

Mackenzie's Legacy believes in creating space for **all** forms of childcare, preserving **parent choice** while ensuring safe and enriching environments for our children **without exception**.

1. **Making sure the right people are taking care of our children:** We believe that home-based childcare is a critical component of our system, and that there is a need to differentiate between these businesses and casual babysitting. The establishment of mandatory minimum safety standards for these businesses should include:
 - A registry that includes the provider's information, business license and location
 - Requirement for all adults in the home to have a criminal and vulnerable sector check
 - Mandatory first aid training, including an infant component
 - Annual requirement to renew licensing and update information above
 - By-law officers empowered to revoke a license or issue fines for non-compliance, as deemed appropriate
2. **Ensuring home-based providers are recognized and supported:** We believe that caring for young children, especially in a home-based setting, is an extremely difficult undertaking. The risks of isolation and lack of support can result in dangerous and/or tragic situations
3. **Ensuring home-based providers are held accountable:** the lack of an ethical framework (i.e. generally accepted standards of care) hinders the ability to prevent harm to some of our youngest and most vulnerable children

Future Vision

We believe one viable pathway to achieving this is through the creation of a professional regulatory organization (PRO) under the *Professional and Occupational Associations Registration Act*, which allows the Alberta government to delegate self-governing responsibilities to protect the public interest and public safety. Some benefits of this approach could include:

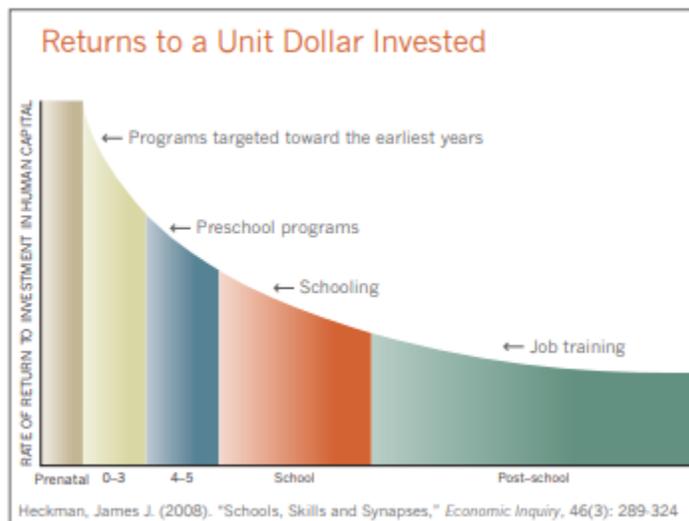
- Establishes barriers to entry (payments of dues, continuing professional development requirements, etc...),
- Creates a framework for the provision of quality care that is fit for purpose for in home-based settings
- Preserves multiple forms of care, thereby creating a sustainable system that works for all geographic and socio-economic conditions in Alberta
- Member dues supplemented by provincial and federal public investment dollars enhance economic sustainability and ROI
- Creates a support network and delivers targeted and cost-effective education through the PRO
- Creates a professional and ethical code of standards that is enforceable for any and all providers in the province, inability of the provider to adhere to these standards results in the revocation of their permit-to-practice in the province

This approach would rely on a requirement for any practitioner in the province to be registered with the PRO, similar to the *Chartered Professional Accountants Act, Engineering and Geoscience Professions Act, Veterinary Profession Act*, and many others.

Supporting Facts:

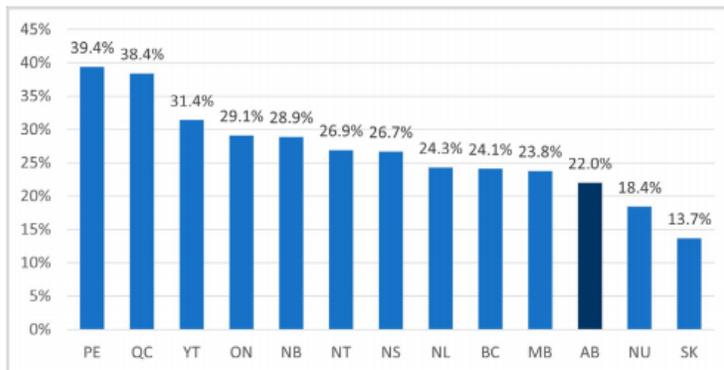
Investment in childcare has a recognized Return on Investment (ROI)

- TD Economics suggest a return of \$1.50-\$2.80 for every dollar invested as quoted [by the federal government in their Budget 2021 overview](#)
- OECD recommends investing 1% of GDP in childcare
 - Alberta currently invests 0.1-0.2%
- Investing in early childhood education and care is a good investment only if the services are of high quality, accessible, affordable and inclusive (European Commission's [Recommendation on High Quality Early Childhood Education and Care Systems paragraph 9](#))
- Nobel Prize-winning economist James Heckman suggest returns are highest in the earliest years of a child's life



As of 2016 (most recent stat available), Alberta can only accommodate 22% of children ages 0-5 in licensed facility-based daycare centres, one of the lowest in the country

Figure 4. Percentage of children 0-5 for whom there was a licensed centre-based child care space by province and territory, 2016



Source: Friendly, M. et al. (2018). *Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2016*.

There are no minimum safety or quality standards for home-based childcare. A licensing pathway is available for home-based childcare; however, it is not mandatory, and the majority of providers remain unlicensed. Anecdote suggests unlicensed care providers find the current regulatory environment to be cumbersome, expensive and returns little to no value for a home-based care setting

Examples of roadblocks to date

1. Inability to effectively differentiate between home based childcare businesses and casual babysitting such as family members caring for children. Minister Schultz has said on many occasions that she can't tell grandparents is it illegal for them to watch their grandkids

Response: The UK has created definition of childminding that differentiates self-employed people who work in their own home and for other people's children for 2 or more hours a day and has a requirement for them to be registered

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/providing-childcare-services-in-england>)

2. Investment required to expand current system to all children in care (i.e., universal childcare) is unsustainable (UCP); Universal Child Care is the answer (NDP)

Response: We don't believe either of these sentiments will help to keep our children safe now, in the short to near term.

- Aspirational models such as Norway's, have taken significant changes to legislation and policy, as well as a significant economic investment. Norway spends >1.3% GDP and have enshrined the fundamental rights of children, as well as access to childcare, in domestic law. (<https://www.muttart.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/An-Examination-of-Regulatory-and-Other-Measures-to-Support-Quality-Early-Learning-and-Child-Care-in-Alberta-1.pdf>)
- We do not believe all children should be in licensed facility-based programs, and that the current regulatory framework is ineffective and inefficient for home based childcare settings, therefore simply expanding the current framework isn't the ideal either.

We do believe home-based care is a critical component of our system and should have access to public funding so as not to discriminate against the families who rely on, and the providers currently working within, this sector

3. No evidence that unlicensed care presents a more significant risk than other types of care (Minister Schultz' office)

Response: no statistics or population-level data exists because it has never been collected, however the public fatality inquiry into Mackenzie's death gives clear evidence of systemic failures and the elevated risk to children as a result, further supported by the continuing occurrence of criminal cases involving unlicensed dayhomes

4. Compulsory registry has no precedence in Canada and establishing one would not increase enforcement or oversight, and could provide a false sense of security that a particular dayhome is condoned or supported by the government

Response: just because it hasn't been done before doesn't mean it can't or shouldn't be done in the future

First Steps and Opportunities

Creation of a municipal registry and accompanying by-laws requiring bare minimum safety standards would allow us to build a proof of concept, as well as the collection of data/statistics for unlicensed daycares that would help inform the evolution of the childcare system in Alberta. This would immediately create a safer environment for children in Calgary, as well as laying the foundation to expand on those advancements on a provincial and/or federal level.