

Federal government should join Ontario in setting universally accessible child care as the goal ^[1]

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Full response

In a historic announcement, Ontario pledged today to build a universal child care system so that all families living in the province can get access to high quality early childhood education and care.

“We applaud the Ontario government for setting out concrete measures to transform how child care will be organized and funded,” said Morna Ballantyne, Executive Director of the Canadian Child Care Advocacy Association.

The Ontario action plan promises:

- The immediate development of a work force strategy to address the serious problem of recruiting and retaining qualified early childhood educators
- A new funding model to make child care affordable and accessible for all parents while also enhancing quality
- Doubling the number of child care spaces for children aged 0-4, with expansion in the public and non-profit sectors in all but exceptional circumstances
- Initiatives to make child care fully inclusive of children with disabilities
- Increased support for Indigenous child care
- Innovative demonstration projects to pave the way to a more comprehensive system of child care that can respond to the growing diversity of needs of parents, including those working non-standard hours

Ontario's policy announcement comes days before the federal government is expected to make public its own early learning and care funding and policy framework for Canada.

“We will be more than disappointed if the federal government's policy direction goes against the universal approach adopted by Ontario and that set out in the child care plan endorsed by BC's NDP, which will likely assume government in the near future,” said Ballantyne.

“The federal government should use its spending power to encourage and support making early childhood education and child care universally accessible across Canada rather than continue to pursue the current patchwork and market-based approach to child care that has proven to be a dismal failure on all counts.”

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