

# Childcare Co-operatives

*December, 2010: As part of Saskatchewan Co-operative Association's ongoing series of co-operative profiles, we present this fact sheet about childcare co-operatives.*

*For more information on Childcare co-operatives in Canada, see [Childcare Co-operatives in Canada 2007: A Research Report](#) which is available at [www.coopscanada.coop](http://www.coopscanada.coop).*

## **What is a Childcare Co-operative?**

Organized in the same way as other co-operative organizations, childcare co-operatives are owned and controlled by their members. This means that member needs are the primary consideration when identifying what services will be provided. All childcare co-operatives in Saskatchewan incorporate as a not-for-profit organization, and any surplus generated is used to increase or improve the childcare services. Childcare co-operatives encourage parent involvement not only as members and volunteers but also as active co-op board members, determining policy, procedure and the environment of the childcare facility.

## **What are the benefits of childcare co-operative?**

Childcare co-operatives develop to meet specific community-identified needs. They are present in communities where other childcare facilities are not available or may not provide the scope or type of facility necessary. Childcare co-ops generally have higher adult/child ratios, and through their involvement at the board, committee, and classroom levels, parents have more opportunity for involvement than in a regular facility. Supporters of childcare co-ops describe the primary benefit to be that parent involvement ensures a consistent style and quality of care between home and the childcare facility. The inclusive environment allows for cost-effective delivery of parent determined programming.

## **Childcare Co-operative Statistics in Saskatchewan\***

In 2005, there were over 400 registered childcare co-ops in Canada; Saskatchewan is home to 112 of these, making it the second largest childcare co-operative sector in the country.

In 2007, Saskatchewan had:

- 72 preschool co-operatives
- 40 daycare co-operatives

- Co-operatives account for 27% of childcare services in Saskatchewan
- Over 12,000 Saskatchewan families have memberships in a childcare co-operative

*\*from the Canadian Co-operative Association 2007 Childcare Report\**

## **Quick Points:**

There are three common types of childcare co-operatives:

1. Preschool co-ops (also called play schools, nursery schools, or parent participation preschools): operate half day programs;
2. Daycare co-ops: provide full daycare, including before and after school programs;
3. Purchasing and service co-ops: provide services for a group of child care co-ops and non-profit organizations;
4. The most common type in Canada is a preschool co-op where children attend only part of the day for educational and socialization activities.

## **There are several models for co-operative ownership and governance in Canada:**

- Parent-run: co-op members are the parents of children who attend the child care service;
- Worker: owned by the professionals who operate the child care service;
- Multi-stakeholder: members involve two or more categories of people who benefit and support the co-op, such as parents, workers, and other interested stakeholders (community organizations, representatives of community service agencies, local municipality, or interested citizens);
- Purchasing or servicing co-operative: co-op members are child care centres that need services or group purchasing (only in Quebec).

Almost all childcare co-operatives in Canada are parent-run.