

## What is **Accessibility** in Early Learning and Care?

Accessibility is sometimes used as a synonym for **availability**, which is the number of **spaces** that are licensed. However, other conditions are necessary for parents to be able to **use** and depend on spaces for their children ([Beach 2020](#)).

Accessibility can also refer to the supply and demand for child care programs and spaces ([Buschmann 2019](#)). **Child care coverage rates** measure supply and demand in a particular location by combining licensed spaces (**supply**) and population (**demand**) into a single number. This number is currently used by Alberta's provincial government to gauge accessibility.

## Why is accessibility **important**?

Measuring accessibility is important to ensure accessibility for the widest range of children in Alberta. The **rate of space usage can help** determine what adjustments could be made to ensure child care spaces are available to all children in Alberta who need them.

## What actions make child care **more** accessible?

Services need to be **inclusive** and **welcoming of all children**, including children from underserved families and children from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Services need to be **responsive** to the needs of working parents, **conveniently located**, appropriately staffed with qualified and caring educators, fully resourced for children with extra support needs, and **culturally appropriate**.

## How is **Alberta** doing?

In **2019**, there were enough centre-based spaces for **19%** of children younger than 3 years, **39.3 %** of children 3-5 years and **8.9%** of school-age children ([Beach 2020](#)).

## What Should Alberta **Strive** for?

### **For policymakers,**

- Moving past **coverage rates** as an indicator of success, and working towards spaces that match the diverse needs of children and families.
- Increasing targets: European Union targets for children's usage of early learning and care are **set at 33%** for children under age three and **90%** for children from age three to mandatory school entry ([Beach 2020](#)).
- Assisting to meet the **supply** and **demand** needs for regulated early learning and care spaces through collaborative community processes with school boards, municipalities, local planning committees and the early learning and child care sector.

### **For families:**

- Parents need information about **available spaces**.
- Accessible child care is a priority as it facilitates **healthy communities**.
- *Families cannot wait any longer for accessible child care.*

*For more information, please*



SCAN ME  
(Beach 2020)



SCAN ME  
(Buschmann 2019)

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