sup> birthday	Paid social security	Included in parental leave	<a href="#">Included in parental leave</a>	<a href="#">42</a>	<a href="#">100</a>	<a href="#">9</a>	<a href="#">80</a>	<a href="#">42</a>	<a href="#">100</a>
Poland	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	18**	100**	N/A	N/A	16	100	156	14.6
Portugal	13	100	Up to 3 <sup>rd</sup> birthday	Fixed rate for some	18	100	52	0	17	100	0	0
Slovak Republic	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	28**	90**	N/A	N/A	28	55	156	24
Spain	16	75	3 years	0	16*	100*	Up to 3 <sup>rd</sup> birthday*	0*	16	100	0	0
Sweden	12	90	Up to 1 <sup>st</sup> birthday	90 for 270 days; then fixed rate	12	100	18 months	80 for one year; flat rate thereafter	15	80	51	80
Switzerland	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	16**	0**	N/A	N/A	16	100	0	0
Turkey	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	12**	66**	N/A	N/A	12	66	0	0
UK	18	6 weeks at 90; 12 weeks flat rate	0	0	18	6 weeks at 90; 12 weeks flat rate	22	0	26 + 26 unpaid	6 weeks at 90; then flat rate	0	0
USA	0	0	0	0 nationally; some state provisions	0	0	12	0 nationally; some state provisions	0	0	12	0 nationally; some state provisions

N/A = not available

Sources:

1989 data from OECD (1990, p. 144)

1999 data from OECD (2001b, p. 32)

2005 data from OECD (2008b, PF7); OECD (2006, country profiles section)

Data marked with \* are from European Commission Network on Childcare (1995, pp. 145-147) and are from the mid-1990s

Data marked with \*\* are from OECD (2001a, p. 144)

**Table 5**  
**Public Expenditure on Child Care and Early Childhood Education as a Percentage of GDP in Selected Countries, 2003**

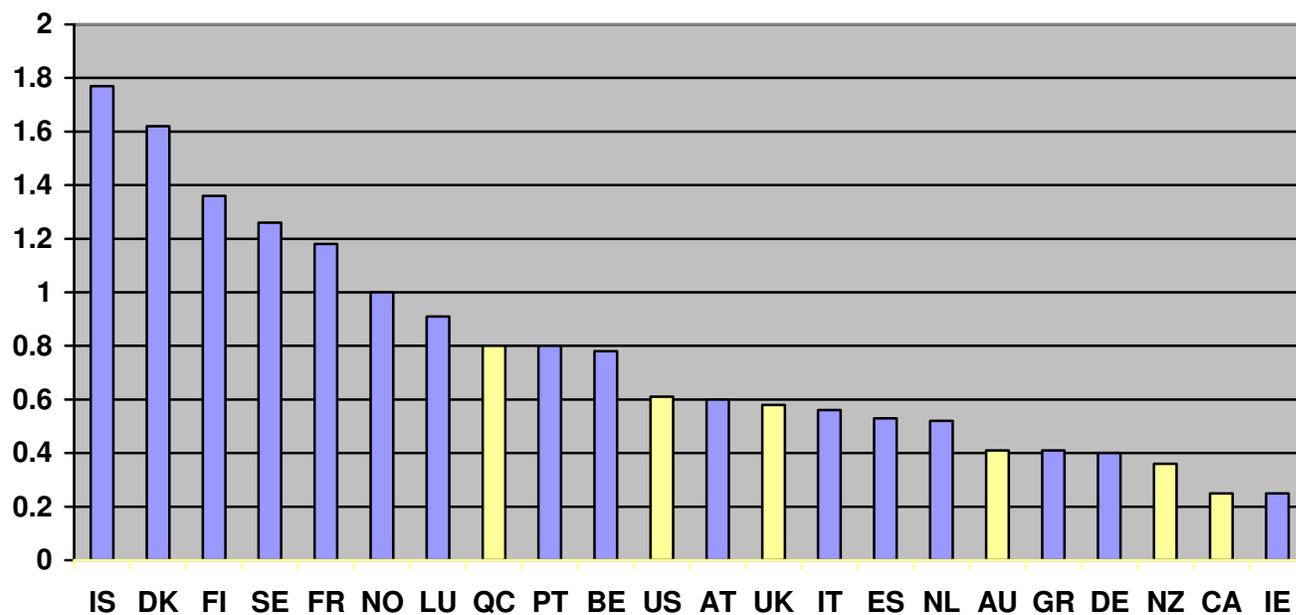
	<b>Child care</b>	<b>ECE</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of total that is ECE</b>	<b>Primary and secondary education spending</b>
<b>Liberal ECEC regimes</b>					
Australia	0.19	0.22	0.41	0.53	3.6
Canada	0.19*	0.13*	(.25)	0.52	3.3
New Zealand	0.16	0.18	0.36	0.53	4.8
Quebec	0.60**	0.12**	0.8**	0.15	---
UK	0.25	0.33	0.58 (0.5)	0.57	4.0
United States	0.30	0.32	0.61 (0.48)	0.52	3.9
<b>Liberal mimicking ECEC regimes</b>					
Germany	0.04	0.35	0.3965 (0.45)	0.89	3.1
Greece	0.16	0.25	0.41	0.61	2.6
Ireland	0.11	0.14	0.25	0.58	3.2
Japan	0.23	0.095	0.33	0.29	2.7
Korea	0.08	0.06	0.14	0.39	3.5
Switzerland	0.09	0.21	0.2968	0.71	4.1
<b>Continental ECEC regimes</b>					
Austria	0.19	0.41	0.60 (0.55)	0.68	3.8
Belgium	0.196	0.58	0.78	0.75	4.1
Czech Rep	0.12	0.41	0.53	0.78	3.0
France	0.52	0.67	1.18 (1.0)	0.56	4.0
Hungary	0.10	0.79	0.898 (0.8)	0.88	3.7
Italy	0.13	0.43	0.56 (0.43)	0.77	3.6
Luxembourg	0.43	0.48	0.91	0.53	4.1
Mexico	0.01	0.67	0.68	0.98	4.0
Netherlands	0.16	0.36	0.52 (0.45)	0.69	3.4
Poland	0.0039	0.4967	0.50	0.99	4.2

Portugal	0.43	0.42	0.80	0.52	4.2
Slovak Rep	0.08	0.49	0.56	0.86	2.9
Spain	0.07	0.46	0.53	0.87	2.8
<b>Nordic ECEC regimes</b>					
Denmark	0.96	0.66	1.62 (2.0)	0.40	4.9
Finland	1.01	0.35	1.36 (1.3)	0.26	4.1
Iceland	1.17	0.60	1.77	0.34	5.3
Norway	0.71	0.29	0.9982 (1.7)	0.29	4.7
Sweden	0.75	0.50	1.26 (1.7)	0.40	4.9
Average of cases		0.38			3.8

Sources:

All data from OECD family database: [www.oecd.org/els/family/database](http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database); totals in (...) are from OECD (2006, p. 246) and are expenditure estimates, based on country responses to a 2004 OECD survey; \* data from Doherty, Friendly, and Beach (2003, pp. 73-80) and are from 2001 – the discrepancy with OECD (2006) is due to rounding down given that the estimates include children ages 6-12 as well; \*\*data from OECD (2005, pp. 17, 109) and are from 2001

**Figure 2**  
**Public Expenditure on ECEC Services (0-6 Years) in Selected OECD Countries, 2003**



Sources: OECD family database: [www.oecd.org/els/family/database](http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database); Canada data from OECD (2006, p. 246) and are from 2004; Quebec data from OECD (2005, pp. 17, 109) and are from 2001

**Table 6**  
**Employment Rates for Women Ages 25 to 54 by Presence of Children in OECD Countries, 2000**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Women's Overall Employment Rate</b>	<b>Women With No Children</b>	<b>Women With One Child</b>	<b>Women With Two or More Children</b>
<b>Nordic w/s</b>				
Iceland	87.4	89.1	89.3	81.8
Norway	81.5	82.9	83.3	78.0
Sweden	81.7	81.9	80.6	77.2
Denmark (1998)	80.5	78.5	88.1	80.8
Finland (1997)	77.6	79.2	78.5	73.5
<b>Liberal w/s</b>				
USA (1999)	74.1	78.6	75.6	69.3
Canada	74.0	76.5	74.9	65.5
UK	73.1	79.9	72.9	63.3
NZ (2001)	70.6	80.7	66.9	56.3
Australia	66.8	68.4	55.3	50.1
<b>Continental w/s</b>				
Switz. (2001)	76.8	84.3	75.5	65.7
Portugal	73.9	72.6	78.5	70.3
Czech Republic	73.7	80.8	72.3	62.3
Austria	73.5	76.0	75.6	68.2
Poland	72.0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Germany	71.1	77.3	70.4	58.9
Neth.	70.9	75.3	69.9	58.8
France	69.6	73.5	74.1	64.7
Belgium	67.8	65.6	71.8	59.4
Slovak Republic	64.8	N/A	N/A	N/A
Luxembourg	63.0	68.7	65.8	50.3
Hungary	61.7	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ireland	53.1	65.8	51.0	42.4
Greece	52.6	53.1	53.9	43.3
Italy	50.7	52.8	52.1	43.2
Spain	50.6	54.6	47.6	40.8
<b>Other</b>				
Japan (1999)	62.7	N/A	N/A	N/A
Korea	56.3	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: OECD (2002, p. 77)

**Table 7**  
**Typology of Child Care and Early Childhood Education Services in Selected OECD Countries**

	Centre-based care		Family day care		Pre-school		Compulsory school	
Public*								
Private*								
Age	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Liberal ECEC regimes</b>								
Australia	Accredited centres and family day care available part-time (20 hours) or full-time (up to 50 hours)				Reception/pre-school classes, with primary school (full-time, out-of-school-hours care also provided)		Compulsory schooling	
Canada	Centre-based and family day care				Junior Kindergarten in Ontario	Kindergarten/Maternelles in Quebec	Compulsory schooling	
New Zealand	Child care centres and some home-based services (family day care)			Community-based Kindergarten, Playcentres		Compulsory schooling		
UK	Nurseries, child minders and playgroups			Playgroups and nurseries part-time	Reception class, with primary school	Compulsory schooling		
USA	Child care centres and family day care			Educational programmes, including Head Start, prek			Compulsory schooling	
<b>Liberal mimicking ECEC regimes</b>								
Austria	Tagesmutter (family day care) and Krippen (centres), part-time (25 hrs)			Kindergarten (part-time, 25 hrs). Out of school care provision under development			Compulsory schooling	
Czech Republic	Crèche (centres), full-time			Materska skola (state kindergarten)			Compulsory schooling	
Ireland	Regulated family day care and nurseries (centres)			Early Start and Infant school (pre-school) with primary school			Compulsory schooling	
Japan	Centre-based care			Kindergartens			Compulsory schooling	
Netherlands	Gastouderopvang (family day care), Kinderopvang (centres) and Playgroups			Group 1, with primary school		Compulsory schooling (group 2 onwards)		
Poland	Nurseries			Pre-school/Nursery schools			Compulsory schooling	
Portugal	Creche familiar (family day care) and centres			Jardins de infancia (pre-school)			Compulsory schooling	
Switzerland	Creche, Krippen, varies across cantons (centres)			Pre-school, mandatory in some cantons			Compulsory schooling	
<b>Continental ECEC regimes</b>								
Belgium	Kinderdagverblijf (centres) and family day care; crèches, and gardiennes encadrées (family day care)			Kleuterschool, pt or ft, with out-of-school-hours care; école maternelle, pt or ft, with out-of-school-hours care			Compulsory schooling	
France	Crèche (centres) and Assistant maternelles (family day care), ft			École maternelle (pre-school)			Compulsory schooling	
Germany	Krippen (centres)			Kindergarten (pre-school)			Compulsory schooling	
Greece	Vrefonipiaki stahmi (crèche for children < 2.5 and nursery school for > 2.5)			Nipiagogeia (kindergarten)			Compulsory schooling	
Hungary	Bolcsode (crèche), ft (40 hrs)			Ovoda (kindergarten)		Compulsory schooling		
Italy	Asili nidi (crèches) pt (20 hrs) and ft (< 50 hrs)			Scuola dell'infanzia (pre-school)			Compulsory schooling	
Korea	Child care centres			Kindergartens			Compulsory schooling	

	Hakwon (pre-school)		
Luxembourg	Crèche (centres) and Tagesmutter (family day care)	Enseignement pre-scolaire (pre-school)	Compulsory schooling
Mexico	Educación inicial (centres)	Compulsor y educación preschool (pre-school)	Compulsory schooling
Slovakia	Nursery schools	Kindergarten	Compulsory schooling
Spain	Educación Pre-scolar (centres)	Education infantile (pre-school) with primary school	Compulsory schooling
<b>Nordic ECEC regimes</b>			
Denmark	Dagpleje (family day care) and Vuggestuer (crèches) ft (> 32 hrs) Adlersintegrer (age-integrated facility) full-time (> 32 hrs)	Børnehaver (kindergarten) ft (> 32 hrs)	Compulsory schooling
Finland	Perhepäivähöito (family day care) and Paivakoti (municipal early child development centres), ft (< 50 hrs)		Compulsory schooling
Iceland	Day-care centres and “day mothers” (family day care)	Pre-school	Compulsory schooling
Norway	Barnehage, including rural familiebarnehager, ft (40 hrs)		Compulsory schooling
Sweden	Forskola (pre-school), ft (30 hrs), some Familiedaghem (family day care) particularly in rural areas		Compulsory schooling

\* Provision is largely publicly funded and managed (more than 50 per cent of enrolments are in publicly operated facilities).

\*\* Provision is largely managed by private stakeholders (both for-profit and not-for-profit providers) and is publicly and privately financed.

Source: OECD (2008c)

**Table 8**  
**PISA Country Rankings (Top 25)**

Country	Reading literacy mean scores PISA 2000*	Country	Mathematics mean scores PISA 2006	Country	Science mean scores PISA 2006
Finland	546	Chinese Taipei	549	Finland	563
<b>Canada</b>	<b>534</b>	Finland	548	HK-China	542
<b>New Zealand</b>	<b>529</b>	Hong Kong-China	547	<b>Canada</b>	<b>534</b>
<b>Australia</b>	<b>528</b>	Korea	547	Chinese Taipei	532
Ireland	527	Netherlands	531	Estonia	531
Korea	525	Switzerland	530	Japan	531
<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>Canada</b>	<b>527</b>	<b>New Zealand</b>	<b>530</b>
Japan	522	Macao-China	525	<b>Australia</b>	<b>527</b>
Sweden	516	Liechtenstein	525	Netherlands	525
Austria	507	Japan	523	Liechtenstein	522
Belgium	507	<b>New Zealand</b>	<b>522</b>	Korea	522
Iceland	507	Belgium	520	Slovenia	519
Norway	505	<b>Australia</b>	<b>520</b>	Germany	516
France	505	Estonia	515	<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>515</b>
<b>USA</b>	<b>504</b>	Denmark	513	Czech Republic	513
Denmark	497	Czech Republic	510	Switzerland	512
Switzerland	494	Iceland	506	Macao-China	511
Spain	493	Austria	505	Austria	511
Czech Republic	492	Slovenia	504	Belgium	510
Italy	487	Germany	504	Ireland	508
Germany	484	Sweden	502	Hungary	504
Liechtenstein	483	Ireland	501	Sweden	503
Hungary	480	France	496	Poland	498
Poland	479	<b>UK...</b>	<b>495</b>	Denmark...	496
Greece	474	<b>USA (35<sup>th</sup>)</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>USA (29<sup>th</sup>)</b>	<b>489</b>

\* PISA 2000 scores are used because PISA 2003 does not include the UK and PISA 2006 does not include the USA

Sources: OECD PISA (2001; 2007)

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