

2017 Ontario Budget: A stronger, healthier Ontario ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Full budget PDF ^[2]

Introduction

The government is projecting that it will restore balance to the Province's finances for the first time since the 2008–09 global recession. In addition, Ontario's economy has fully recovered from the global recession and has outpaced the economic growth not just of Canada, but of all G7 countries over the last three years.

In the 2010 Budget, the government committed to eliminating the deficit and returning to a balanced budget by 2017–18, a commitment that has been reiterated year after year.

Through targeted, measured and fiscally responsible decisions, Ontario has restored its fiscal and economic strength. Ontario has not only eliminated its deficit of more than \$19 billion at the height of the recession; it has done so without cutting vital programs and services. The benefits of balanced budgets and a strengthening economy are already providing the government with the fiscal flexibility to do more to help Ontarians.

A balanced budget means that the government will no longer need to borrow to pay for its ongoing operating costs. The result: more money to invest in health care, education and other public services that matter most to Ontario families. A strong economy, together with a balanced budget, is positioning Ontario for long-term fiscal sustainability.

Excerpts from Chapter 2: Helping families access and afford child care

Finding quality and affordable child care can be a challenge for families in some communities due to long waitlists for subsidies and spaces. The government is helping 100,000 more children access affordable, quality licensed child care to give them the best start in life and support families across Ontario. As a first step, the Province invested an additional \$65.5 million to help create 3,400 licensed child care spaces in fall 2016.

In addition to creating new licensed spaces, the renewed investment in child care will also:

- Help to provide a subsidy to approximately 60 per cent of new spaces to address affordability and reduce fee subsidy waitlists; and
- Provide greater responsiveness to parents' needs and ease the transition for children with special needs.

By 2017–18, this new investment will support access to licensed child care for 24,000 more children up to four years old through new fee subsidy spaces and support for new licensed child care spaces in schools. These new supports will reduce waitlists, better ensuring that parents with low- and middle-incomes can benefit in a variety of ways.

This new commitment builds upon the 56,000 licensed child care spaces the government has helped create over the past three years. Ontario has also invested an additional \$63.5 million each year since 2010 to help fill the gap left when the federal government stepped away from its child care responsibility. The Province welcomes the federal government supporting Ontario's investment as part of the infrastructure announcement outlined in the 2017 federal budget.

Moving forward, government will continue to work with schools and municipalities to provide funding through a mixed approach of school, community and home-based expansion to provide care that is convenient, flexible and in line with parents' needs.

The government will also expand five existing child and family programs on reserve in the following communities:

- M'Chigeeng First Nation;
- Nibinamik First Nation;
- Six Nations of the Grand River;
- Walpole Island First Nation; and
- Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve.

Ontario will continue to work with Indigenous partners to help increase the number of quality, affordable licensed child care spaces.

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