

BC Liberals falling \$100 million short on child care spending promise, advocacy group says ^[1]

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The Colettas put their name on daycare wait-lists as soon as their son Dominic was born.

He is now two-and-a-half years old and they have yet to receive a phone call.

"It's really stressful," mother Michele Colletta said. "We both have careers that we want to focus on ... and raise a family at the same time."

The shortage of space is fuelled by a shortfall in public spending, according to the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC. Their report claims the province spent nearly \$100 million less on child care than what was promised.

"We now understand even more about why the crisis in child care in B.C. has grown so substantially, because the government has actually underspent its budget in each of the last four years," Lynell Anderson of the Coalition of Child Care Advocates said.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development said it did fully spend its budget, but in some cases it had to redirect money from one program to another.

The NDP is proposing a \$10-a-day child care program similar to one in Quebec, but has yet to reveal how it will be funded.

NDP leader John Horgan said more subsidies won't mean more child care spaces right away.

"You can't create spaces overnight," he said. "You can't train early childhood educators overnight. But the Liberals have been ignoring this, not for one year, not for two years, but for 16 years."

B.C. Premier Christy Clark, meanwhile, said change is on the way.

"Our plan is a real plan and it's going to mean 4,000 new child care spaces in the province," she said Monday.

"When you add that in to what we think the Trudeau government's commitment will be, that will be 8,000 new spaces."

The Colettas hired private child care, but are still pushing for a \$10-a-day child care plan.

"I think it's totally feasible and that there's no reason why we can't do it."

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