

# Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada



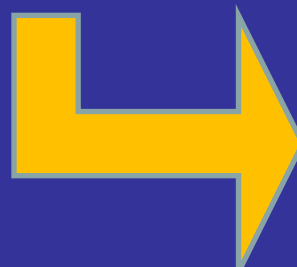
Connecting Early Child Development and Schools  
Pan-Canadian Summit: January 2009

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# Some Canadian Features

- Within a market system, *attachment to the “public sphere”*
- No federal department of education
- *Lowest ECEC coverage* among OECD countries for 3-6 year olds
- Role of private funding and delivery
- *Paid maternity and parental leave* for eligible parents
- *High labour force participation* of mothers
- Diverse populations

# Federal Provincial Influences



- Maternity and parental benefits
- Federal payments to parents
- Federal transfer payments to provinces
- ECEC for specific populations

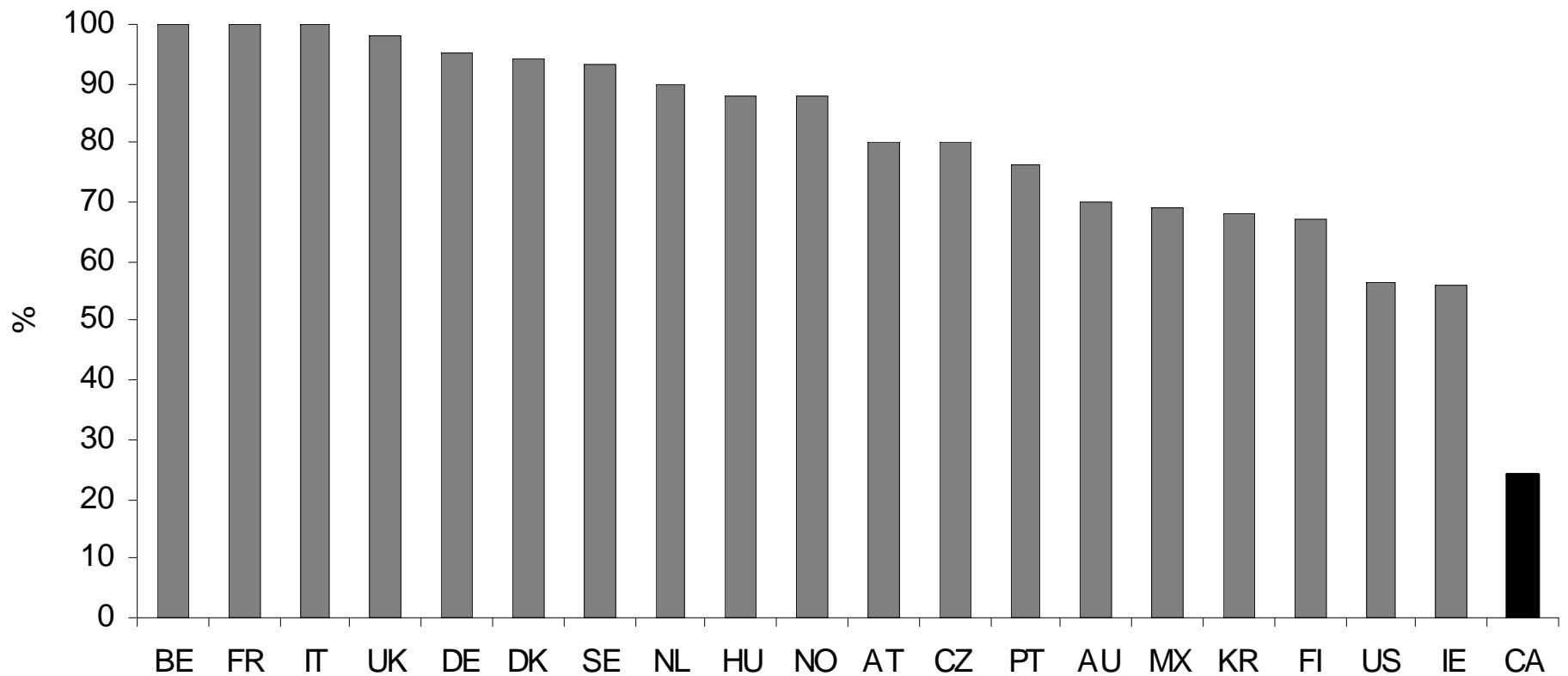


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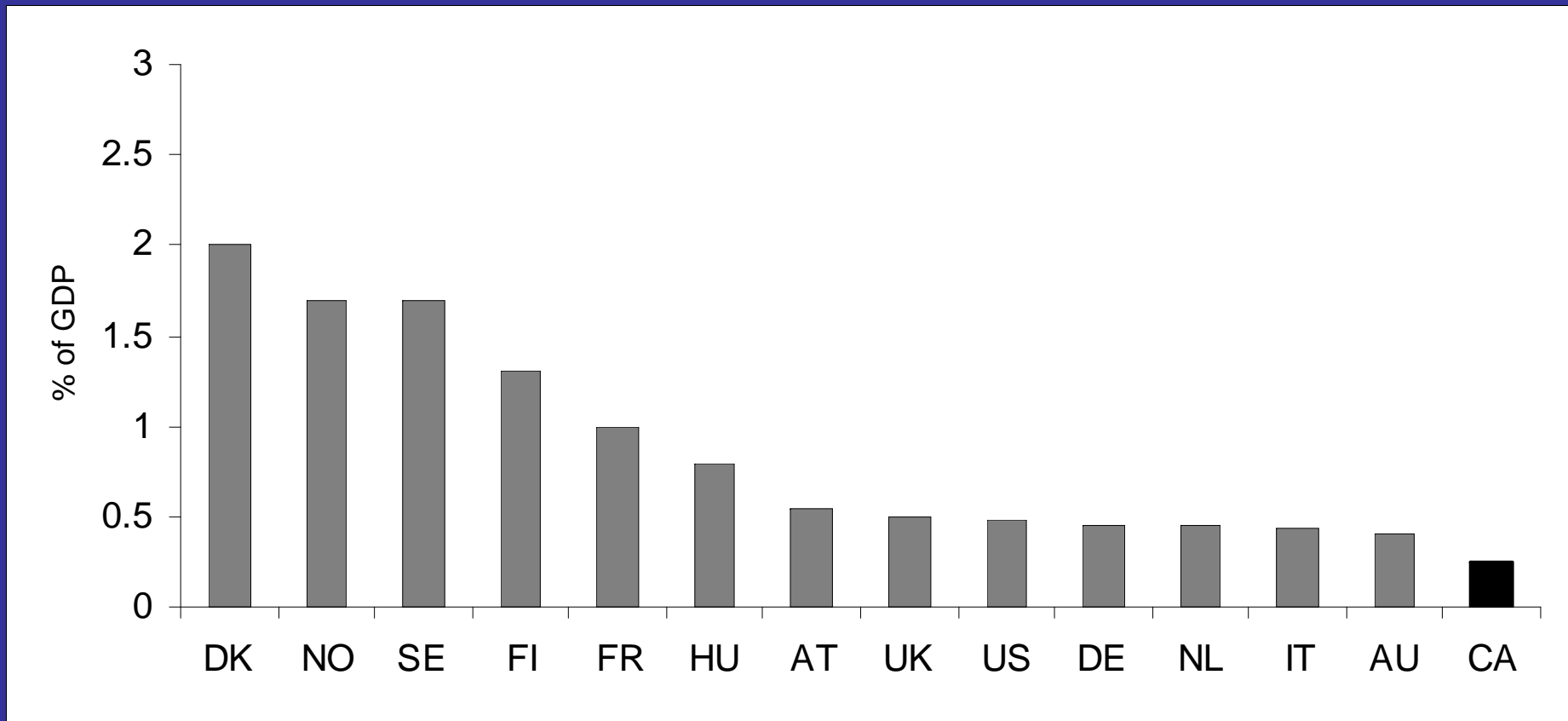
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# Rate of Access to ECEC programs for 3-6 year olds across OECD countries



Data source: OECD. (2006). *Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care. Country Profiles*

# Canada's spending on ECEC programs



Data source: OECD. (2006). *Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care*. Annex C, pg. 246.

# OECD recommended to Canada

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- Build bridges between child care and kindergarten
- Integration of kindergarten and child care would bring real advantages in Canada
- Conceptualize, deliver care and education as one seamless program
- Provinces – have a single responsible department

Characteristic	Child Care	Education
Main purpose?	Care while parents work/study	Education
An entitlement?	No	Generally yes
Coverage?	Minority of children	Universal
Financing?	Limited public funding	Publicly funded
Schedules?	Full-day, usually full-year, to meet parents' work schedules	Usually part-day, 10 months/yr
Compulsory?	No	Not usually
Age group?	0-12	5 year olds Limited 4 year olds

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Child Care</b>	<b>Education</b>
Who operates?	Community groups, entrepreneurs Very little public operation	Education authorities, usually school boards
Teacher qualifications?	Ranges – none-two/three year ECE college diploma	Four-year degree, ECE education not required
Wages?	Usually set by individual program; wide salary range; often low	Elementary teacher salary scale; board/district-wide bargaining
Workforce organization?	Limited unionization; multiple unions	Unionized as part of provincial/territorial teachers' organizations
Sustainability?	Changes with political climate; market delivery	Strong infrastructure

# Recent Initiatives in Canada

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- Ontario move to integrated care and education for 4- and 5-year olds; *Early Learning for Every Child Today*
- BC feasibility study of full day kindergarten for 5- (and possibly 3-4) year olds; *StrongStart in selected schools; Early Learning Framework*
- Saskatchewan child care moved to Education
- Manitoba child care in schools policy
- PEI kindergarten system under review

# Why Education?

- Primary focus on *children*
- Importance of *lifelong learning* and recognition that children are learners from birth
- *Strong infrastructure* within education (financing, data, training, support, curriculum, evaluation and research)
- Education - better basis than welfare for *universal entitlement*
- Education – *publicly-recognized* systems

# Policy questions: what are our assumptions?

What are the programs like?

Who are the programs for?

Who are the teachers?

Who has input and makes decisions?

Who pays and how?

Who operates the programs?

Where are the programs located?

How would K and pre-K programs relate to other ECE services?

