

# Feds to give Ontario \$435 million over 3 years for child care <sup>[1]</sup>

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## EXCERPTS

Ontario will receive \$435 million over three years from the federal government to be invested in child care, in the first such bilateral deal Ottawa has signed with the provinces.

The federal government signed a multilateral agreement earlier this week with the provinces and territories except Quebec and British Columbia, and federal and Ontario ministers unveiled the details of Ontario's deal on Friday.

Each year about \$100 million will support access to high-quality, licensed child-care programs, about \$40 million will go to child and family programming at centres across the province, and about \$5 million will go to early childhood educator training, said Ontario's minister responsible for early years and child care.

"The majority of the federal funding will help to make licensed child care more affordable, and more affordable for low- and middle-income families in Ontario," said Indira Naidoo-Harris.

It will give an estimated 11,200 more children access to licensed child care spaces and is on top of Ontario's existing commitment to create 100,000 spaces over five years, she said.

The \$100 million per year will include subsidies for low- and middle-income families -- just who is eligible will be determined by municipalities -- and capital costs for building spaces or renovating them, Naidoo-Harris said.

The federal money will also go toward 100 new early years child and family centres, which offer various programming.

"These centres will essentially deliver high-quality early years programming to families, to kids," said Naidoo-Harris. "There will be resource centres, they'll be able to get information. In addition to that families will be able to drop in and take workshops, drop-in programs -- they're really wonderful support services for families."

Ottawa's framework will allocate a total of \$1.2 billion to the provinces over the next three years.

"Child care is more than a parking lot for children," said Jean-Yves Duclos, the federal minister of families, children and social development.

"Child care is about quality early learning for our children so they get the best possible start in life, and child care gives more parents, especially mothers, an opportunity to work, to train for their next job, or to go back to school. In fact, taking gender equality seriously means taking child care seriously."

According to research from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, several Greater Toronto Area cities have the highest child-care fees in the country, with Toronto topping the list with a median fee of \$1,649 a month for infants.

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