

N.S. says it will create up to 1,000 new child-care spaces with \$35M from Ottawa ^[1]

Province says three-year agreement will also lead to greater subsidies for more families

Author: Laroche, Jean

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EXCERPTS

The Nova Scotia government is promising to create as many as 1,000 new daycare spaces across the province as a result of a three-year \$35 million deal signed Wednesday with Ottawa.

Premier Stephen McNeil, who attended the signing at St. Joseph's Children's Centre in Bedford along with a half dozen other federal and provincial politicians, called it a major investment in the future that will pay "huge dividends" for children and the "economic health of this province."

But as high profile as the event appeared to be, politicians struggled to provide answers about where the extra money will actually be spent.

When asked, federal Social Development Minister Jean-Yves Duclos deferred to the province. He called it a "great question," and said "the great answer" will come from Nova Scotia Education Minister Zach Churchill.

But Churchill also could not answer specific questions. He did say more families would benefit from the maximum provincial child-care subsidy of \$7,540 a year because the eligibility income threshold is being increased from \$25,000 to \$35,000 a year.

"Right now, certain families just don't have child-care centres or spaces available in their community or close to their community," he said.

Churchill said the money will create new spaces in areas of the province where the need is highest, and told reporters his department would provide a list of communities in need of new daycare centres.

An email sent by a department spokesperson later offered a "clarification."

"Results of the early years consultation will be released shortly and that will inform the strategic growth plan for the province," the email said. "That plan will also be released shortly and will identify the areas of the province where new spaces will be developed."

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