

No major funding for relief on child care costs ^[1]

Author: Smart, Amy

Source: Times Colonist

Format: Article

Publication Date: 10 Sep 2017

AVAILABILITY

Read online ^[2]

EXCERPTS

Edith MacHattie was one of several mothers looking forward to the \$10-a-day child care promised by the New Democrats during the spring election campaign - a commitment that was conspicuously absent from provincial budget update Monday.

MacHattie, co-chairwoman of the B.C. Health Coalition, brought her three-month-old son Theo to the budget lockup.

"Having affordable child care is critical for any working parent," said MacHattie.

"I think the public has spoken loud and clear about the urgent need to address the child care situation in B.C. I have tonnes of friends starting their own families and it's incredibly stressful to think about starting a family and knowing you could sit on a wait list for years."

Despite promising \$10-a-day child care in the election campaign, the government committed little new funding and no specific timeline for achieving that goal.

Instead, it is providing an additional \$20 million in 2017-2018 for new child care investments, which increases provincial funding to \$330 million this fiscal year. That funding will support 4,100 new child care spaces.

Finance Minister Carole James said the government is still committed to delivering \$10-per-day child care. But she said the New Democrats and Greens disagreed on child care funding when the two parties were negotiating the pact that allowed the NDP to form government.

She said the power handover from the Liberals meant the new government didn't have time to prepare a budget that included some of its platform promises.

Green Party Leader Andrew Weaver said the exclusion of \$10-a-day care shows the NDP are being true to its no-surprises agreement with his party.

"Look, I was thrilled by the budget today. The budget today was exactly what we were hoping to see," Weaver said.

Committing to a specific figure before thorough consultation doesn't make sense, Weaver said of the daycare promise.

The Greens' election platform promised up to 25 hours of free early childhood education per week for three- and four-year-olds, free daycare for working parents with children under three and up to \$500 per month for families with children under three and a stay-at-home parent.

Iglika Ivanova, senior economist with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, said she was surprised to see there wasn't more funding for child care, given that the NDP and Greens share some common ideas. "They agree on basic principles, which is universal, publicly-funded, affordable and accessible [child care] to families across the province," Ivanova said.

"So what I'm surprised about is there's so little money invested right now for building a framework."

-reprinted from Times Colonist

Region: British Columbia ^[3]

Tags: funding ^[4]

government ^[5]

affordability ^[6]

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/17/09/no-major-funding-relief-child-care-costs> [2] <https://www.timescolonist.com/news/local/no-major-funding-for-relief-on-child-care-costs-1.22628896> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7860> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/funding> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/8941> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/affordability>